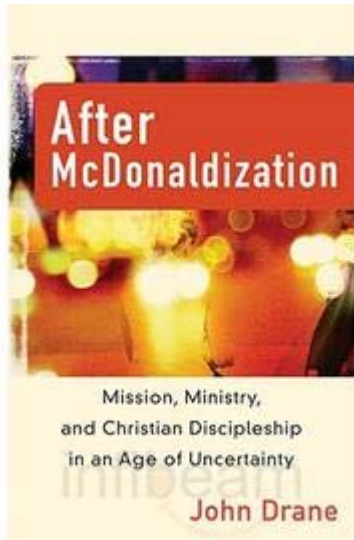


## Mission Possible Ezine 31<sup>ST</sup> August, 2009

### BOOKS

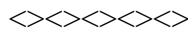


**After McDonaldization: Mission, Ministry, and Christian Discipleship in an Age of Uncertainty,** by John Drane

**John Drane's acclaimed,** "The McDonaldization of the Church," identified the catastrophic trend of Western churches offering uninventive, pre-packaged worship to dwindling congregations. Since its publication, church attendance has continued to decline even though increasing numbers of people are searching for spiritual integrity and turning to "spirituality."

In *After McDonaldization*, Drane argues that the continuing impact of globalization and consumerism has been joined by a post-9/11 culture of fear and a search for truth. He asks what it means to be Christian in a post-Christendom context. Where are today's mission opportunities, the places where God is at work? In our fragmented society, how should Christian community be shaped? And what values might inspire the leaders of the twenty-first century?

As he addresses key questions for Western Christianity in a global context, Drane presents a case for a more practical theology, a reinvigorated style of ministry, and a restatement of classic Christian beliefs for the twenty-first century. "To continue as we are may be comfortable, but could also be institutionally suicidal," writes Drane. "Our options are simple. We either do nothing, and the decline continues, or we ask fundamental questions and take whatever steps may be necessary to re-imagine church life."



**The Real Man's Toolbox – a DIY health manual for men, by [Tammy Farrell](#).**

*from the blurb:*

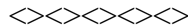
Most men look after their cars. They look after their trucks. They make sure their fishing rods are maintained, and look after their golf clubs. But too many men don't look after themselves. It's not hard. Simple changes can literally mean the difference between life and death. Farrell, an Australian, is a registered nurse who is often called on by males to demystify the medical world. Taking



this role a step further, she saw a need to talk to men about their health and started giving 'tool box talks' to miners. With her focus on what men need to hear and want to know, in this book she has created the manual every man needs to live a healthier life. *In a quick glance at this in a local shop, noted that there's some good information on mental health for men – and the need for blokes' sheds. She also talks about the Men's Sheds movement in Australia:*

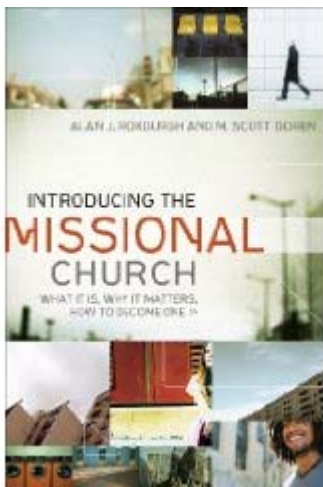
*[Mensheds Australia Ltd.](#) is a not-for-profit Australian Public Company dedicated as the premier organisation for supporting and resourcing men's sheds across Australia. Problems with men's health, isolation, loneliness and depression are looming as major health issues for men. Men's sheds can play a significant and practical role in addressing these and other men's issues. Men's sheds can help connect men with their communities and mainstream society and at the same time act as a catalyst in stimulating their community's economic activities.*

*The Men's Sheds site has a number of videos on it, introducing the topic and talking about Men's Sheds that are already up and running.*



**Introducing the Missional Church: What It Is, Why It Matters, How to Become One (Allelon Missional Series), by Alan Roxburgh and Scott Boren.**

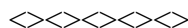
*This book won't be out till November this year. In the meantime, here's some information about it:*



Many pastors and church leaders have heard the term "missional" but have only a vague idea of what it means, let alone why it might be important to them. But what does it actually mean? What does a missional church look like and how does it function? Two leading voices in the missional movement here provide an accessible introduction, showing readers how the movement developed, why it's important, and how churches can become more missional. Introducing the Missional Church demonstrates that ours is a post-Christian culture, making it necessary for church leaders to think like missionaries right here at home. Focusing on a

process that allows a church to discern its unique way of being missional, it guides readers on a journey that will lead them to implement a new set of missional practices in their churches. The authors demonstrate that living missionally is about discerning and joining God's work in the world in order to be a witness to God's kingdom on earth.

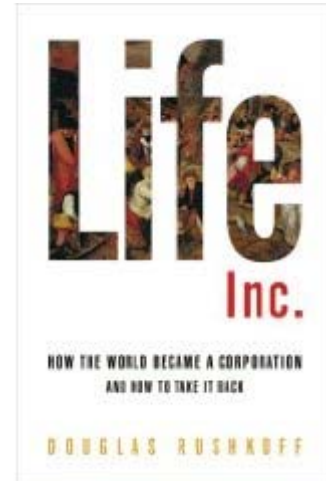
To be published by Baker Books.



[Life, Inc. How the World Became a Corporation and How to Take it Back](#), by Douglas Rushkoff.

Missional guru, **Alan Roxburgh**, has written a [good review of this book on his blog](#). Here is a paragraph from it:

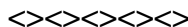
“I read it in one sitting. A lot of the material is familiar and, yes, he overstates and exaggerates in places where it isn’t needed. Frankly, it’s pretty easy to critique this book at many levels, in part because it tries to tackle a tough piece of social history in a book wanting to communicate with people who don’t have the inside ‘expertise’ of social historians, economists or urban studies. It’s a book that over-stretches by oversimplifying economic developments that are more complex than he wishes to own. All of this being the case, Rushkoff has still written a book that deserves our attention. It would seem to be the vocation of church leadership to read with a critical eye and not simply take everything at face value. *There is much in this book that will assist us in framing why it is so hard right now to shape local churches and denominational systems in anything that goes much beyond the latest ‘seeker’ techniques or church growth gift-wrapped in glossy missional paper.*



“Part of living in an [unthinkable](#) world is discovering how to see the ways certain parts of life we simply ‘take for granted’ come out of very specific social histories, now forgotten, that are blinding us not just to the ways we are being shaped but from imagining a different world. In reading Rushkoff we are getting very close to the lived anxieties of the people who come, hungering and thirsting to our churches whom we too often send away empty because we are focused on meeting needs and being seeker friendly. We see how corporatism has framed a way of living in suburban life shaped by the automobile that isolated people from neighbours and makes us frightened of the very strangers the Gospel calls us to embrace.”  
Random House, June 2, 2009

**When you hear someone sigh and say that ‘Life is hard’ I am always tempted to ask, ‘Compared to what?’ Sydney J. Harris**

*The National Mission Office is happy to put together demographic information about your parish and the local area, along with interesting background and other relevant material. We also do backgrounders on broader subjects, such as Cultural matters within NZ. Examples of these can be seen [on the Presbyterian website](#).*



## LEADERSHIP

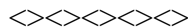


**Leadership** is scarce because few people are willing to go through the discomfort required to lead. The scarcity makes leadership valuable. If everyone tries to lead all the time, not much happens. It's discomfort that creates the leverage that makes leadership worthwhile. In other words, if everyone could do it, they would, and it wouldn't be worth much.

It's uncomfortable to stand up in front of strangers.  
It's uncomfortable to propose an idea that might fail.  
It's uncomfortable to challenge the status quo.  
It's uncomfortable to resist the urge to settle.

When you identify the discomfort, you've found the place where a leader is needed. If you're not uncomfortable in your work as a leader, it's almost certain you're not reaching your potential as a leader.

[Seth Godin, quoting from his book, Tribes.](#)



[Seth Godin again:](#) **Most of us are afraid of strategy**, because we don't feel confident outlining one unless we're sure it's going to work. And the 'work' part is all tactical, so we focus on that. (Tactics are easy to outline, because we say, "I'm going to post this." If we post it, we succeed. Strategy is scary to outline, because we describe results, not actions, and that means opportunity for failure.)

"Building a permission asset so we can grow our influence with our best customers over time" is a strategy. Using email, twitter or RSS along with newsletters, contests and a human voice are all tactics. *In my experience, people get obsessed about tactical detail before they embrace a strategy...* and as a result, when a tactic fails, they begin to question the strategy that they never really embraced in the first place.

The next time you find yourself spending 8 hours on tactics and five minutes refining your strategy, you'll understand what's going on.

**We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.**  
**Winston Churchill**

## **MENTAL HEALTH**

*One of the less well-known aspects of the recession in New Zealand is that Asian men whose businesses have failed here are going back overseas to find work, and are leaving their wives and children behind.*

*For many of these women the sudden isolation and sense of being turned into single parents is causing issues with mental health, through stress and depression. But because it is normal to 'save face' in Asian societies, many of these women don't feel they can reach out for help.*

*There is already a lack of research into the mental health of Asian people in New Zealand. The University of Auckland's Centre for Asian Health Research and Evaluation is unable to find sufficient funding to do the research needed, and have fears that many of the women involved will be left to look after themselves without any assistance.*

*Picture courtesy [aaspe.net](http://aaspe.net)*



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*In an article in the latest [SPINZ \(Suicide Prevention Information NZ\) newsletter](#), Dr Sunny Collings writes:*



Recent articles in the media have suggested that the recession is having an impact on suicide rates. For example, in the UK a death by suicide was reported as being the 'first suicide due to the economic downturn'. Irrespective of the details of the individual case, this claim is an oversimplification. The causes of suicide are complex and both individual level factors and societal/cultural factors are important.

Suicide rates rose in New Zealand during the Great Depression with a peak in 1930. The international rise in suicide rates during the Depression was probably due to the rise in unemployment. Evidence of a link between unemployment and suicide has been shown in New Zealand, with an odds ratio of about 2.5, meaning that people who are unemployed are more likely to complete suicide. However, mental disorder was estimated as accounting for about half of the increased risk.

Dr Collings discusses the connections - or lack of them - further in the [article, which is available online](#). Basically, unemployment - particularly for men - can add hugely to stress in a person's life, but it's usually only when it's added to an existing state of unwellness that the risk of suicide increases.

Picture courtesy [techfeel.com](#)

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At the SPINZ National Symposium 2009, the following paper will be presented: [Emergency department re-presentations following intentional self-harm](#) by Silke Kuehl and Dr Kathy Nelson.

A retrospective observational design was selected for a period of one year and data was collected from electronic clinical case notes. The sample consisted of 48 people with 73 presentations and re-presentations.



This study made several discoveries: many re-presentations (55%) occurred within one day; the exact number of people who re-presented many times to ED is unknown, but is far higher than reported in other studies; fewer support people were present for the second presentation; the documentation of triage and assessments by ED staff was often minimal, though frequently portrayed immense distress of this population; cultural input for Maori was missing; physical health complaints and psychosis were found with some intentional self-harm presentations; challenging behaviours occurred in at least a quarter of presentations; and the medical and mental health inpatient admission rates were approximately 40% higher for second presentations.

Recommendations in regard to the use of a triage assessment tool, cultural input for Maori and the need for a mental health consultation liaison nurse in ED are made. Staff education, collaboration between services with consumer involvement and further research of this group are required.

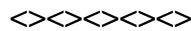
Further to this, the list of talks to be given at this Symposium [is listed here](#). There are a number of culturally-concerned topics, both Maori and Pasifika, as well as some basics regarding suicide prevention. Picture: [piority.com](#)

**The Body of Christ has had its hands and feet amputated  
until all that's left is a big mouth. Rick Warren**

## **MISSION**

Lasting missional transformation cannot be done by large scale plans imposed upon people. It is done by initiating all manner of experiments around the edges where people are given permission to try out what they are learning. These experiments are not about creating permanent change. They are about retesting and discovering along the way. The beauty of such experiments is that, like the wind of the Spirit in our sails, there is no telling where they'll take a congregation.

**The Missional Leader:** equipping your church to reach a changing world, by *Alan Roxburgh and F Romanuk*.



*Seth Godin* has written a [blog post on Education](#), asking three questions:

1. *Should this be scarce or abundant?*
2. *Should this be free or expensive?*
3. *Should this be about school or about learning?*

*He says there are eight possible combinations from the three questions above, such as scarce and expensive, or about school and abundant, and so on.*

*What's this got to do with mission? I'm not entirely sure, but in the back of my head there's a nudging that says we could apply the same sort of questions to church and/or mission. We may not ask whether mission should be scarce or abundant, free or expensive, about itself or about something else, but I get the sense that there are three questions in there somewhere that we should be asking.*

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**Len Hjalmarson** on the [NextReformation blog](#) writes:

Friends in Edmonton are pioneering a new model for planting missional communities. They realized that in most communities in western Canada about one-third have some Christian experience, and between 5 and 10% are believers who are travelling some miles to participate in a church. Their idea: bring the church into the neighbourhood and leverage the existing relational networks. Invite the small number who are already in place to actually become the church in their neighbourhood, and invite those who have some history of neglected commitment to go on a journey in discipleship. They don't ask those who are driving to "church" to stop driving away on Sunday, but rather to start living on mission where they are.



What is growing up are IMCs.. intentional missional clusters ... and out of this are growing neighbourhood churches: not the building and programs, but people loving God, loving their neighbours and transforming their world (Mark 12).The most surprising part.. the established churches that may lose members over this are not upset but energized, and some are asking for training to reconnect with their own neighbourhoods.

*The post continues with some paragraphs from [Simon Carey Holt](#), who notes: "the Incarnation is about much more than God revealed in human experience, but God revealed and encountered in place—and in the most domestic of places one can imagine." He goes on to list three points about place and theology.*

**Taking Your Church Missional: what does it cost the leader?** is an article by Lois Swagerty. The article is available for download from [Leadership Network](#) though you may find you have to register with them in order to read it. (This is a once-only registration.)



*Leading one's church in a missional direction may be easier said than done. Along with the rewards come risks – both personal and corporate. In an informal survey, church leaders identified ten key areas of cost in taking their church missional.*

The cost of the **Clock**: missional work is time-consuming;  
The cost of **Comfort**: it disturbs the club member paradigm;  
The cost of **Crowds**: people will leave;  
The cost of **Conflict**: rebellion in the ranks;  
The cost of **Criticism**: people questioning the wisdom of mission;  
The cost of **Cash**: finances will feel the pinch;  
The cost of **Career**: missional leaders can lose their jobs;  
The cost of **Calling**: redefining the role of the pastor;  
The cost of **Character**: there's a need for more prayer;  
The cost of **Control**: delegation of ministry.

**"Education is a wonderful thing, provided you always remember that nothing worth knowing can ever be taught." Oscar Wilde**

## **SOCIETY**



*Aaron Thomson, who works with [Student Life](#) at Otago University, has just published [an eight-page essay on alcohol and the Gen Y students who are now attending the University](#). The essay, called **The Way Forward**, is full of commonsense (something Aaron says most students lack, and which is part of the problem) and offers some well-thought out solutions.*

*Here's a sample from early in the essay.*

The day and age has come where old-fashioned common sense just does not exist en masse, in a self-evident fashion. Whilst our little country has been buying and trading, sunbathing and fishing, boy racing or tending roses... a gradual but certain paradigm shift has occurred in our youth. The excess of a decade of wealth production combined with the political correctness of our time have resulted in a crop of spoilt brats, who are entitled to what was promised them: whatever they want!

And now who are we to deny them such rights: to dance in the streets, to drink irresponsibly, to throw bottles, to destroy property? After all, it's everyone's right - the greatest value of Generation Y - to have fun. It is hardly surprising that a

university that has promoted itself as the place to “get over it” should now find itself in such a predicament.

“Get over it” is the perfect slogan for today’s youth. It meets them where they’re at. Whatever marketing company harnessed the phrase is nothing short of brilliant, because this slogan met a generational desire with 100% accuracy. But there are always two edges to every sword, and in earlier years the slogan earned us student numbers. The now emerging downside is that for such students and such a culture, the same phrase is has conveniently become the stock excuse of a culture out of control. “You don’t like my behaviour – get over it!”

*This essay doesn't just apply to youth drinking in Dunedin; it's relevant way beyond our borders.*

**We do not quit playing because we grow old,  
we grow old because we quit playing. ~Oliver Wendell Holmes**

## WELLNESS

In the August edition of *NZ Management*, there’s a one page article called, **Why Health = Wealth**, by Peter Tynan.

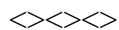
*We’re all familiar with the word, absenteeism, but in this article a similar word, presenteeism, is introduced. It relates to people who come to work sick, and the impact on productivity associated with having them there in that state. The biggest cost to businesses in relation to their staffs’ poor health is presenteeism.*



*It’s not a matter of making sure people stay away when they’re unwell, but ensuring that people are more healthy in general.*

*According to some stats, 70% of workers have a “state of health equivalent to an older person, with 20% rated as having the health of someone a decade older. Nearly a third were rated as obese while stress levels were poor to bad for 43%.” As recession stress only adds to ill-health.*

*At present it’s estimated that “two thirds of New Zealand companies offer employees health and wellness interventions.” But further investment in this area is needed, particularly as the workforce ages.*



In a recent article on the [Roxburgh Missional Network](#), entitled [New Directions for a Leadership Style](#), **John McLaverty** writes about the need for ongoing evaluation of our lives and ministry. After he quit his job as a full-time pastor nine years ago, McLaverty was encouraged to take a *360 evaluation*.



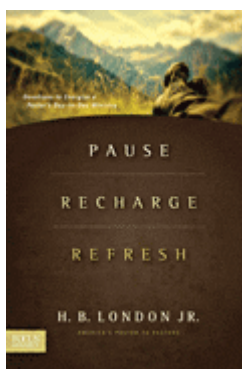
“A 360 what?,” I believe was my quick and rather anxious response. Patiently and wisely [the Vocational Psychologist] responded, “A 360 is an effective instrument through which you can filter and evaluate changes you may want to make in your

style of leadership. It is a multi-rater, full circle (hence the 360) feedback survey. We are going to ask 20-25 of your friends, colleagues, peers and work associates to fill-in a confidential survey on how they perceive you both in strengths and challenges. In the end we will provide you with a confidential report and recommendations for your professional development. We will also suggest you form a support group that will help guide you through the recommendations.”

McLaverty recently asked in a different post, [Why are you in ministry?](#) It's a question he believes ministers should be asking themselves on a regular basis. The Pastor/Leader 360 is [available via the Roxburgh site](#) - it costs something, but you can download a sample report to get some idea of what it's about.

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### *The Challenges of a Pastor's Spouse*



*I realize that not all clergy spouses struggle with the challenge of sharing their mate and family with a congregation. But I haven't met many who have not had their moments.*

*This is what I hear: "Our family needs more balance. It seems we are owned by the church." "Sometimes, when I see how my husband is treated by the church leaders, I wonder if it's all worth it." "I'm concerned about my husband's health. He does not sleep well, eat well, or find time for himself."*

*When spouses talk about themselves, often it is in the area of their own identity or relationship. "I'm not sure who I can trust." "So many of the expectations for me are unrealistic." "If we didn't work here, I'm not sure we would even attend this church." "Sundays are my roughest day of the week." "I feel a heaviness in my heart that I can't describe."*

*Well, you know the rest. As couples in ministry, you must keep talking, keep observing the one you love. Don't be afraid to ask how the other is doing, and take time to be together. Ministry should be a joy — full of love and respect for one another.*

***"When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought joy to my soul"***  
*(Psalm 94:19).*

**From *Pause, Recharge, Refresh* by H. B. London, Jr, published Sept, 2009, by Tyndale House.**

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Check out the [National Mission blog](#) for the latest posts