

## **Kia ora e te whanau**

The next 2 years for UCANZ promises to be challenging. We do not know whether we will exist beyond the 2027 Biennial Forum.

In the mean-time, I'm resolved to do what I can to assist the CVs (Co-operative Ventures) with which I may have any influence, to be open to a pathway that leads to life and vitality.

There are numerous programmes available promising church growth - generally premised on the belief that if you will simply submit to doing things our way – following the prescription that worked for us, it will then, surely, work for you.

Part of the problem is that most of what is offered worked for a particular group, with a particular mix of personalities, gifts and graces, in a particular time, cultural context, and place.

There is one 'instrument' that is often disdained, yet when engaged with consistently and in good faith, has been demonstrated to make a positive difference in the congregations that have used its learnings. It is Natural Church Development (NCD). Even its moniker draws scorn – surely, either such a thing is impossible, or if it is to be taken seriously should be called 'Supernatural Church Development'.

NCD has been around almost 30 years.

NCD is not a programme. It starts with a simple premise – that healthy organisms tend to grow – 'all by themselves' (Mk 4:28). It is more focussed on Church health than church growth. It doesn't tell you what you need to do in your context, and isn't captive to a particular brand of theology or spirituality.

NCD is first and foremost a diagnostic tool pointed razor sharp at definable measures of what constitutes a healthy church. As I said, it doesn't tell you what to do – that's for you to decide. It does tell you what areas of unhealth you could profitably look at.

Over the next few weeks I'll be 'posting' information about NCD – what it is, how it works, what it might require of you, and what you can expect from it.

Interested? Want to know more? Drop me a line [yomyom@xtra.co.nz](mailto:yomyom@xtra.co.nz) or give me a call 027 559 9042.

## **Further Leadership and Personal Development Resources**

### **1. Sheryl Sandberg, Bill Gates and the world's top CEOs swear by the same daily habit.**

My life changed when I was gifted my first smart-phone for a significant birthday. It was a Samsung Note4. It turned out to be a blessing, and also a curse. 10 years have passed. The most significant loss was around my habit of being a fairly voracious reader of books. Real books - of paper and ink. Often my address on Sunday mornings would include the question "Guess what?" and like a well-practised liturgical response, the congregation would automatically chirp "You've been reading a book!" This article is a plea to recapture this old habit – as an investment in yourself! I'm attempting to take its invitation seriously. It can be accessed here: <https://fortune.com/2025/08/02/top-ceos-daily-habits-career-coach-bill-hoogterp-sheryl-sandberg-bill-gates-gen-z-advice-success/>

### **2. The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion**

It's the title of a book by Jonathan Haidt, a moral psychologist (yes, such a thing exists). Published in 2016 he explores the dynamics that trap us in our silos unable to hear one another. Haidt concludes early on that *Intuitions come first, strategic reasoning second* - while we may think our opinions are based on some conscious, rational reason, in most cases we're responding to an unconscious "gut feeling," and only later coming up with reasons to justify that instinct. We end up rationalising what we feel. As I heard it put recently on a 'Holy Post' podcast "The mind justifies the decision of the heart". This article gives a simple and clear outline of the book. You may want to take the matter further, as I am. The article can be accessed here: <https://nextbigideaclub.com/magazine/righteous-mind-good-people-divided-politics-religion-bookbite/32247/>

### **Homilies & Preaching Resources**

My response to the lectionary for the 10<sup>th</sup> of August focusses on the Gospel reading of Luke 12 vs 32-40. Jesus is inviting his followers to a simpler lifestyle, in a state of readiness. The reflection is titled 'Travel Lite' and can be engaged with here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6q1dRiepZbE>

**Trevor Hoggard** is currently on long leave, so we won't be seeing him again until September.

**Gospel Conversations** - out of the Dunedin Anglican Diocese. They host a conversation of 4 Theologians / Practitioners around the Gospel lectionary text for the coming Sunday. The site with all its options can be accessed here: <https://www.calledsouth.org.nz/gospel-conversations/> . The reflection for this coming Sunday of the 10<sup>th</sup> of August also focusses on the lectionary Gospel of Luke 12 vs 32-40. The discussion can be accessed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wdn5UaGLkEA>

Again, it will help broaden all our reach if you '**subscribe**' and '**like**'.

Once again, use the videos as you will.

### **Finally.**

As always, if you find you'd prefer not to receive this weekly newsletter, please let me know and your address will be removed.

Ngā manaakitanga

Andrew Doubleday

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