

Hugh Mackay:
Beyond Belief,
65-67.

There is an important point at the start of Mackay's observations about why people stop going to church. He observes two of the big pull factors in Western society away from faith communities:

"Any analysis of why people have stopped going to church needs to take account of the massive bombardment of Western society over the past thirty years by propaganda in two directions – both antithetical to the messages of religion and spirituality. The first barrage has come from the world of consumer mass marketing... The unambiguous message embedded in all this consumerist frenzy is that 'it's all about me' ...

The second bombardment has been from the merchants of happiness. Marshalling their considerable forces, they have also been telling us exactly what we want to hear: your entitlement isn't confined to material prosperity; you're entitled to happiness as well, and the pursuit of personal happiness is a perfectly suitable goal for your life."

Ageing

One of the most alarming statistics is the ageing of church attendees:

- 44 % are over 60 years of age, and
- 25 % are 70+ years of age

McCrindle Research



Learning: Ekklesia does not refer to a building or a denomination in the Bible. Ekklesia refers to the Body of Christ (two or more people who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ and gather regularly to pray, worship, open the Bible, build community and break bread). Each 'ekklesia' is a member of the universal church. History and experience show that this can occur in many contexts, forms, settings. John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 12:13.



Learning: The meaning and examples in the New Testament of ekklesia are a long way away from most modern expressions of church. While there are elements of gathering and worshipping together implicit in the use of the term, there are equal measures and assumptions about dwelling and being sent every day into the local community.

From Kingdom Communities by Menzies & Phelan 2018





A case study

The Conference of Churches of Christ in Queensland was within “a whisker of folding” in 2009.

Geoff Risson & Craig Brown, *The Church from the Paddock: A History of Churches of Christ in Queensland 1883 – 2013*, Second Edition, Kenmore: Churches of Christ in Queensland, 2016, p.163.

A Different Future ?

Yet,
There are all kinds of futures...
There is a predictable future,
There is a feared future,
There is a hoped-for future, and...
There is a future that God is calling us to



Images by Paul Durr




February 2010	November 2010 AGM
Key Goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebuild Unity • Re-missionalise • Better leverage resources 	Key strategy themes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One Church, one Body, • Clusters • Communities • Mission Development Pastors • Mission Division • Kingdom Access Places

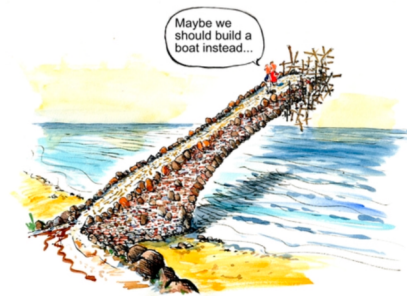
Our Health as a movement



- Growth – seven consecutive years of overall growth
- Morale – Strong morale State-wide
- Culture shift from survival to belief – "colleagues in mission"
- Registered volunteers – 700 to 1600
- Churches' increased mission focus – community engagement through SALTs and local church initiatives – 30 SALTs
- Local, State and Federal Governments – CofCQ one of Australia's best –new contracts and funding growth to care for those in need - \$87M to \$186M
- 4 major Awards in past year – Seniors Care, PASCOP Worship service, Sanctuary,

From the Annual Reports	2009 - 10	2016 - 17	% Growth
Total number of Kingdom Communities	207*	398	92%
Number of people regularly connecting with KCs	30,000+	40,000+	33%
Number of affiliated churches	70	69	- 1%
Average weekly attendances at affiliated churches	6,220	7,808	26%
Registered Clients receiving care	14,282	20,598	44%
Number of foster and kinship carers	667	1,000	50%
Number of Family day care and in-home carers	276	286	4%
Number of social & affordable housing places	583	1,268	117%
Number of independent retirement living units	556	1,074	93%
Number of approved operational aged care beds	1,355	1,812	34%
Number of registered volunteers	740	1,627	120%
Number of staff across all areas	2,907	3,333	15%
Total revenue (\$000)	\$138,970	\$259,041	86%

Organizational Learning



Story 1

Story 2

The Churches of Christ in Queensland Story

Two Stories

A Kingdom Community

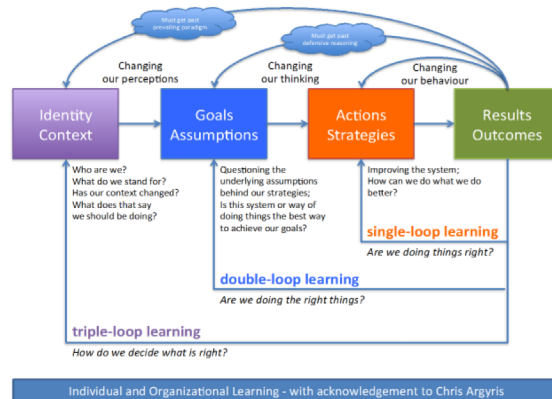
- A Kingdom Community is a group or active network that:
 - Has twelve or more people who connect with an identifiable rhythm and regularity,
 - Contains at least three people who would self-identify as members of the Churches of Christ in Queensland mission movement,
 - Is designed to give people in the community access to the kingdom of God, or in other words, 'there is a danger they will meet Jesus,'
 - Has some definable and nameable leadership and governance, and
 - Has traceable links to Churches of Christ in Queensland.



"It is obvious what kind of life develops out of trying to get your own way all the time: repetitive, loveless, cheap sex; a stinking accumulation of mental and emotional garbage; frenzied and joyless grabs for happiness; trinket gods; magic-show religion; paranoid loneliness; cutthroat competition; all-consuming-yet-never-satisfied wants; a brutal temper; an impotence to love or be loved; divided homes and divided lives; small-minded and lopsided pursuits; the vicious habit of depersonalizing everyone into a rival; uncontrolled and uncontrollable addictions; ugly parodies of community. I could go on. This isn't the first time I have warned you, you know. If you use your freedom this way, you will not inherit God's kingdom.

But what happens when we live God's way? He brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard—things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity. We develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people. We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely. Legalism is helpless in bringing this about; it only gets in the way. Among those who belong to Christ, everything connected with getting our own way and mindlessly responding to what everyone else calls necessities is killed off for good—crucified. Since this is the kind of life we have chosen, the life of the Spirit, let us make sure that we do not just hold it as an idea in our heads or a sentiment in our hearts, but work out its implications in every detail of our lives".

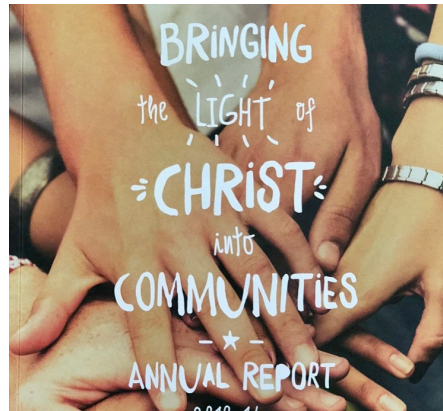
Galatians 5:19-26, Eugene Peterson, *The Message*



Single Loop Learning?



More than
nice words...



The Essentials according to Jesus:

The Greatest Commandment and the Golden Rule.

Matthew 22:37-40

37-40 Jesus said, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence.’ This is the most important, the first on any list. But there is a second to set alongside it: ‘Love others as well as you love yourself.’ These two commands are pegs; everything in God’s Law and the Prophets hangs from them.”

The Great Commission

Matthew 28:18-20

18-20 ... “God authorized and commanded me to commission you: Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I’ll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age.”

The Message (MSG)



Strategic Action Leadership Team (SALT)

How can we enable more of the light of Christ to be shining in our community?



James 2:14-26 Faith in Action – Christ's Gospel is holistic

14-17 Dear friends, do you think you'll get anywhere in this if you learn all the right words but never do anything? Does merely talking about faith indicate that a person really has it? For instance, you come upon an old friend dressed in rags and half-starved and say, "Good morning, friend! Be clothed in Christ! Be filled with the Holy Spirit!" and walk off without providing so much as a coat or a cup of soup—where does that get you? Isn't it obvious that God-talk without God-acts is outrageous nonsense?

18 I can already hear one of you agreeing by saying, "Sounds good. You take care of the faith department, I'll handle the works department."

Not so fast. You can no more show me your works apart from your faith than I can show you my faith apart from my works. Faith and works, works and faith, fit together hand in glove.

19-20 Do I hear you professing to believe in the one and only God, but then observe you complacently sitting back as if you had done something wonderful? That's just great. Demons do that, but what good does it do them? Use your heads! Do you suppose for a minute that you can cut faith and works in two and not end up with a corpse on your hands?

..... 26 The very moment you separate body and spirit, you end up with a corpse. Separate faith and works and you get the same thing: a corpse.

Some Strategies that we have been pursuing as CofCQ

- Kingdom Access Points (KAPs) – encouraging and assisting every CofC presence in the community being a place where people can find love and care, and access to the Kingdom of God
- Mobilizing "the workers" by building commitment to vocation - Encouraging and equipping all Christians to be aware of God's calling on their life and to be the best they can be using their gifts in the world seven days a week –" the priesthood of all believers".
- Focusing first on individual, neighbourhood and community uplift rather than "running and planting services" *i.e. "being the light of Christ"*
- Strategic Action Leadership Teams (SALTs) – 6-8 passionate local leaders meeting regularly to work out how we might collectively bring more of the light of Christ in their community – formulating a Mission Action Strategy (MAS) to build missional engagement
- Mission Action Partners (MAPs) to help forward the strategy (MAS)
- Community Chaplains to provide love and care in their community, build engagement and foster new KAPs