

draw others, to realising that Jesus' ongoing mission is the centre." Through his work at the Sheffield Centre, Mr Lings has observed that a growing number of people are putting Jesus' mission at the centre by acting as missionaries and pioneers modelled on Jesus' life.

New communities of faith are being planted and fresh expressions of church are slowly emerging across England as a result. As pioneers, a few Christians have gone out, often in small teams, to be with non-churched and de-churched people. They have been prepared to die to their own preferences and to listen to the local culture and the gospel so that more people might meet Jesus. By attuning to the places, times and manner in which people meet, these groups are better at speaking and living the gospel with de-churched and non-churched people.

The fruit of such work, Mr Lings indicated was the development of 'mixed economy' church. In such a church, fresh and existing expressions of church are working together. Fresh expressions such as café churches, community churches, cell and network churches are reaching people otherwise untouched by existing expressions of church.

An Australian perspective was brought to the conference by Mr Keith Castle and Dr John Bellamy, from the National Church Life Survey team. Dr Bellamy suggested that Australian church attendance were only slightly behind England. Although recent surveys suggest that up to 20% of Australians attend regularly with another 20% on the fringe, these figures are inflated according to Dr Bellamy. Approximately 41% of Australians are de-churched while 19% have had no involvement whatsoever. Dr Bellamy suggested that, "we have a greater window of opportunity" to address these challenges but he cautioned that as the trends are happening much faster in Australia it may not remain open for long.

The conference was organised by Church Army Australia and co-sponsored by the NCLS and the Anglican General Synod. Baptists, Uniting Churches, Lutherans and a broad cross-section of Anglicans from NSW, ACT, Victoria and Queensland found the conference very beneficial.

Written comments from participants included these:

"Superb! Well run, nicely balanced...Material presented was of the highest quality and you are to be congratulated for providing this sort of invaluable insight to the Australian Church."

"Excellent!!! Very thought provoking...We must answer the right questions, in the right order, and correctly!"

"Good to have thoughts about cross-cultural mission at home being discussed...trinity in mission very important."

"Thank you for a terrific forum and inspirational input."

"Very helpful analysis of the four mission tribes. I think these fit the Australian scene."

"Absolutely timely. Thank you! Better than I could have hoped for!"

"Too many doughnuts for those of us with limited will power!"



PIONEER



NEWSLETTER OF THE CHURCH ARMY IN AUSTRALIA NO 62 SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2004

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What's UP?



I am writing to you from the Sacred Heart Retreat Centre in Melbourne where I am engaged in a training intensive called "Base Jumping". Church Army persons are learning how to form missional communities that will lead to the establishment of "Bases of Evangelism". These Bases will be on the cutting edge of a new wave of evangelism. They will lead to the establishment of fresh expression of church and aid in the revitalisation of existing expressions.

In this issue of Pioneer you will read about some of the exciting things taking place within Church Army. Our National Conference back in July was exhilarating with exceptional input from Rev. George Lings, director of The Sheffield Centre in the UK (www.encontersontheedge.org.uk). You will see that those sessions are now available to the wider public as a DVD package. In addition, there was a profound sense that God has a specific and exciting role for the Church Army to serve the Anglican Communion as "Spearhead". Of course George reminded us that the "Spearhead" is really no use at all unless it has the weight of the shaft of the spear behind it. For me, that image provides a good picture of the servant relationship we are seeking to have within the church and in particular with our bishops.

You will also read about the Mission-Shaped Church conference that Church Army co-sponsored with General Synod and National Church Life Survey. The comments at the end of the article (some of them from bishops) will give you a sense of the impact of that gathering. We were blessed to be able to serve and stimulate thinking, discussion and future planning.

I have been on the road quite extensively in the last three months seeking to learn how we can more effectively help our evangelists reach the communities in which God has placed them. In our first 70 years of ministry within Australia we have learned a lot. We are seeking to build on that knowledge and experience by integrating

the realities of our rapidly changing cultural context into our strategies. Unfortunately our church is declining, the gap is widening between what happens in our buildings on Sunday and how the average Aussie lives. The big picture is that God desperately loves lost people. Our role as the church is to reach out to them with Christ's love and help them find new life in Him and a place within a community of faith. Church Army is committed to that task. We appreciate your interest in our work, your partnership, your prayers, your giving.

In early October I am looking forward to being at General Synod. Church Army has the opportunity to participate in a presentation on Attendance and Mission. It should provide for some exciting interaction. Later that month I will be travelling to Nairobi for the International Church Army Leaders Conference. Church Army Africa is celebrating its 50th anniversary and we will join in on part of their Officers Conference marking that milestone. Internationally, Church Army is increasingly sharing resources and learning as evidenced by CA UK loaning us George Lings for two weeks in July.

Be encouraged as you read this issue of Pioneer. The Church Army may have turned 70 this year but she is not feeling or looking old. God is blowing fresh wind in our sails and it looks like being an exciting journey.

In His Grip and Grace,
Capt. Tim Scheuer

Yes! I will be your Partner in Evangelism

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"Base Jumping"

THIS ISSUE

- Planting A Revolution
- A Future Found
- New Resource Available

A Future Found

Uplifting, empowering and challenging is the way Nathan Donnelly, an associate evangelist from Tasmania, described the Church Army conference. The conference was a turning point for many as hope was stirred that the best days for Church Army are still to come.

Seventy officers, candidates, interested applicants, board members and their families laughed, prayed and froze together in the Blue Mountains during July. The Revd George Lings, Director of the Sheffield Centre UK, led a full and challenging program the core of which was how Church Army could assist Australian Anglicans to become a Mission-Shaped Church.

The future Church, according to Mr Lings, will need to be apostolic by intention and in shape. Such a Church will actively go out into all corners



of Australian society bearing the seeds of the gospel to plant new faith communities. These communities grow up within new cultures and regions, transforming them from the inside.

To be effective in this new world, evangelists will need "a new mindset" according to Mr Lings. Rather than solely going out to bring people back into the existing church the evangelist will increasingly need to act as a missionary. Recognizing how cultures differ and listening to God will be vital so that new churches can be formed within them. Journeying with God and people into the unknown to find and pioneer new forms of church will be essential.

"The Church in its mission is being moved on, from bouncing on springboards to riding surfboards" said Mr Lings. The shift, he explained, is like waiting and riding the wave rather than perfecting techniques and routines for a flawless dive. Like the surfer, the evangelist needs to "read the cultural context beneath you and discern what God the Spirit is doing in mission beyond you." By working with the wave, a sense of "adventure, freedom and wildness" is often found.

"It was great to see our organisation again as a body at the cutting edge, not just wishing we were," said Bruce Ollington, an officer and priest from Melbourne. Many others echoed these sentiments



Bruce Ollington shares his story



Tim Scheuer outlines the Church Army calling



George Lings talks of "Liquid Church"

as Cpts. Ron and Crystal Spindler did, "we feel like at long last there is a unified, positive vision for CA and beyond, we are glad to be a part [of it]."

Capt Tim Scheuer, cut a fine figure in the old military styled uniform as he delivered his vision of God's calling for Church Army. Such a vision is to embrace Church Army's calling as the 'Spearhead of the Church' once again. The core of this vision, he explained, would be building Bases of Evangelism. These bases would be "local communities of faith where the convictions and distinctives of Church Army are lived out intentionally."

Other elements of the vision included the development of a special training year for young adults interested in evangelism with Church Army and forming a research group modelled on the

Sheffield Centre to provide resources, advice and encouragement for experimental ministry. Indigenous ministry was also flagged as an area of future work along with sharpening the Society's participation in mission trips and intensive leadership training called "Base Jumping".

Singing love songs to strangers, blindfolded people eating 'dog' food and games of monkey chuck-up were laid on by the irrepressible minister of fun, the Revd Capt Dave Woodyard.

Officers also had the opportunity to renew their commissioning vows. The reactivation of the Revd Capt Graeme MacRobb's commission was very moving as was his prayer for each and every conference participant at the final Communion service.

The last word is best left with Ron, "just looking for the next wave."

New Resource Available Now! "The Shape of Things to Come" DVD set!!

The Rev. George Lings' insightful and inspirational presentations at the July Church Army Conference are now available as a DVD set. The pack contains 6 DVD's of George's presentations entitled "The Shape of Things to Come". In addition you will receive a bonus CD containing his notes, handouts and Powerpoint presentation. This resource is only available through Church Army Australia. To order just contact the National Office on 02 9635 6346. The cost is \$50.00 to collect or \$60.00 posted by mail.

The Church Army is a growing movement of pioneering evangelists who declare the good news of Jesus Christ in word and action so that many more people will follow Him and be established in healthy communities of faith.

Our dream is to become the "Spearhead of the Church" as we serve the Anglican Communion through evangelism, disciple making and church planting.



Planting a Revolution



"The Church is entering a Copernican revolution," said Revd George Lings, Director of the Sheffield Centre UK at the Mission-Shaped Church Conference held in Sydney on 17 July 2004. "Realising the centre is different, changes the inherent direction of the missionary and spiritual journey," said Mr Lings.

Nicholaus Copernicus, a Polish astronomer, turned our understanding of the universe right side up during the 16th Century by proposing that the sun

and not the Earth was the centre of the solar system. Copernicus' theory was accepted decades later after astronomers confirmed his calculations by careful observations.

Mr Lings argued that England was now a mission field in its own right and that Churches had to respond accordingly. Only 10% of the English population attend church regularly while 10% were on the fringe. Approximately 40% had some past involvement with the church but were no longer participating. Half of this de-churched

group stopped coming because they did not fit while the other half left because of hurt or disillusionment. Surprisingly, 40% of English people have never had any connection to church life whatsoever. This non-church group was growing rapidly as it consisted mainly of young adults. The effectiveness of the traditional 'come to us' approach by churches has clearly diminished.

Most evangelism, Mr Lings explained, targets people in the fringe or that are open to returning to church life, often by offering better worship. But this approach Mr Lings likened to "fishing in a shrinking pond." If the Church is going to reach those who have never had a connection with it then new approaches are needed.

The revolution, Mr Lings explained is that, "we are shifting away from thinking that the Church is the centre of life to which we

continued overleaf