



**dale, an ordinary guy, says
some extraordinary things**

WWW.IAGREEWITHDALE.COM

www.ccecyouth.com



**J-WALK ISSUE #005
I AGREE WITH DALE**

**INSIDE:
Transformers
Warhammer
Stale Popcorn
The Prosperity Gospel
Repent or Perish
DALE centre-fold
The Jesus Revolution**





J-walk is the monthly magazine of CCECYOUTH.

CCECYOUTH is run by Central Coast Evangelical Church.

CCECYOUTH is for year 7-12 high school students

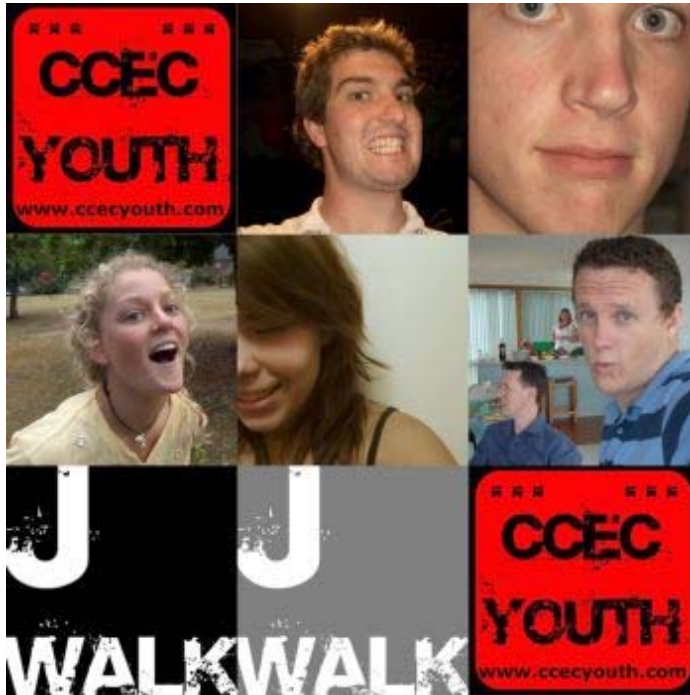
We meet on Friday nights from 7-930pm @ erina high school
Entry = \$5 (includes din)

GLADLY rejoice in Him.

We also have G-TEAMS - the aim of these is to GROW TOGETHER.

G-TEAMS are smaller groups where we dig even deeper into the Bible

Join us on Friday, or in a G-TEAM.



We exist to GLORIFY God in everything as we: GATHER to hear his word; GROW in godliness; GIVE in service of others; share the GOSPEL of Jesus' death & Resurrection; and

INFO:
www.ccecyouth.com
ccecyouth@gmail.com
office 0243672100
dave 0428-532-665

J-WALK ISSUE #005

There are some things that it doesn't matter whether you agree with them or not. If my favourite colour is blue—it doesn't really matter if you agree or not. If I believe that soccer is the only sport really worth watching or playing—again... it doesn't really matter if you agree or not.

HOWEVER—there are things where it does matter if you agree or disagree.

I might believe in gravity. You disagree with me. What happens when you step off the edge of a building? It doesn't matter how strongly you disbelieve in gravity—you will still hit the ground pretty fast!

This term we have been meeting an ordinary guy each week. Dale. Each week Dale says two different things. One of them (such as the use of floaties, skate-

boarding or air guitars) doesn't really matter. The other one does.

Each week we are playing a video of Dale doing some stuff and saying some things.

The things that matter are the things about Jesus. By the end of the term he will have said 7 insignificant things and 7 significant things about Jesus and how we ought to respond to him.

My hope is that each week you will agree with the claims he makes about Jesus. My hope is also that you will talk to your friends about the things on the videos, point them to the website (iagreewithdale.com) and bring them to youth group.

The Bible says that apart from Jesus we are lost. Do you agree? Jesus says that he has come to seek and to save the lost. Do you agree? Jesus died on the cross for

EDITORIAL

By Dave Miers

our sins. Do you agree? Jesus says that following him is radical. Do you agree?

As always, the aim of J-WALK is to 1) help you think about the world that you live in and 2) understand what it means to live in this world as a follower of Jesus.

It's a sweet issue. Love to hear your feedback. Have a sweet term. Keep trusting in Jesus.

dnm

TEAM J-WALK

- Alex Hartley
- Dave Miers
- Jackson Stace
- Josh Bones
- Nicole Maloney

J-WALK ISSUE #005

CONTENTS

- Repent or Perish 04
- Movie + Music Reviews 06
- Stale popcorn 08
- Warhammer 10
- DALE Poster 14
- Jesus Revolution 16
- A different Jesus 20
- Interview 26

Guests this issue:

- John Piper
- Andrew Heard
- Tim Baldwin

www.ccecyouth.com

REPENT
OR
PERISH

By
John Piper

John Piper is the Pastor of a church in walking distance from the Minneapolis bridge that collapsed this week. His blog post is insightful and prophetic. In it he reflects on a conversation with his 11 year old daughter and Jesus' warning from Luke 13:1-5. I'm with John Piper... I also need to "turn from the silly preoccupations of my life" and focus my mind and heart on Jesus: my only hope.

At about 6 PM tonight the bridge of Interstate 35W over the Mississippi River in Minneapolis collapsed. I am writing this about three hours after the bridge fell. The bridge is located within sight of Bethlehem Baptist Church. Most of us who minister at the church cross this bridge several times a week. At this point I don't know if any staff was on the bridge. Desiring God offices are about a mile from the bridge.

There are no firm facts at this point about the total number of injuries and fatalities. When we crossed the bridge Tuesday on our way out of town, there was extensive repair work happening on the surface of the bridge with single lane traffic. One speculates about the unusual stresses on the bridge with jackhammers and other surface replacement equipment. This was the fortieth anniversary of the bridge.

Tonight for our family devotions our appointed reading was Luke 13:1-9. It was not my choice. This is

surely no coincidence. O that all of the Twin Cities, in shock at this major calamity, would hear what Jesus has to say about it from Luke 13:1-5. People came to Jesus with heart-wrenching news about the slaughter of worshipers by Pilate. Here is what he said.

There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And he answered them, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

Jesus implies that those who brought him this news thought he would say that those who died, deserved to die, and that those who didn't die did not deserve to die. That is not what he said. He said, *everyone* deserves to die. And if you and I don't repent, we too will perish. This is a stunning response. It only makes sense from a view of reality that is radically oriented on God.

All of us have sinned against God, not just against man. This is an outrage ten thousand times worse than the collapse of the 35W bridge. That any human is breathing at this minute on

J-WALK ISSUE #005



this planet is sheer mercy from God. God makes the sun rise and the rain fall on those who do not treasure him above all else. He causes the heart to beat and the lungs to work for millions of people who deserve his wrath. This is a view of reality that desperately needs to be taught in our churches, so that we are prepared for the calamities of the world.

The meaning of the collapse of this bridge is that John Piper is a sinner and should repent or forfeit his life forever. That means I should turn from the silly preoccupations of my life and focus my mind's attention and my heart's affection on God and embrace Jesus Christ as my only hope for the forgiveness of my sins and for the hope of eternal life. That is God's message in the collapse of this bridge. That is his most merciful

www.ccecyouth.com

message: there is still time to turn from sin and unbelief and destruction for those of us who live. If we could see the eternal calamity from which he is offering escape we would hear this as the most precious message in the world.

We prayed during our family devotions. Talitha (11 years old) and Noel and I prayed earnestly for the families affected by the calamity and for the others in our city. Talitha prayed "Please don't let anyone blame God for this but give thanks that they were

saved." When I sat on her bed and tucked her in and blessed her and sang over her a few minutes ago, I said, "You know, Talitha, that was a good prayer, because when people 'blame' God for something, they are angry with him, and they are saying that he has done something wrong. That's what "blame" means: accuse somebody of wrongdoing. But you and I know that God did not do anything wrong. God always does what is wise. And you and I know that God could have held up that bridge with one hand." Talitha said, "With his pinky." "Yes," I said, "with his pinky. Which means that God had a purpose for not holding up that bridge, knowing all that would happen, and he is infinitely wise in all that he wills."

Talitha said, "Maybe he let it fall because he wanted all the people of Minneapolis to fear him." "Yes, Talitha," I said, "I am sure that is one of the reasons God let the bridge fall."

I sang to her the song I always sing,
Come rest your head and nestle gently
And do not fear the dark of night.
Almighty God keeps watch intently,

**continues
on p12**

MOVIE REVIEW:

Transformers
 Released 28th June 2007
 Shia LaBeouf
 Megan Fox
 Josh Duhamel



In the simplest of terms the best part about transformers is the huge robots that fight each other and end up destroying loads of stuff. The for the most part everyone is aware of the basic story of Transformers. In short it's a film about two races of robots the Autobots and the Decepticons who come to earth and end up in battle over its ultimate fate. Derived from the famous 80's cartoon series it was the dream of many young child to befriend a real transformer, or even be one themselves. Yet the closest fulfilment of this dream most likely resulted in laying on the ground pretending to be a carpet or having someone sit on us while we pretended to be a chair. While there isn't much depth the actual story, robots come, robots fight, robots win it's not the story which audiences are there for. Rather it's the culture which comes along which the Transformers ethos. Director Michael Bay, who previously worked on films such as Armageddon and Bad Boys isn't particularly recognised for his meaningful story lines so much as action sequences don't let this be a deterrent. There is just the right amount of action coupled within the original cheesy dialogue, of Optimus Prime in particular, which makes this movie a worthwhile activity. It is the typical battle for the fate of humanity we see so often, but looking more closely we can draw similarities to our own Christian lives. Like in Transformers the humans were helpless to the Decepticons weapons and tactics. Without the help of the Autobots it is likely they would have been ruled or ultimately destroyed by the Decpticons. We too are helpless without a relationship with God, yet this has been possible through Jesus death on the cross. We too would be living a life apart from God without this sacrifice, one which because of our sinful nature would lead us to eternal death. It is important in our Christian walk not to become apathetic and take Jesus death on the cross for granted. The grace we receive through the cross is something which we should be thankful for and reflect upon daily, as without it we would be spiritually dead.

4 j-walkies.

**MOVIE
 REVIEW**

By
 Alex Hartley



MUSIC REVIEW:

The Audreys
 Album: *Between last night and Us.* [2006]
 Taasha Coates (voice)
 Tristan Goodall (guitars, banjo)
 Mikey G (violin), Lyndon Gray (bass)
 Toby Lang (drums).

If the Audreys were a colour it would be sepia, the colour of olden day photos with curling edges. This in fact is the impression of their album *Between Last Night and Us*, beginning with the album cover features a man and a woman dressed in period clothing. Their music is a collection of genres, mainly comprising of folk and a bluegrass feel which is heightened with the use of the banjo. Taasha Coates on vocals is amazing creating a haunting atmosphere starting with the first track titled *You and Steve* McQueen and ending with *Don't Change*. The unusual title and references within the first track led to the question who is Steve McQueen, who I inturn Googled and discovered he was an actor, one nicknamed the 'king of cool' in the 1970's, just a little bit of trivia. Each song deals with something different, with fame and talent, being lost in a crowd and wanting to run away. Each song speaks to a different aspect we're sure to have faced in our own lives something we may struggle within our own circle of friends or just something which challenges our own sense of self. So often we are putting problems of life before God. We make idols of fame, of relationships, money anything which takes us away from putting God first in our lives. If in this situation be encouraged to read your bible and pray continuously as we should be in the habit of doing. Bring any problems before God, so that you may be able to best serve and glorify him in everything.

4 j-walkies.

**MUSIC
 REVIEW**

By
 Alex Hartley

STALE POP CORN

By
Jackson Stone



I take long strides to walk quickly through the entrance of Hoyts at Erina. There are so many dangers standing out the front, particularly the people who like to congregate and discuss loudly and with little regard for those around them about the movie I am there to see that they have just seen (the truth is in two hours I will be that person). It also seems to be the chosen place of public break-ups- why be subtle when you can scream your 14yr old lungs out at your 14yr old ex-boyfriend in front of at least 15 complete strangers?

I scan the carpet to avoid chewing gum as I walk to the ticket register (which is now the candy bar because someone has finally figured out that they can halve their wage cost by doing this)

I wait in line for about 3.6 minutes. Not the longest line I've had to wait in but it's not the shortest.

I request my purchase of a movie ticket- "adult for transformers please"

I decline the offer for a popcorn and coke combo for \$11.95 (because of course I have been here before and I know not to get ripped off from the cinema)

I make the mistake of indicating that maaaybeeee a small drink would be nice.

I agree to a medium coke for an extra 60 cents (whats 60 cents?)

I agree to a small popcorn which isn't too much.

I then agree to a further up-sizing to a large coke

I am then told that for an extra \$1 I can get my coke in a limited edition bottle which looks like and oversized lamp thingy that genie's pop out of.

I agree to this.

I am then told that what I have agreed to costs more than the original \$11.95 combo I was offered and if I would like to change my mind but still get the novelty bottle.

I say yes.

I swipe my card through eftpos, take my ticket and goods, hang my head in shame and walk away- grateful that the wonder of eftpos spares me the distress of physically seeing how much money I have just spent.

I realise I need to use the toilet and yet have nowhere to place my popcorn and coke. Luckily within the men's bathroom, there is a convenient shelf above the basins for me to place my food. I try to avoid the wet patches and assorted hairs that adorn this shelf.

I hand over my ticket to be ripped in half and am told by the ticket girl that she hopes I enjoy the movie. My enlightened spirits are soon crushed when she says this to the next person and I realise that instead of taking an interest in my life, she is simply doing her job.

As I walk out of the movie after its finished I am upset because it wasn't as good as the book, or it wasn't as good as I was told, or it wasn't as good as the first one, or the cartoon series was better or Johnny Depp just wasn't as funny.

I realise with annoyance I
www.ccecyouth.com

have left my \$1 novelty bottle behind. Its too late to go back now...isn't it?

I walk past the giant Harry Potter rectangular prisms that advertise the upcoming movie. I look around and realise I could easily take one of them with me straight out of the cinema and into the car. But I can't- Christians don't steal, not even large cardboard replica's of Daniel Radcliffe.

I walk outside into the frosty 11.30pm air and witness another public break-up. Different faces- same words.

I get into my car and drive home, wondering as I drive through an empty Erina Fair carpark if a man in a black coat with a fishing hook will appear from behind one of the pylons.

I've been to the movies five times in the past week. In fact, I've been 10 times in the past month.

I have spent at least \$150 on Blades of Glory (3 times), Harry Potter (2 times), Transformers, Knocked Up, Shrek 3, Pirates of the Caribbean and goodness knows what else.

And I've become a bit tired of it. In fact I've decided that the movies is an unhealthy place to go. If nothing else it smells. Read a book instead. Read the bible. Talk with your friends.

That's what I'm going to do anyway.

A World Without Meaning

By
Josh Bones



Picture a sprawling universe composed of millions upon millions of worlds, upon which countless humanity's billions constantly struggle to survive. It is not enough to simply provide food and shelter for these poor ingrates, but constant attacks from hostile aliens must be fended off, not to mention the lethal ecology of many of the worlds themselves. Each day many worlds fall, millions die, and the domain of humanity slowly but surely shrinks as countless soldiers and civilians lay down their lives in a fruitless struggle to protect their species. As all this occurs, entombed deep within the incredible life support machine larger than the pyramids of old known as the golden throne, deeps within the bowels of ancient Terra, sits the Emperor of all humanity, who's incredible physic

strength is all that holds this fragile conglomerate together. In the grim darkness of the far future, there is only war...

By now some of you will have picked up that I'm talking about the immensely popular tabletop battle game, Warhammer 40,000. For those of you who are wondering if I've (finally) flipped my lid, Warhammer is a game system that allows the players to experience the bloody battles of a fictional far future where many alien species fight humanity for survival. Personally I love the game and the activities associated with it such as collecting, assembling and painting the models which represent my army. However as I have reflected on the dark future world in which the game is set, I've come to some serious realisa-

tions, hard as that is to believe.

Most strikingly, it's made me realise the hopelessness of a world without God. While the circumstances of the general populace as dictated by the gaming world are fictitious, there have been many situations in our history where people have suffered lives just as difficult as those fictional ones in the game. Think of the plight of the African slaves in colonial America, or the Jews in Nazi Germany or more recently the Iraqi civilians, many who must live in constant fear that one day they will walk around a corner and be hit without warning by a stray bullet. Imagine yourself in those situations suffering, struggling to survive, how would you cope mentally with such trying circumstances? What would make you keep going each day if you lived in such fear?

As Christians the answer is obvious - our God and our Lord and saviour Jesus the Christ, but imagine for a moment if there were no God. What would make life worth living? Mere survival? Revenge? Love? Ultimately all these different reasons for living would have the same end sooner or later: death, eternal and final. Even in a world that was comfortable and easy, anything you lived for would have the same end result. A world without God is a world of death, nothing more, and nothing less. This is the world that most people live in today.

Whether or not they realise it yet, ultimately everyone will die and face judgment, the bible is extremely clear on that (Heb 9:27), and there is only one way to avoid a verdict of guilty. One of the best known bible verses, John 3:16, says

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

The flip side of this is that anyone who doesn't believe will perish and won't receive eternal life. Rich or poor, good or bad, famous or infamous, everyone has to make the same choice. What is incredibly sad about this though is that many people don't even consciously realize that they have a choice to make! We who do know, and have chosen to live for God, are unfortunately a relative minority in a world that hates God. We have been chosen by the Lord of the universe to serve him, but that's not where our privilege and responsibility ends. As those who are aware of the real purpose of life, we are charged with an incredibly special duty, God has declared in his word that he will use us to spread the good news of his son's Lordship to the ends of the earth.

The world of Warhammer is a bleak, hopeless place; unfortunately our world is not much better. Non Christians in this world are

all heading for the same end result, and the only thing that can change that is if they choose to serve the true God of the universe instead of themselves. Praise the Lord that he has given us the privilege of sharing his incredible good news with those who don't yet know it! For if we don't tell them, then who will?

continued
from p7

And guards your life with all his might. Doubt not his love, nor power to keep, He never fails, nor does he sleep.

I said, "You know, Talitha, that is true whether you die in a bridge collapse, or in a car accident, or from cancer, or terrorism, or old age. God always keeps you, even when you die. So you don't need to be afraid, do you." "No," she shook her head. I leaned down and kissed her. "Good night. I love you."

Tonight across the Twin Cities families are wondering if they will ever kiss a loved one good night again. Some will not. I am praying that they will find Jesus Christ to be their Rock and Refuge in these agonizing hours of uncertainty and even loss.

The word "bridge" does not occur in the Bible. There may be two reasons. One is that God doesn't build bridges, he divides seas. The other is that usually his people must pass through the deadly currents of suffering and death, not simply ride over them. "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you" (Isaiah 43:2). They may drown you. But I will be with you in life and death.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these

things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life . . . will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35-38)

Killed all day long. But not separated from Christ. We go *through* the river. Not over it. He went before us, crucified. He came out on the other side. He knows the way through. With him we will make it. That is the message we have for the precious sinners in the Twin Cities. He died for your sins. He rose again. He saves all who trust him. We die, but because of him, we do not die.

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die." (John 11:25)

Talitha is sleeping now. But one day she will die. I teach her this. I will not always be there to bless her. But Jesus is alive and is the same yesterday today and forever. He will be with her because she trusts him. And she will make it through the river.

Weeping with those who weep, and those who should,

Pastor John

Psalm 71:20 You who have made me see many troubles and calamities will revive me again.

By John Piper. © Desiring God. Website: www.desiringGod.org Email: mail@desiringGod.org

J-WALK ISSUE #005

www.ccecyouth.com



**coast youth REVOLUTION conference
Fri 7 – Sat 8 September 2007**

**Paul Dale, Andrew Heard, Dave Miers
REVIVE, Running Home**

**WWW.CYREVOLUTION.COM
MYSFACE.COM/CYREVOLUTION**

More details VERY soon...



**I AGREE
WITH
DALE.COM**

JESUS REVOL UTION

By
Tim Baldwin



It all starts in your heart

I love a good revolution – big groups of people full of passion and purpose.

Have you heard about any of the crazy youth movements that have happened over the years? There was a Jesus movement that started in the 70's in America where thousands of young people turned to Jesus and started up new churches all over the country. It got on the front cover of Time magazine which showed thousands of youth going down to the river at a festival to be baptised.

I've always wanted to be part of a Jesus revolution that starts with a small group of young people but grows to impact a whole city. How insane would it be to see so many people turning to Jesus on the coast that our churches had to meet at Blue Tongue stadium every-week just to fit everyone in.

Bring it on I say !

But how could we start a revolution like this?

Guess what - It starts with you !

First you need to let Jesus start the revolution in *your* heart. But don't worry he's had some experience.

God said to his people back in the olden days "I will give you a new heart" (Ez 36:26) His plan was to change them by taking out their old, cold, stoney hearts and replacing them with hearts that went after him.

God is still in the business of changing hearts – he loves a good heart transplant!

I'm old enough to remember the first person to ever have a heart transplant that worked. She was a 14yr old girl named Fiona Coote and my Dad explained to me how it all worked.

"well son...they basically just rip your chest open - take your heart out and put someone else's heart back in".

I remember thinking – "gee -

J-WALK ISSUE #005

radical operation - you'd wanna make sure you really needed it hey".

likewise – God wouldn't be offering us a spiritual heart transplant if we didn't really need one. But the truth is – all our hearts are diseased and cold towards God – we were born like this and the disease is called sin. These sinful hearts of ours will drag us all the way to hell if we don't have them removed and replaced with new hearts – the spirit of Jesus.

This transplant is a very costly process for God – Jesus had to go to the cross and die to allow this heart exchange to happen. But it's gotta be the best deal you'll ever hear about – we get to exchange our sinful, cold, hard, diseased hearts for perfectly righteous, warm, healthy hearts - free of charge.

Sounds too good to be true doesn't it? – there must be fine print somewhere! No fine print - just a radical new life!

Here's what to expect if you get a Jesus heart transplant; It totally changes the way you see everything!

You'll see God differently No longer will you see God as a grumpy old man in the sky with a beard and a long white dress who spends all his time trying to stop us having fun.

No, instead you'll see he's the God who knows us a loves us enough to get off his throne and come to us in the person the son - becoming the fearless man Jesus to live, die and rise and give us a way back to him with brand new hearts.

You'll see the central coast differently No longer will you see a cool place

www.ccecyouth.com

full of cool people living cool lives partying hard.

No, instead you'll see hundreds of thousands of people, young and old, desprately bored and searching for more meaning in their lives. There are so many different forms of spiritually, sports and social clubs but what people really need is Jesus. The truth is - there are only two types of people on the central coast – those who have new hearts and those who don't – and it makes all the difference where you spend eternity.

You'll see yourself differently No longer will you think that world revolves around you. You will realise that you are not the centre of the universe and that your dreams, your desires and your happiness are not what makes the world go round.

No, instead you'll see that this world revolves around Jesus. He is at the centre of the universe and rules over the whole world and everything in it – including the central coast and YOU!

It's all about Jesus – he made you, he sustains you and you exist for him and his fame alone.

Live for Jesus today – let him start a revolution in your heart!

Cheers
Tim Baldwin

Tim spoke at our wild and wet COASTYOUTH REVOLUTION during term 2. Go listen to the POCAST of his talk at: [cyREVOLUTION.com](http://www.ccecyouth.com)

Tim has just started a fresh style of church with CCEC. Pray for him and his family and their new community.

Check them at www.saturdayEV.com

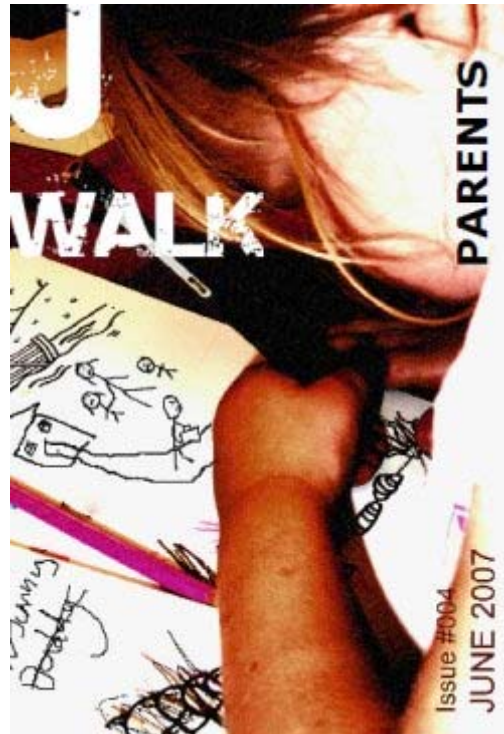
If this is your first issue of J-walk, make sure you check out the last issue.

**Issue #004
THE PARENTS ISSUE**

We've had lots of great feedback about this issue from CCEC YOUTH, Parents and beyond. In our online poll over the last 2 months we asked which parent(s) you live with.

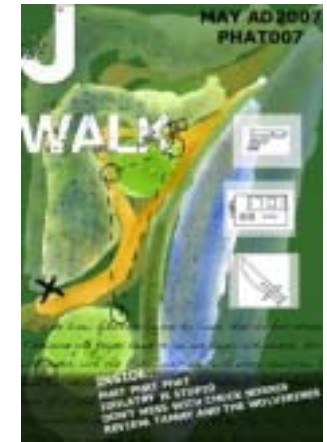
67% of you said you live with your Mum + Dad. This statistic is higher than the rest of the population. That's good. But... it does mean that there are 33% of us who are in a different situation.

Keep praying for friends who are dealing with divorce, separation, death, difficulties and tough times with their parents.



**DOWNLOAD THE FIRST FOUR ISSUES
OF J-WALK FROM:**

J-WALK.CCECYOUTH.COM



A Different JESUS

...The Prosperity Gospel

By
Andrew Heard



In some Christian circles at the moment another gospel is making itself known. It looks a lot like the gospel that we received—the gospel of Jesus Christ who died and rose again to bring us reconciliation with God—but it has an emphasis upon physical healing, material blessing and success that is very different from traditional evangelicalism. The difference doesn't lie in the conviction that God can and does bless his people with physical healing or material prosperity as this has always been accepted as biblical; the difference lies in the conviction that Christians *ought* to expect God to bless them physically and materially here and now.

This is what many now call the prosperity gospel. It teaches that Christ's death has not only overcome the

curse laid upon us at the Fall (Gal 3:10-13), it has also overcome the *effects* of this curse—for example, sickness and poverty (cf. Deut 28:15-68) in this age. So Christians ought to expect, in this age, not only forgiveness of their sins but also—in equal measure and with the same certainty—health and wealth. If they live in sickness and poverty, they have failed to exercise true faith in God. For proponents of the prosperity gospel, this would be as offensive as a Christian continuing to live in sin: it dishonours the Christ who died that we might be healthy and rich.

It is not difficult to find these convictions expressed by prominent teachers today. Passages such as

J-WALK ISSUE #005

Joshua 1:8, Psalms 34:10, 35:27 and 37:25, Job 36:11, Mark 10:29-30, 2 Corinthians 8:9 and 3 John 2 are regularly used to support these views—usually without much regard for context. An older example is seen in the writings of Kenneth Copeland: "You are an heir to the blessing which God gave to Abraham. This blessing, found in the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy, covers every area of your existence: spirit, soul, body, financially, and socially." Elsewhere he says, "[H]ealing is just as much a part of the plan of redemption as salvation, the Holy Spirit and heaven as your eternal home". Jerry Savelle, an American televangelist once associated with Copeland, agrees: "Not only is it God's will to heal, it is God's will to heal all! Satan is the author of sickness and disease. By the authority of His Word, God has made provision for our healing. It is not the will of God that anyone be sick with any sickness or disease or pain whatsoever—from hangnails to tuberculosis!"

The prosperity gospel has also been taught in Australia. Brian Houston, senior pastor of Hillsong Church in Sydney, has written, "the Scriptures ... [are] full of promises of prosperity ... Is it God's will for you to prosper? ... the answer is undoubtedly YES"

There is no doubt he meant material prosperity, given the book's premise:

If you and I can change our thinking and develop a healthy attitude toward money, I believe we can all

www.ccecyouth.com

walk in the blessing and prosperity that God intends for us. We will never have a problem with money again.

Brian's words highlight another aspect of the thinking that drives the prosperity gospel. Many of its teachers believe that Christians don't walk in the prosperity that has been promised because they fail to step out in faith, and name and claim what is theirs by right, or they fail to live according to the 'rules' of prosperity found in Scripture. When Christians pray, they must pray *believing* that what they are asking for is theirs. Prayers that include the words "If it is your will" are faithless prayers and can't expect blessing. After praying for blessing, Christians must then follow this up with 'positive confession', thanking God for all that he has given them. Even if sickness or financial stress remain, the believer must transcend these things and rest secure in the promises of God and his word. Giving is also essential: on the basis of passages like Mark 10, Kenneth Copeland preaches, "Do you want a hundredfold return on your money? Give and let God multiply it back to you."

This is not to say that preachers of the prosperity gospel are seeking to promote crass selfishness (although some of them do). Houston and others rightly emphasize the need to be generous with our prosperity. They insist that God prospers us *so that* we might be generous. Gloria Copeland, for example, writes, "Don't just believe God to meet your needs. Believe Him for a sur-

plus of prosperity so that you can help others”, and Houston has said, “When a person understands that the resource that’s in our lives is about the purpose of God, it releases you to believe God to resource your life”.

As commendable as this is (and in its best expressions it is very commendable), the foundation it is built on—false expectations of God’s promises for prosperity—make the entire package wrong. The prosperity gospel not only misuses the Bible, it seriously misrepresents Christ. This is why a number of leading Bible scholars and pastors, including John Stott, have declared it to be a ‘different gospel’—not because it denies fundamental biblical teachings but because it *adds* false and misleading doctrines to them.

There are a number of approaches I could take to demonstrate this point. One way would be to examine each of the proof texts to determine whether they have been exegeted correctly. Another approach would be to consider the pastoral impact of this theology and the damage it does. But none of these take us to the core problem—the problem that makes the error so serious. We need to consider this gospel in light of the cross, and one good place to do this is Paul’s correspondence with the Corinthians.

The Corinthian church was full of problems—not the least of which was immaturity (1 Cor 3:1) which led them to cling to worldly ways and ideals, despite the blessings they had received in

Christ. Paul’s deep concern for this church led him to write at least four letters, the second and fourth of which are our 1 and 2 Corinthians. In these letters, it is possible to discern a progression: in his first letter, he writes with great warmth and tenderness, naming them as “saints” of the “church of God” (1 Cor 1:2). But by his fourth letter (2 Corinthians), the problems have grown so serious, he finishes his letter by urging them to “[e]xamine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith” (2 Cor 13:5). What has given rise to this concern? They appear to be on the path of accepting “another Jesus than the one [Paul] proclaimed” and therefore “a different gospel” to the one they had originally accepted (2 Cor 11:4).

In context, it seems that new teachers or “super-apostles” (2 Cor 11:5, 12:11) were now ministering in the church, and their style was very different to Paul’s. He describes them as “false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ” (2 Cor 11:13) because they brought a different gospel and a different Jesus.

How was their gospel different? Some have suggested it was a heresy similar to that of the Galatians. However evidence for a works theology is slight and subtle. The visible and dominant issue is what has been called ‘triumphalism’: these new teachers brought a

‘gospel’ and a ‘Jesus’ of power and glory (triumph) without weakness and shame, and they had brought them to a congregation already enamoured of such things (cf. 1 Cor 4:8-10).

It wasn’t long before the Corinthians were led to believe that being in touch with Jesus would lead to victory, power and success (all defined in worldly terms). The new teachers showed evidence of this themselves: they came with letters of recommendation (2 Cor 3:1), they had the right background, they were impressive speakers, and they performed signs and



wonders to support their teachings (cf. Paul’s critique in 2 Corinthians 12:11-13).

By comparison, Paul was regarded as second-rate. He didn’t march into town and start mega churches; on the contrary, he was run out of most of them. He wrote decent letters but he wasn’t a trained speaker, and he wasn’t very impressive in person (2 Cor 10:10). He got sick and he suffered (2 Cor 11:24-12:10). The Corinthian attitude towards Paul began to cool, and the church became in danger of not only leaving Paul behind but also leaving

the one he pointed to behind.

How did Paul combat this problem? He taught the Corinthians about the true Jesus, the ministry of the cross and his own ministry. Jesus didn’t walk in triumph according to the standards of the world. He suffered and was crucified. Therefore a true apostle doesn’t live triumphantly (according to worldly standards). Instead, true power and true wisdom are found in weakness. This is why Paul reminds them of the very beginning of his ministry among them when he focused on the cross (1 Cor 2:2). He wanted the Corinthians to know that God’s ways are not man’s ways, and that God’s power is seen in weakness—particularly in the humiliation of the cross (1 Cor 1:18). Jews thought that miraculous signs were evidence that a person was in touch with the powerful God, and Greeks thought sophisticated rhetoric was proof of the divine, but Paul preached Christ crucified, “a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles” (1 Cor 1:22-24). But for those who have the Spirit, it becomes miraculously clear that this is where true power and true wisdom are found (1 Cor 1:24 cf. 2:9-13).

Paul was once no different from the Corinthians. Before his conversion, he judged Christ by worldly standards—“according to the flesh” (2 Cor 5:16). Like other first-century Jews, Paul thought that Jesus was an impostor because he didn’t come at the head of a great army—the triumphant Messiah (cf. Psalm 2). But when Paul’s eyes were opened by the

Spirit, he saw Jesus in all his glory. He saw that Christ's weakness was actually his strength and wisdom (1 Cor 1:25). He saw too that following Christ would also mean suffering (Acts 9:16). For Paul, true spiritual power is found in what the world regards as weakness. So he says,

Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Cor 12:9-10)

This was a great rebuke to the Corinthians and the false apostles. Paul was saying that in the ministry of the weak, God shows his true power. Conversion, maturity and church growth all demonstrate the true power of God because nothing in the clay vessels God uses can explain the outcomes (2 Cor 4:7ff). The growth of the Corinthian church, for example, was clear testimony to the power of God because it be-



gan from news about a crucified Messiah, declared through a minister as weak and nervous as Paul (1 Cor 2:3-5). Paul was so confident that God would bless his 'weak' words that he was never tempted to spice them up or play games; he proclaimed them without adornment (2 Cor 4:2).

At this point the seriousness

of the error Paul was combating needs to be highlighted. The Corinthians were in danger of making exactly the same mistake Paul and his Jewish contemporaries made about Jesus. By focusing on the *triumphalistic* messiah the Jews were completely uninterested in the *true* messiah when he came – the suffering one. The Corinthians, in embracing a triumphalistic Christian life, were in danger of recasting Jesus as a triumphalistic messiah and so effectively following a new Jesus (2 Cor 11:3, 4). This was concretely evidence in that they were growing cold towards the true messiah's apostle (2 Cor 1:1).

This highlights a very important principle: we are what we follow. The life of Christ and the shape of Christian ministry are intimately tied together. This is just what Jesus taught in Mark 8:34: "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me". If you follow the crucified Messiah, you must be prepared to go the way

the Messiah went—along the road of rejection, suffering and death. In fact, we are only "fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him" (Rom 8:17).

As noted at the outset, the problems at Corinth weren't

identical to the modern prosperity gospel. But in many modern manifestations of it, it's clear this gospel has sprung from the same root. It isn't just that future blessing has been mistakenly assumed to be ours now; it's that the nature of the Christian life and the nature of Christ himself have been profoundly skewed. For prosperity gospel teachers, Christian suffering is out; triumph and worldly success are in. We ought to expect victory in our finances, victory over sickness, and power to march through life successfully. We are encouraged not to pray like older faithless Christians but instead to pray with power and claim our requests now. Triumph, success and prosperity will be the evidence that we are in touch with the 'powerful' Jesus. Our churches ought to demonstrate this same power: if we build 'successful' churches (large and prosperous ones), the world will be won over by how impressive they (and therefore we) are. Our ministers should be powerful and influential. If we dress like we are a success, success will follow. None of this is very different from the 'theology of glory' Luther railed against in the medieval church; it has just reasserted itself in a modern guise.

Some of the leaders who teach the prosperity gospel have actually explicitly reshaped Jesus. We are now told that he was, in fact, wealthy (we are told this is evidenced by the fact that his robe was seamless). We are therefore to live like he lived—in wealth. But other

www.ccecyouth.com

teachers aren't so obvious in their reshaping of Jesus. They make little mention of him. Even so, the life and ministry they promise Jesus' followers is so at odds with the life and ministry of the true Jesus, it will inevitably cause many to imagine a different Jesus to the Jesus revealed to us in the Bible.

Certainly the prosperity gospel is teaching a whole generation of young Christians to measure their leaders by the same standards the super-apostles measured Paul. As a result, like the Corinthians, many modern church-goers are rejecting humble, faithful, godly servants of Christ for the super version of the gospel which is really no gospel at all.

But the key to spiritual success will not be found in following a different Jesus. The key to spiritual success is utter dependence on the God the Apostle Paul followed. We don't need more positivism. More and more the church is depending on lighting, amplification, looks, emotionalism, reward, hype and appeals to selfishness to increase in number and influence. But we must not be blinded by such worldly ways of thinking. These churches may look like they are in touch with the power of God, but their unreadiness to proclaim the offensive message of the cross, to condemn materialism and greed, and to call people to stand with the crucified one (even if it won't bring any earthly rewards) is really spiritual faithlessness to the true gospel.

Our lives and ministries should be shaped by the sav-

our we follow: we are to walk the way he walked. This doesn't mean delighting in poor lighting, bad music, boring preaching and lack of emotion; rather we should place our confidence where it ought to be—in the power of the cross and the glory of the crucified one. If we get the Christian life wrong, it's because we have a wrong understanding of the true gospel of the true Jesus. We need more leaders who truly believe that God is powerful to save through the foolishness of the cross—leaders who won't be shaped by modern skepticism and led to despair—leaders who will faithfully, urgently and persistently and unashamedly preach his powerful gospel. The irony here is that preachers like this will be confident, courageous and *spiritually* powerful, even though they may not look this way in the eyes of the world.

Andrew Heard is the Senior Pastor of CCEC.

Download full version with footnotes from www.ccec.com.au



(pic: Daisy & Francesca looking all 80's at phat 2007!)

Interview With Daisy

By
Alex Hartley

birthday I bid on like 20 badges for a gift, they had like trap door, nightmare before Christmas, gargoyles and corpse bride on them. They were kind of rad.

1. Where were you on July 4, 2007? I was at home in my P.Js till like 3 and the only reason I decided to get dressed was because some gas and electricity people came doorknocking and I looked so lazy, heh heh

2. What does your dad do for a living? Something all computery and stuff

3. What's your favourite memory from last weekend? Going to finding nemo on ice and making up a theme song for nemo, well it's not like it has one.

4. What did you dream last night? I think it was about work, and then it changed to walking to school.

5. How long have you been a Christian? About 4 months.

6. What side of the bed do you sleep on? The right, and real close to the edge too, lol

7. What is your favourite frozen treat? Frozen grapes are incredibly awesome!! They have the consistency of sorbet and you're like mmmmmmm, grape sorbet, lol

8. What do you smell like right now? Daisy by Daisy, hahaha, I smell like me, plus a bit of mango hair gel.

9. Have you ever bid for something on eBay? For a friend's

10. Do you ever feel guilty after eating meat?

Yeah, I kinda switch between being a vegetarian and being a meat eater, but you have to kinda switch off from thinking, aww poor buttercup, and just be like so this grew in the ground *cough cough*.

11. Do you tend to rip the paper off water bottles? Yeah if I get bored, and I bite the edges all around the bottom too

12. Why are you a Christian? Y'know, I don't actually have one straight answer for that. There's like a million different reasons, and each reason branches off into another and another, its like this giant family tree, but not..... but I guess what it kinda comes down to is the fact that God made this place and made us and He sent His own Son to die for us, to take all our sin upon Him, and that is truly amazing, that someone loves us so deeply that they would do that.

13. What would you say to a friend if you wanted to tell them about Jesus? That Jesus died to save us, and he is our salvation and that by accepting Jesus we can be closer to God

14. What are you looking forward to most about growing up and being a Christian? I feel bad saying this but i seriously don't know. I come from a non-Christian family so I don't know what to expect, I'm just taking it a step at a time. I

J-WALK ISSUE #005

NEXT MONTH IN J-WALK:

>> DEAR DOUG AND/
OR DEBBIE

>> TOP TEN

>> REVIEWS

>> PICTURES

>> INTERVIEWS

>> GOING GLOBAL—
INDIA—PART 2

>> HARRY POTTER



DOWNLOAD ME ONLINE
IN FULL COLOUR

www.ccecyouth.com

J-WALK ONLINE POLL

LAST MONTH—JUNE/JULY

I LIVE WITH MY...

67% DAD AND MUM

11% MUM

3% DAD

9% MUM + STEP DAD

5% DAD + STEP MUM

2% ADOPTED OR FOSTER

3% OTHER FAMILY

THIS MONTH—AUGUST

What do you think of Harry Potter?

A) Best series of 7 fiction books ever

B) It's okay

C) Christians shouldn't read it

D) I like Harry Kewell better

Go and vote now on
www.ccecyouth.com