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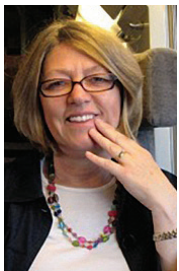
'So that in every way we
might make the teaching
about God our Savior
attractive.'

Titus 2:10

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"PLEASE LORD, NOT A GRUMPY OLD WOMAN!"

Alison Blake



THE BRITISH TV SERIES and stage show *Grumpy Old Women*—do you know it?

A cast of middle aged or older actresses, writers and media personalities rant, rail and rave about everything and anything that irritates them—men, the world, other women, work and their own

advancing age. I find myself simultaneously cringing and saying "I get you! I'm on the same page!".

Living on the other side of 55 years of age I'm realising just how easy it is for a committed Christian woman, to morph into a Grumpy Old Woman, a "GOW". It might be amusing for a while, but over time being a GOW is miserable—for her and for everyone around her. More seriously, it's not God-glorifying. It's insulting to God's work of re-creation in us, through Christ. As we grow, we're to also be growing in purity, humility, gentleness and patience—not putting on more anger, greed, malice and bitterness. God sets the dress code for the woman of God, at every age.

So here's a few thoughts and strategies for how I'm trying to avoid becoming a GOW.

- I'm praying Colossians 1:9-14, asking God to renew my mind and transform my life now, so I'll live a life worthy of Him, fully pleasing to him, in the season ahead.
- I'm memorising 1 Peter 1:3-9. I don't want to forget that, in Christ, I have a living hope, a glorious salvation and an unfailing inheritance. In God's providence, every grief and

trial refines my faith, and that's a precious thing. As my body and strength fails, I still want my life to be shaped by God and his glory, rather than a bucket list of perpetual vacations, "me-time" and self-indulgence.

- The life transforming reality of the cross, eternity or God's judgement will never feature amongst the tsunami of advice out there telling baby boomers how to squeeze the most out of life.

Far better to know deeply, from the Scriptures, what a cross shaped life looks like in

As we grow, we're to also be growing in purity, humility, gentleness and patience—not putting on more anger, greed, malice and bitterness.

this season of life, and to find joy and contentment in that.

- The struggles of faith and godliness that tripped us up when we're 28 and 48 will most likely still be a challenge for us when we're 68 and 88, but sadly seem to be accentuated by age. So I want to be serious now about putting those sins to death, not using age or poor health as an excuse for tolerating them.

In what ways do you see yourself growing in grumpiness? What are you doing now to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour"?

(Yes, there's also a *Grumpy Old Men* TV series, but I'll leave the Christian men to consider how not to be GOMs!) ☺

MERE PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY: HOW SINGING SOLA RENEWS BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION (AND THEOLOGY)

Ed Loane



FROM AUGUST 7 TO 14 the faculty and students of Moore College, along with any interested guests, were treated to a stimulating and enjoyable series of lectures by Prof. Kevin Vanhoozer, the Research Professor of Systematic Theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Illinois, USA. The aim of the lectures was to retrieve the Reformation *solas* in order to counter that tendency of Protestant hermeneutics and ecclesiology to continually divide into separate groups.

Vanhoozer began by acknowledging a common critique of Protestant Christianity: that the principle of *sola scriptura* has led to the disturbing reality of proliferating doctrinal differences. This has led to another perceived weakness: that the stance inevitably results in schism. The present day reality of over 38,000 Protestant denominations worldwide may be used as evidence for this critique. Indeed, it is very difficult to discuss 'the Protestant position' on a theological issue because there is such a wide variety of positions. Perhaps the Reformation notion of Christians being able to read the Bible for themselves really is a dangerous and unhelpful idea! Vanhoozer certainly pressed home the seriousness of this critique.

The method of approach in answering these criticisms was to look carefully at each of the reformation *solas* and offer a constructive theology in order to build upon them. In each of the five morning lectures Vanhoozer used the method of, firstly, exploring what the reformers had said. He then discussed the issues that they were reacting against and their twenty-first century manifestations. From this point Vanhoozer attempted a constructive retrieval of the reformed theology and he concluded with a discussion of how this doctrine helped answer the question of who has the authority to interpret Scripture. This was one of the key points that he was attempting to establish, if

there is an interpretative authority, who authorises the authority?

An interesting line of argument that Vanhoozer continued to execute was the connection of teleology with ecclesiology. He maintained that the material principle of Protestantism is our share in Christ's death, resurrection and ascension by grace through faith. Moreover, the formal principle of Protestantism is the supreme authority of scripture. But he also claimed that to retrieve the gospel we have to retrieve the church because it is not only an implication of the gospel, but it is also the God-given place where the gospel is grasped, celebrated, understood and enacted. In other words, of vital importance for Vanhoozer is the need to retrieve and cherish the Protestant notion of the priesthood of all believers.

Did Vanhoozer rescue Protestantism from the charge of unleashing interpretive anarchy on the world? Was he able to save our tradition from the charge of hermeneutical recklessness and negligence of tradition? Well, all his lectures are available on the Moore College website so I encourage you to listen for yourself. You will certainly benefit from hearing a penetrating and insightful theologian wrestle with some big issues surrounding biblical interpretation and ecclesiology. Those who gathered for the lectures in August continue to ponder the implications for our theology and ministry. We are grateful to Prof. Vanhoozer for his efforts in delivering the lectures. ☺

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EDITORIAL

RESPONDING TO THE REFUGEE CRISIS

Nathan Walter

FOR MANY OF US in Australia, it is difficult to get our minds around the scope of the refugee crisis engulfing Europe at the moment. We see the images on our TV's and on our computer screens. We read of the staggering numbers of displaced people. We hear the stories of those who are fleeing war-torn areas of Syria and Iraq. Together with the rest of the world we are appalled by the photo of a drowned three-year old Syrian boy whose body had washed up on a Turkish beach. The photos of parents and children throwing themselves onto train tracks in Hungary in protest for their freedom are scarcely any better.

And yet despite our awareness of these things, it is just so difficult for many of us to get our hearts and minds around what is happening. For a start, we are geographically removed. More seriously, we are, by comparison, so blessedly fortunate. The things that so often distract us are so trivial – as a lover of sport I'm thinking of things like the recently completed footy finals season, or the ongoing Rugby World Cup. But even those that aren't as trivial – like the recent change in Prime Minister, or the impending El Nino system that promises to extend already difficult drought conditions and bring damaging bushfires – even these can seem tame by comparison.

In the general thanksgiving, we give God thanks above all for the great blessings of the gospel - for our Savior, Jesus Christ; for his death and resurrection; for the gift of God's Spirit; and for the hope of sharing in God's glory. Before these things, however, we also give God thanks for life and health and safety, for power to work and leisure to rest, and for all that is good in creation and human life.


It is completely right, of course, to give God thanks for such things, for he is the giver of all such gifts. But how easily we can do so without any real reflection on how truly wonderful, and uncommon, such 'ordinary' gifts are. Put simply, we very often take these things for granted. We should not. That's why, as prosperous Christians in peaceful Australia, one aspect of our response to the refugee crisis should be a greatly increased sense of

gratitude to God for his generosity to us in all of life.

But our response must not stop there. We must pray also for those who are suffering, hungry and homeless. We must ask God to stay the hand of those who would do evil, and to protect those who have no refuge other than him. We must pray for those, including our own Federal and State governments, whose decisions will, humanly speaking, affect the fate of many.

But our response must not stop there either. For the gospel of Jesus Christ is the gospel of God's grace and mercy, the gospel of rest for the weary and burdened, the gospel of compassion and love for the lost, the gospel for the lowly and the despised things of this world. That's why those who have been saved by this gospel cannot help, in their dealings with others, but be shaped by the same mercy and grace that God has shown to us. And so the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10) teaches Jesus' disciples to be concerned not so much with the task of identifying precisely who are the neighbors that they are to love, but rather with the task of showing neighborly love to whomever they can, as each one has the opportunity.

In this regard, we ought to give God thanks for our Archbishop's recent call that Sydney Anglicans not just pray for those caught up in the refugee crisis, but also show warm welcome and offer practical help to those who come and find new lives in Australia. And we should not just give God thanks for this. We should actually answer the call! We should also welcome the task he has given to Anglicare Sydney, of coordinating our various diocesan organizations and parishes, so that together we can work to offer material and financial support for those in need.

These are initiatives that Christians and churches, across our whole diocese, will have opportunity to be involved in supporting, each in their different ways. And our hope and prayer should be that as we do these things, God will be pleased to use us in the service of those who have need, so that in every way we will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive. 



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The Australian Church Record is an evangelical newspaper in the Reformed Anglican tradition of the historic creeds and the 39 Articles of Faith, and the standard of teaching and practice in the Book of Common Prayer. We accept the Scriptures as God's word written, and as containing all things necessary for salvation and the final authority in all matters of faith and behaviour.

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AT THE THIRD STROKE

Steve Carlisle



"AT THE THIRD STROKE, the time will be eight fifty five and twenty seconds. Peep. Peep. Peep." Do you remember this service? You could ring up the number on the telephone and have the time read to you precisely? If there was a blackout, we would all get on the phone and ring through to get

the precise time to reset all of our clocks, clock radios, microwaves and VCR's until the next time the power went out. And let's face it, precision in those days was important. If you didn't get the time right on the VCR, your recording of *A Country Practice* would miss out on the opening credits and Esme's first line. Or you'd miss out on who won *It's a Knockout*. Important stuff!

On a more serious note, there are times in life when precision is crucial. It is important when it comes to understanding how to drive, or for planning a wedding, or putting up a tent. But precision is also needed in order that we might be saved by Jesus. You see, Jesus must be completely and utterly perfect in order for him to save us.



The precision of his obedience is something we desperately require in order to be in God's presence.


God himself cannot stand in the presence of sinners. In fact, perfection is what would be needed in order to please God and stand freely in his presence. But all of us fall very far short of this mark of precision.

Instead we are imprecise, and imperfect, described by the Bible as sinners,

deserving the wrath of God. But Jesus, when he died on the cross, offers to us the 'great transfer'. In this transfer, Jesus offers to take our sin and replace it with his perfection, in order to save us and the world.

If you stop and think about it, however, it would have only taken one act of sin for the obedience of Jesus to be imprecise, and not precise. And if Jesus had been in any way imperfect, then the 'great transfer' could not have taken place, and his death would not have helped us.

How wonderful it is to know that God freely gave his Son to us in order that we might be saved, and that the plan of salvation in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus has been carried out with ultimate precision so that our salvation and calling might be made sure.


Our precision in obedience to God is far short of what it needs to be, and yet as each second and hour goes by, at every 'third stroke', we can be thankful for the precise one who stood in our place and secured for us eternal life. 

if Jesus had been in any way imperfect, then the 'great transfer' could not have taken place, and his death would not have helped us.

SACRAMENTS OF THE GOSPEL

THERE IS NO QUESTION that the Thirty-Nine Articles clearly set apart two sacraments—Baptism and the Lord's Supper—as indispensable hallmarks of a spiritually healthy and authentically Anglican ministry. Modern evangelicals can sometimes struggle with this. Why did our Reformation forebears continue to give the sacraments such prominence? Do they really offer anything to a Christian believer that cannot be more than adequately served by the ministry of the word alone? But if the Reformers still saw great value in the sacraments—even after clearing away so much Roman Catholic error—shouldn't we give them a close look too?

The Articles refer to Baptism and the Lord's Supper

as 'sacraments of the Gospel'. In part that's because they seem to be specifically ordained by Christ (e.g., Mk 14.22-25; Matt 28.19). But the Reformers also realised that unlike other worthy biblical practices such as marriage, singing in church, or even prayer, these two ordinances have a special way of tangibly re-enforcing the very promises of the Gospel. The Articles speak of them as 'effectual signs of grace'—not because they possess some magical power of their own, but for the way the Spirit uses them to strengthen our faithful grasp on Christ. As Mark Earney shows below, that's how Archbishop Cranmer saw that 'plain old bread' can powerfully assure us of the Gospel. 

PLAIN OLD BREAD?

Mark Earngey




THE MAJOR THEOLOGICAL debate during the reign of Edward VI (1547-1553) was over the Lord's Supper. Evangelicals in the Church of England were determined to eradicate any trace of Roman Catholic eucharistic theology and produce a biblically robust doctrine of the Lord's Supper. One of the important strands of the debate revolved around the nature of the sacramental bread.

The English reformers were united in their denial of the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. They were outraged at the suggestion that Christ's body could be re-offered and re-sacrificed for such a notion struck at the very centre of the Gospel. Thomas Cranmer rebuked his arch-nemesis Stephen Gardiner, '... you give Christ such a nip, that of that whole satisfaction, you pinch half away from him, and ascribe it to the sacrifice of the Priest'.¹ In addition to his reformed liturgies and treatises, Cranmer underscored his point by inserting a rubric at the end of the 1552 *BCP* Communion service which encouraged curates to take home the leftover bread for general consumption! At the heart of Christianity was the full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction of Christ, offered once for all upon the cross. The reformers would rather go to the flames than deny this truth.

For Cranmer, the plain old bread was also important for the encouraging effect of the Lord's Supper. To his mind, the Roman Catholic doctrine of fantastical bread only signified a fantastical feeding on Christ. Yet if one feeds

on true bread, so too does one feed on the true Christ. Cranmer believed that the sensory experience of seeing, touching, smelling and tasting the plain old bread drove home to the faithful the reality of Christ crucified. It was this sensory similitude that allowed him such a warm and pastoral vision of the Lord's Supper: '... we may see Christ with our eyes, smell him at our nose, taste him with our mouths, grope him with our hands, and perceive him with all our senses'.² Just as Thomas, the disciple, was not deceived when he touched the wounds of the Lord, so too Christians were not deceived when they touched the Supper of the Lord. Thus, plain old bread not only upheld the work of Christ, but also drove this reality into the heart through the senses.

Admittedly this hardly scratches the surface of the English reformation debates over the Lord's Supper. But even from this short glimpse, we can see some of the pastoral benefits when we welcome saved sinners to 'the table of the Lord' (1 Cor. 11:27). We live in materialistic times that can undermine the spiritual strength of some. Yet in the Lord's Supper we have a material ministry that can bolster the spiritual strength of many. Plain old bread that makes plain the wonderful work of Christ. 

The reformers knew that the heart of Christianity was the full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction of Christ, offered once for all upon the cross. They would rather go to the flames than deny the Gospel.

¹ Thomas Cranmer, *An Answer of the Most Reuerend Father in God Thomas Archebysshop of Canterburye...*, sig. J.6', RSTC 5991.

² Cranmer, *Answer*, sig. E.3^v.

BOOK REVIEWS

One of the crucial ways that evangelicalism strives to preserve the gospel is by creating patterns of church life that embody and proclaim the gospel of God's grace, that we are justified by trusting in Christ's death on our behalf. We have a wonderful heritage in our diocese that rightly upholds the local congregation, and not the denomination, as the place where the essential work of the gospel takes place.

With this in mind, here's a look at two recent books that will help the local church do the work of embodying and proclaiming the gospel. They could be read by individuals to great benefit, or by small groups, as a stimulus to spurring each other on in living as Christ's disciples. They could even be read by church ministry teams and Parish Councils, to remember some of the basics of Christian life and godliness that should be shaping the life of the local church.

HOW TO WALK INTO CHURCH

Reviewer **Craig Schafer**



When I think of Matthias Media I think of useful resources that are theologically well grounded, engaging to read and imminently practical. That is exactly what Tony Payne's *How To Walk Into Church* is. Plus it is tiny; I read it from start to finish on a train journey into town from

Pennant Hills (and I finished it despite the distraction of my two daughters on their way to the museum!).

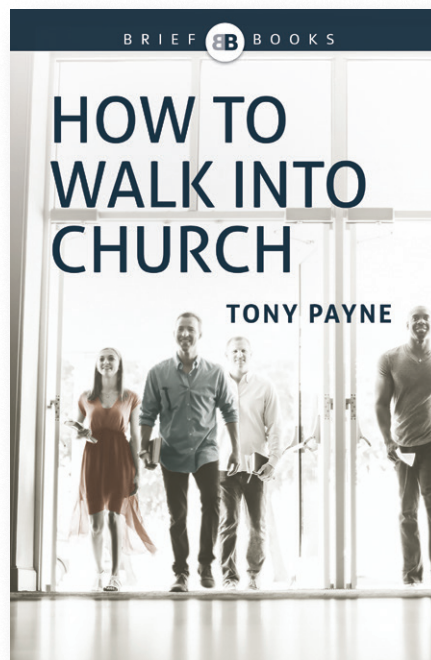
How To Walk Into Church belongs to that subversive subset of books that empower the average Christian by teaching them to do useful things that build God's kingdom, that they need no official authorisation to do and that will never appear on a roster.

It starts in that 'Tony Payne way', by painting a picture of what might be going on in our heads as we walk into church each Sunday; a picture that few will have difficulty identifying with. It then uses the questions "what is this thing called 'church'" and "why am I walking into church" to frame a simple and clear overview of what the

Bible says the church gathering is and what it is for. It is simple and clear but also pretty powerful, because what the Bible says about church is pretty powerful. It then includes a couple of chapters full of good advice on what a Christian can do before, during and after church to further God's purpose for the church gathering. It ends with a chapter on "How to walk out of church" which I thought suffered

a bit from trying to cover two things under the one heading, but which nevertheless had some very useful things to say about the way we think of church when we're finding it hard.

For my money, *How To Walk Into Church* is a great little tool for introducing new Christians, as well as for re-introducing experienced Christians, to the fundamentals of 'the ministry of the pew'. That is, it helps people think about every member ministry. And it does so in a way that both equips and empowers them to immediately put it into action. Most Christians would benefit from reading it, and so would their churches. ☺



How to Walk Into Church, Tony Payne, Matthias Media, 2015. 64pp

BOOK REVIEWS (CONTINUED)

HONEST EVANGELISM

Reviewer **Nathan Walter**



There are five things I really like about Rico Tice's *Honest Evangelism*. First, it's short. Just on 100 pages from beginning to end. That makes it a very achievable project for everyone, even those who don't like to read very much! But it also makes it a very achievable project for anyone who feels a bit

threatened by the idea of a book on evangelism.


That's the second thing I liked: it recognizes how inadequate and timid and brow-beaten many Christians feel when it comes to evangelism. Although Rico has been talking to people about Jesus for decades, he clearly regards himself not as 'gifted' so much as 'well practiced'. He shares his own struggles, and 'failures'. And so rather than making us feel guilty, he writes as a friend who is genuinely encouraging us to the same task that he is working on.

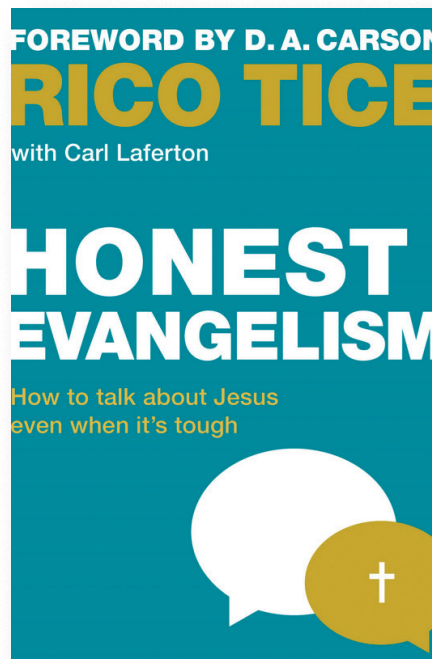
A third thing I liked about *Honest Evangelism* is that it's realistic about our contemporary context. It talks plainly about the 'painline' we will need to cross if we are to talk to people about Jesus, and about the reality of opposition. It recognizes how society has changed in the past 50 years, and how this should change our expectations and practice when

it comes to people talking about Jesus. (As an example of changed practice, Rico talks about taking the Bible to people by doing one-to-one evangelistic Bible reading.)

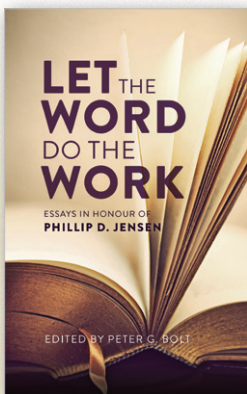
A fourth thing I like about this book is that it's propelled by theology. It's much more about why we should evangelize than it is by the specifics of what we should say. It gets us thinking about the glory of Christ, the wonder of the new creation, and the grim reality of death and hell. It gets us thinking about God's sovereignty, God's grace, and God's power. It gets us thinking about the idolatries in our

own heart which hold us back from talking to people about Jesus. In the end, it is these kinds of theological anchor-points that make *Honest Evangelism* a spiritual refreshment rather than a spiritual guilt trip. They are also what makes it an optimistic book, even with all the challenges we face. For in effect, what they do is they call us back to the gospel of God's grace and to the gracious God of the gospel.

Finally, *Honest Evangelism* makes talking to people about Jesus achievable. This is not a book just for 'gifted' evangelists. It's for ordinary Christians who have regular, everyday relationships with non-Christians, and who are striving with God's help to live life loving Christ first of all. 



Honest Evangelism, Rico Tice, The Good Book Company, 2015. 101pp



A remarkable collection of essays written in honour of Phillip D Jensen

At the end of 2014 when Phillip Jensen stepped down from his role as dean of Sydney at St Andrew's Cathedral, it marked the beginning of a new phase of Phillip's remarkable service of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In recognition of the occasion, and to celebrate the four decades of his ministry, friends from around the globe offer brief, thoughtful essays in Phillip Jensen's honour.

Let the Word Do the Work contains essays by over 20 authors, including Don Carson, Paul House, William Taylor, Kent Hughes, Tony Payne, Mark Thompson, and Peter Jensen.

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