




**SPECIAL Vestry
Meeting
29 August
10.00am**





Pentecost
XII

*"The Church is the only organisation
that does not exist for itself,
but for those who live
outside of it."*

– William Temple



“The challenge for us is how to share the merciful forgiveness and love at the heart of God that the Psalmist says, is the antidote to the kind of hopeless despair and self-disgust expressed in Psalm 51.”



Faith and belief in Australia

A national study on religion,
spirituality and worldview
trends, 2017

– mccrindle

WHAT?

- National survey of 1,024 Australians
- Representative of the national population by gender, age, and state
- Survey conducted from 13 – 18 January, 2017
- Focus groups with 26 non-Christians, Sydney from 15 – 16 March, 2017

- Generation Z: 7-22 year olds (born 1995 to 2009)
- Gen Y: 23-37 year olds (born from 1980-1994)
- Gen X: 38-52 year olds (born from 1965-1979)
- Baby Boomers: 53-71 year olds (born from 1946-1964)
- Builders: 72+ year olds (born 1925-1945)

Religion in Australia is not dead

... two thirds of Australians (68%)
currently follow a religion or have
spiritual beliefs.

(52%) open ... **to changing their religious**
views ... Younger generations more likely
than older generations

Religious activity differs across the states.

South Australia (69%) has the highest proportion of Australians not at all active in practising religion.

- **The greatest attraction to investigating spirituality and religion is **observing people who live out a genuine faith** (61%). (us?..)**
- **Second is experiencing a personal trauma or significant life change (59%).**

**55% talk about spirituality or religion
(often or occasionally) when they
gather with friends**

Generation Z is the most comfortable

Conversations key to thinking about
spiritual/religious things (31%)

- Australians most value the Church and Christian organisations for their **work with those in need.**
- The supportive community (38%) is what Australians most value about the **local church.**
- Parents and family have **greatest influence** on perceptions and opinions about Christians/ity (57%)

What turns people off?

- Perceptions of Christians and Christianity are negatively influenced by the **actions and behaviours of Christians in society** (73%)
- The... Church's stance and teaching on homosexuality (31%)
- 58% switched off investigating religion and spirituality by hearing from public figures and celebrities who are examples of that faith

The top three attributes of Jesus that Australians connect with in a positive way are:

1. Love (50% connect with this)
2. Hope (39%)
3. Care (34%)



<https://mccrindle.com.au/insights/blog/faith-belief-australia/>



The Future of the Church in Australia

Zoom interviews with 30
Christian leaders, 2020

- mccrindle

WHO?

- Mike Stevens – Lead Pastor, Clovercrest Baptist, Adl
- Melinda Dwight – National Director, Alpha Australia
- Archbishop Peter Comensoli – Archbishop for the Catholic Diocese, Melbourne
- Bishop Richard Condie – Anglican Bishop of Tasmania
- Clare Steele – CEO, Compassion Australia
- Nicky Gumbel – Founder of Alpha & Vicar, Holy Trinity Brompton, London
- William Dumas – Senior Pastor, Ganggalah Church, Tweed Heads

Australians are disillusioned with the Church but spiritually hungry because of:

“...church culture becoming detached from the everyday Australian experience, and partly ... a break in trust due to poor leadership examples from the church. ...even amidst this ... a spiritual hunger... **Times of change, hardship and crisis can often cause people to think more deeply about what matters.**”

What should we
do?

Church needs to engage the community

“... a local church should be engaged with the local community, serving its needs and creating healthy relationships. COVID-19 has caused a disruption to church routine and has shown ... just how important the ‘in between’ connections are beyond the Sunday service.”

Put evangelism, discipleship back into the hands of the people

“Some ... leaders believe a key challenge ... is that ‘almost blindly we’ve pulled the Word back into the hands of the clergy’ (Dale Stephenson). ... as a result, many Australian Christians do not feel equipped or empowered to share the gospel within their communities and rely on church leaders to do it for them.”

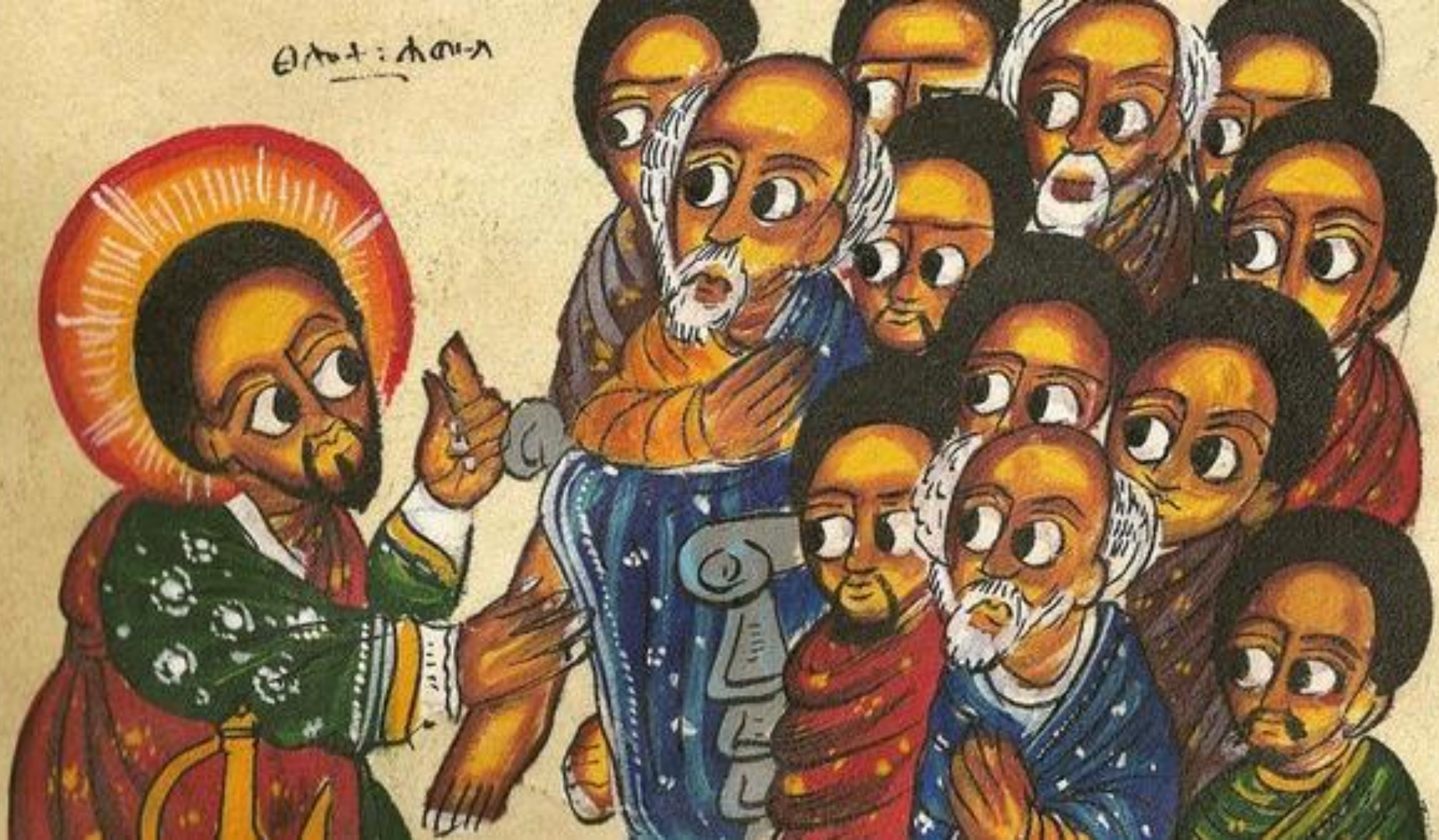
“The hard soil is actually between the ears of the Australian Christian where the inner voice says, ‘I can’t.’ It manifests as fear but is actually pride. I’ve seen it so repeatedly ... Australian Christians *en masse* predispose in their own mind ‘I can’t, it has to be someone else’, especially when it comes to sharing the gospel. They think it’s only them that thinks that, but it’s *en masse*.” – Dale Stephenson, Senior Pastor, Crossway Baptist Church, Burwood East, Melbourne

“This season is genuinely opening a new doorway and the wind will be in the sails for the congregations that lean in and re-evaluate.”

– Mike Stevens, Lead Pastor,
Clovercrest Baptist, Adelaide

[https://mccrindle.com.au/insights
/blog/faith-belief-australia/](https://mccrindle.com.au/insights/blog/faith-belief-australia/)

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“I am the loving bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.” – John 6: 51



To conclude...

Richard Rohr



“...Jesus entered as he did, where he did, doing what he did, because God needed us to finally comprehend the truth: God is not a sky king who heads an empire; God is the love that gives itself away for the sake of more love. ... Jesus sought ... to give away his life, so he and others might flourish as God intends. . . .” – Richard Rohr



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