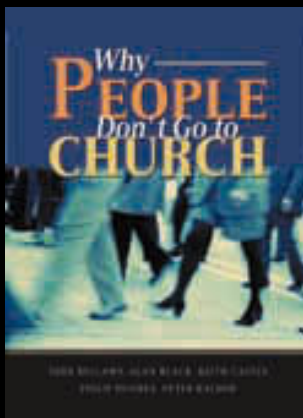
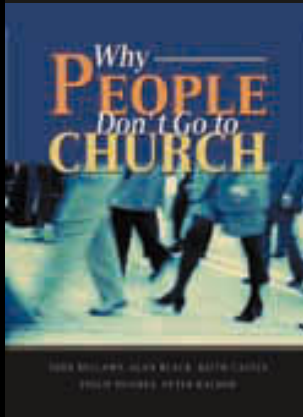
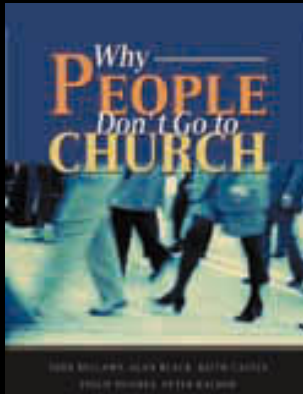
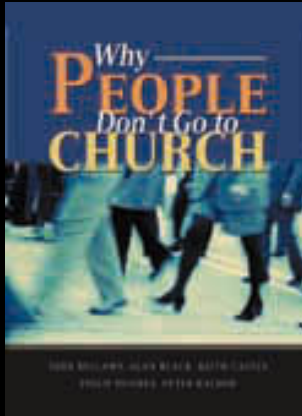


Why People Don't Go To Church!





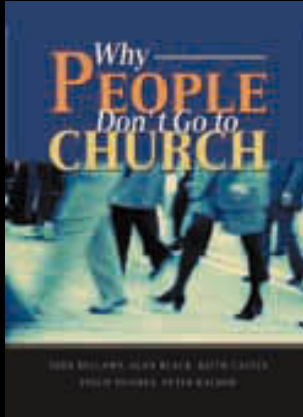
A Changing Spiritual Landscape

We live in a time of great change

The Australian spiritual landscape is dramatically changing

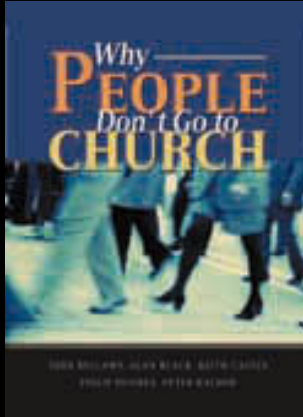
Time of great challenge ... yet also great opportunity

We need to know what's happening!



A Changing Spiritual Landscape

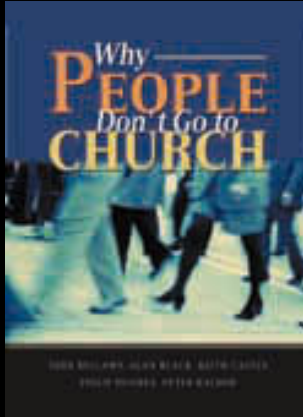
- **80% Australians affirm belief in God/Higher Being**
- **Yet many looking beyond Christianity**
- **Spirituality smorgasbord**
- **Decline in Church attendance across Australia**
- **Growing unchurched population**
- **Growing number of non-believers**



Australian Community Survey

-8000 Australians surveyed

-Feedback on past & present church attendance, feelings about spiritual issues/beliefs, church involvement, worship services, community involvement, etc

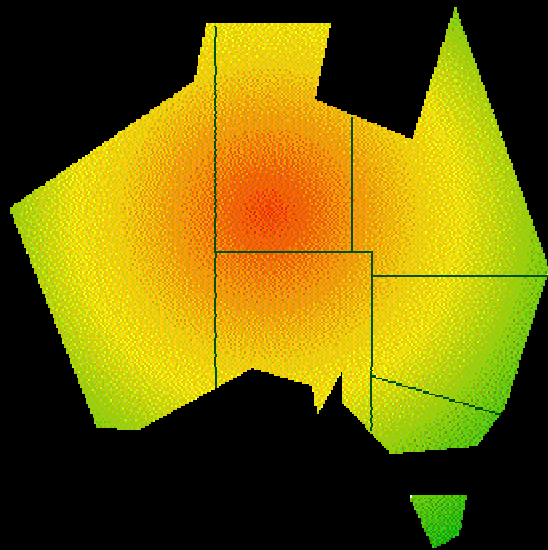


Australian Community Survey

**Opens a window into thinking
of a cross section of
Australians**

**Challenging and informative
findings for the Australian
Church**

Church Attendances in Australia



Attend monthly or more

20%

Attend yearly or more

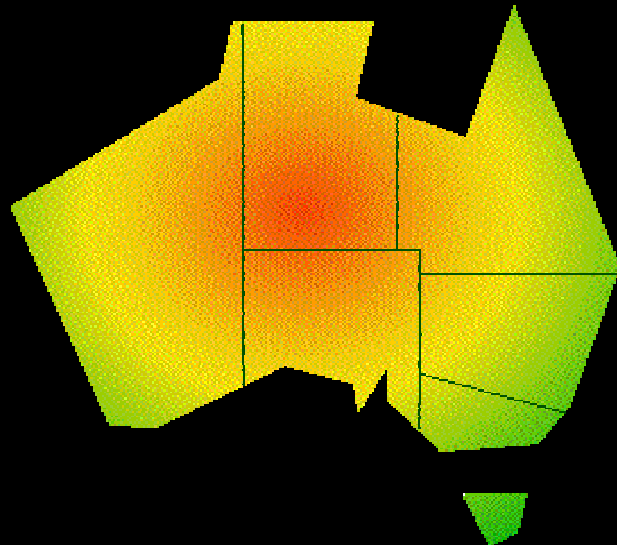
20%

Never or hardly ever attend

60%

***Special service, rites-of-passage
service, etc - 70%***

Church Attendances in Australia



Frequent attendance

1950 – 45%

1980 – 25%

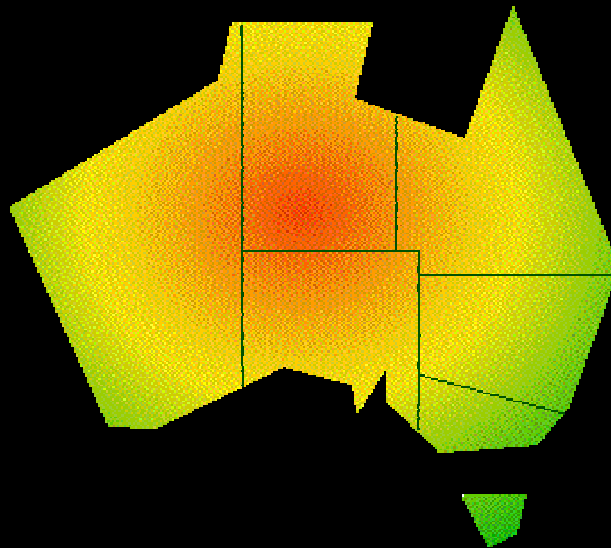
2000 – 20%



**20% frequent
attenders**

**17% positive or
sympathetic**

**General
attitudes to the
Church among
Australians**



**36% neutral or
apathetic**

**27%
unsympathetic/antagonist
ic**



**Stated reasons for not attending
Church among infrequent attenders
and non-attenders**

Boring or unfulfilling church services
42%

Belief of the churches
35%

Churches' moral views 35%

No need to go to Church 34%

Prefer to do other things 31%

My beliefs are too weak 27%

The way churches are organised 24%

Too many other commitments 21%

Bad experience of church people 16%

Not enough time because of work 15%

No previous involvement	8%
Family or friends don't like church	6%
No churches of my denomination nearby	4%
No good churches nearby	4%
Poor health/disability	3%
No transport to get to church	2%



The most common response

- 42% boring church services
- Rites of passage services is the major connection point [71%]
 - More positive if attended a regular worship service
 - *They feel more positive about contemporary, shorter services where they have something in common with others there.*
- So while “boredom” is a reality for many, for even more it is a perception issue



**We need to hear and respond
to these concerns ...**

**But we also need to look
deeper.**

Behind The Statistics ... Four Key Issues

Background

Beliefs

Relationships

Attitude



*** Religious Upbringing**

Background

*** Demographics**



A Religious Upbringing

Declining denominational
influence in continuing church
attendance

Background

Growing sense of choice and
people experimenting with other
religious forms ...

Eg: 1.5million adult Australians in
the past year have tried some
form of Eastern meditation.



Background

A Religious Upbringing

The ACS study confirmed that the influence of parents is the most powerful predictor from a person's childhood of their current religious involvement

Frequent attenders: 67%

Non attenders: 33%



A Religious Upbringing

A key challenge:

Helping our children & youth
transition in the Church

Background

25% leave by high school

40% leave after they move out



Background

A Matter of Demographics

Who goes and who doesn't go?

The under-represented:

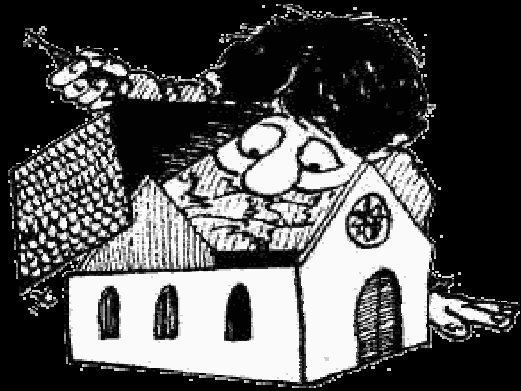
Men [39%]

-Young adults

-“Blue-collar” occupational groups

-Divorced, separated, de-facto relationships

- The lesser educated



*** The importance of
friendship**

Relationships



Relationships

The Importance of Friends

Most newcomers to Australian churches report friends as the primary reason for their coming to Church.

60% of non-attenders report they have no close friends who attend Church.

Significant challenge to all of us ... the importance of developing growing relationships with friends outside the Church.



The Importance of Friends

And of the newcomers who attend our Churches, feelings of acceptance and belonging is a key factor in whether people stay or go!

Relationships



Invitations to Church:

NCLS – 33% have invited

Yet only 2% newcomers

Relationships

- A matter of perseverance
- A matter of perspective



*** A key and growing factor to be considered in our engagement with the community**

Beliefs



35% of those surveyed said they didn't share the beliefs of the Church

Another 27% point to weakness in their own beliefs for not attending

Beliefs

35% also cite problems with the Church's moral position as a reason for non-attendance

Less than 20% of infrequent attenders affirm believe in a personal God



**Only a minority of Australians
accept a range of conventional
Christian beliefs ...**

Beliefs

Direct link to church attendance

**Growth in beliefs integrally linked
to participation in faith community**



**The other key “belief gap”
between the Church and
community relates to moral
values.**

Beliefs

**35% say they don't attend Church
because of differing moral views
and many more say they have
concerns about the Church's
stance on some moral issues.**



Beliefs

Some of the widest differences exist in areas of sexuality, living arrangements, abortion, euthanasia, enjoyment of life and wealth issues.



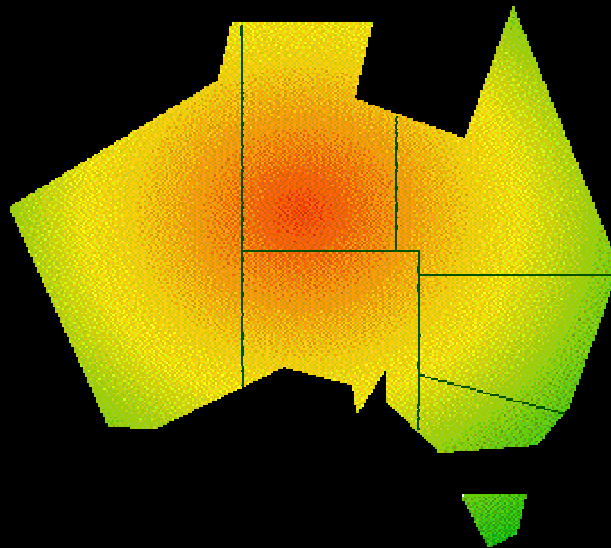
There is a huge diversity among Australians when they are asked about their attitude towards the Church.

Attitudes

**20% frequent
attenders**

**17% positive or
sympathetic**

**General
attitudes to the
Church among
Australians**



**36% neutral or
apathetic**

**27%
unsympathetic/antagonist
ic**



There has been a loss of public confidence in the Australian Church.

Attitudes

	1983	1998
Banks	87%	21%
Police	80%	69%
Education	65%	51%
Legal	61%	29%
Church	56%	39%
Fed Govt	55%	21%



Most negative factors

- Clergy sex abuse
- Issues of exclusion
- Moral viewpoints
- Boring services

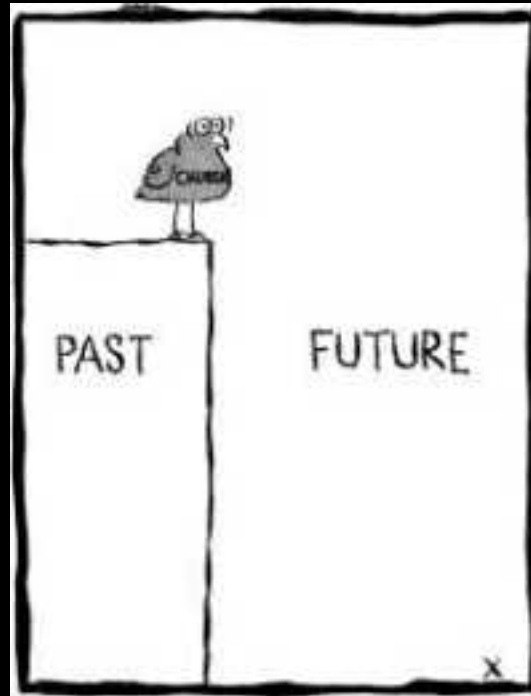
Attitudes

Most positive factors

Place where community can be found

Community benefit/support

Helping people cope in difficult times

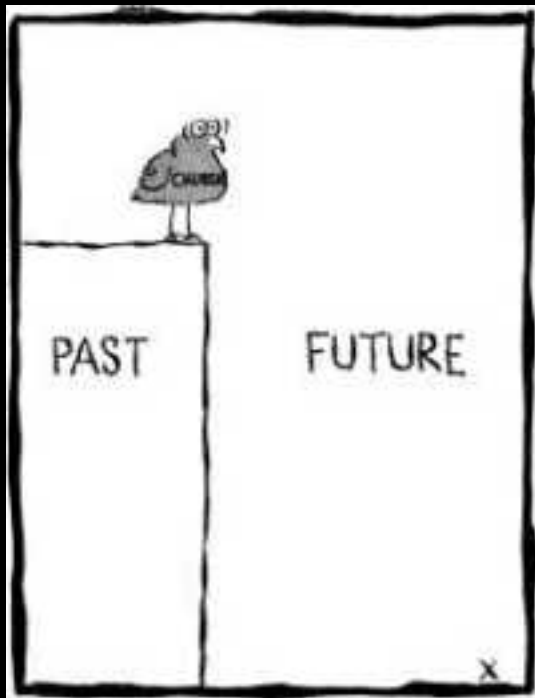


Bringing It Together

Facing the challenges ...

Seizing the opportunities ...

Some Key Issues For Us!



- 1. We need to develop a greater missional mindset**

What's happening out there?

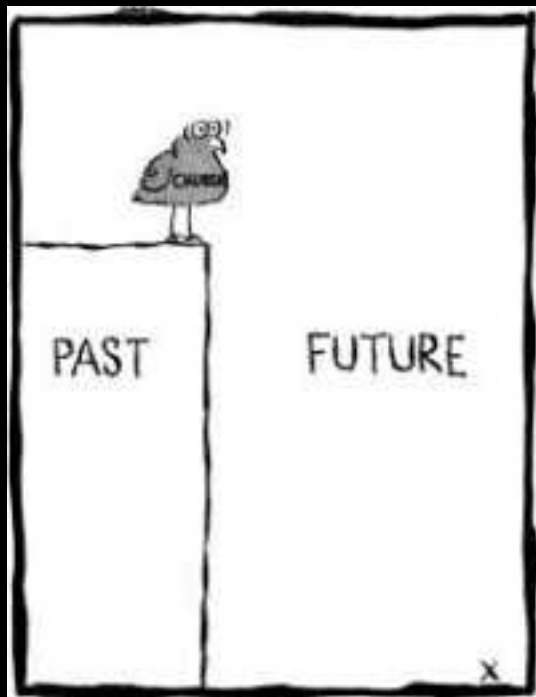
What are people thinking?

Attitudes to spirituality, faith, Christ?

- 2. We must focus on the vital importance of developing authentic relationships.**

“And you will be my witnesses”

Some Key Issues For Us!

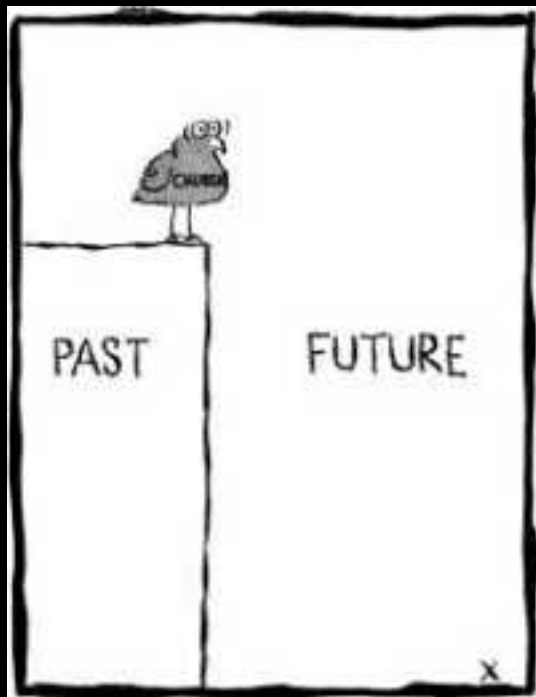


3. We need to continue to strengthen our community connections, presenting people with a positive profile of the local Church.

The Acts 2 picture : "... and the people liked what they saw"

4. We need to ensure we are a welcoming and inclusive church community.

Some Key Issues For Us!

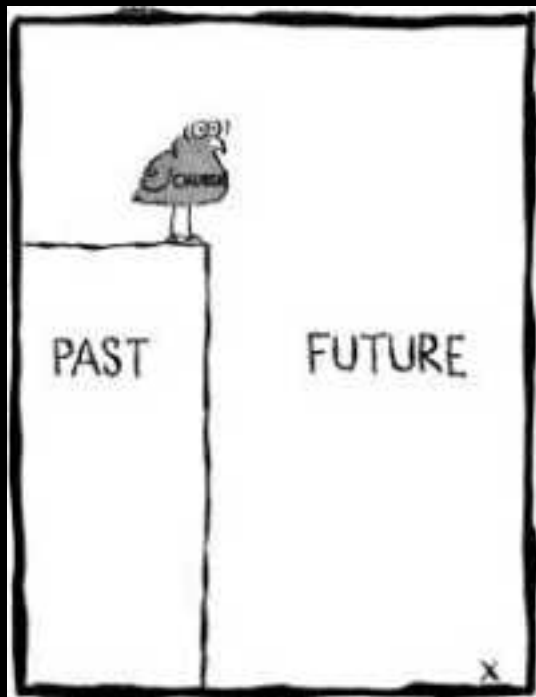


5. We need to continue to develop a meaningful and engaging worship experience.

6. We need to maximise our opportunities.

- *Contact with people*
- *Outreach opportunities*
- *Speaking positively about Church experience*

Some Key Issues For Us!



7. We need to be open to new and creative entry points and discussion of life-related issues.

- SIP, community anchor, other possibilities

8. We need to remain committed to presenting biblical truth in relevant ways.

“- I am the way, the truth and the life!”

- People searching for truth

