

Building More Wells

What kind of space does the 21stC church really need? What kind of spaces did Jesus use? He said, “Love the Lord your God...this is the greatest commandment” and “Love your neighbour as yourself” Matt 22:37-38. He also said, “Go and make disciples of all nations...” Matt 28:19.

Rick Paynter answers the question, “what are we here for?” by proposing that the church is an outpost of hope and a cultural insurgency, infiltrating the local culture for the purposes of the kingdom.

Tim Cool, in his book *Why Church Buildings Matter*, reminds us of the encounter that the Samaritan woman had with Jesus at the well, told in John 4. This did not occur in the temple but at an everyday meeting place, a place of community interaction where people would chat about the neighbourhood. In our workplace is this around the photocopier or the water cooler? In the social life of Western society this might be the gym, the coffee shop or the pub. Tim suggests that we don't just build temples but we build the equivalent of wells, the places of encounter out in society.

Some churches have consciously decided to provide facilities to meet a normal non-religious community need. Goodlife Church in Buderim, Queensland, has a new building

complex consciously constructed by the church training as a sports centre for the local community. It has a well-equipped gymnasium, a large sports hall and an indoor swimming pool, in addition to a cafe and a range of meeting rooms.

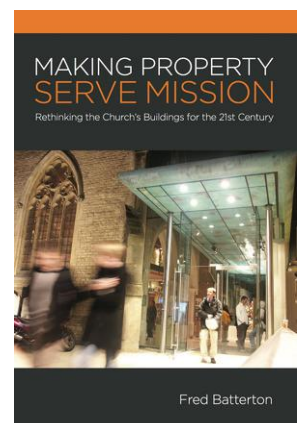


Door of Hope, Launceston's Gym

Door Of Hope Church in Launceston bought a disused heritage building that was much larger than the church needed. Imagine that, a lively church choosing to buy a heritage building while others are trying to offload them!

They adapted and occupied 10% of the whole building as church, then rented parts out to a car repair training workshops, a fully equipped gymnasium company, a self storage company, a children's events centre and a conference centre. A new homeless persons hostel has been built on the site with outside funding and management. Almost 18,000 people a month pass the church's information point and cafe en route to their activities.

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