

PartnerNews

"MTS regularly reminds apprentices that a central part of training is failing."

Ministry Training & Church Withering

by Mike Lynch



:: Mike Lynch Bio ::

- * Attended MTS Conferences since 2000.
- * Trained by Pete Woodcock, Phil Dowe, David Jones and the Crossroads leadership team from 1998-2002.
- * Part of the team that planted Crossroads Presbyterian Church with David Jones in 2000.
- * Trained five MTS apprentices since 2003.
- * Runs a citywide training program for MTS apprentices in Hobart.
- * Worked as Executive Network Coordinator for MTS Tasmania in 2008.

Jono Lange did his apprenticeship in two churches because the church plant where he began his apprenticeship got shut down. Our mother church, Crossroads Presbyterian, then went through a period of restructuring. Was his apprenticeship sabotaged by the bigger waves of church life? Is church planting and withering bad for ministry apprenticeship?

It is true that there are some things you miss out on for not being in a more established or 'successful' church. You might have to be involved in children's ministry at another church, because the church plant has no children to minister to. Because of smaller numbers of people, you may have less opportunity to try new programs. But both Jono and I agree that there are some unique benefits of being trained during a season of church withering.

MTS regularly reminds apprentices that a central part of training is failing. There is no better way to learn this than watching your trainer fail. We should model godly failure to our apprentices. For example, after the church plant closed down, Jono reminded me of the time we reflected on the fact

that if it was just God's elaborate way of saving one convert, then it was all worth it. In church planting you have to trust that the real failure is to not attempt new things for the kingdom in the first place.

After our church plant closed down, Crossroads made a fresh start in 2006. Such times allow our apprentices to join in the process of relearning. They are able to be intimately involved in the humbling process of consulting with the church and the wider community, seeking to understand those we are called to serve. We should long for our trainees to become pastors with great confidence in God, but we want them to grasp that the Father of our Lord Jesus is glorified through weakness. God works by his Spirit through weak and sinful people and this brings down the proud and so magnifies his wonderful mercy. God may make them the next rock star church planter. Or he may send them back to the mother church, tail between the legs. We should pray that they be able to see that either outcome could be glorious. ■

MTS Apprenticeship: Fiona Lockett

Crossroads Presbyterian Church, TAS

My church, Crossroads Presbyterian in Hobart, had had a number of people complete MTS apprenticeships over the past few years. So when I decided to give overseas mission work a try, my pastor Mike Lynch suggested that the apprenticeship would be good preparation. The work involved a staple diet of daily Bible reading and prayer and mentoring women from my church. On top of this I tried my hand at most things a church leader does – responding to friends' criticisms; writing policy papers; organising conferences and newcomer's nights; chatting to strangers; writing a Christian reflections blog; giving sermons at women's events; interviewing politicians; writing and leading Bible studies; leading small groups on how to answer people's questions and how to vote as a Christian; attending prayer meetings; thinking creatively about and planning for both the direction and day-to-day running of the church and more.

The highlights were realising and gaining confidence in what I was good at, and working out how to prevent burn-out. I found the MTS apprenticeship extremely beneficial because it gave me the opportunity to experience many things and to work out how I work best, and to observe and learn from my pastor's ministry and wisdom.

The apprenticeship has enabled me to determine not only that I am suited to church work, but the unique contribution I can bring. What's more, the challenges of leadership, teaching others and knowing God better have matured my character. I'm still thinking of being a missionary, in a leadership and Bible teaching role, so 2008 finds me at Bible college. I hope that in the years to come, I can play my part in identifying other people's gifts and training them up in the role God has for them to play. ■



The benefits of MTS are summed up in the words that make up the TLA (Three-Letter-Acronym): Ministry, Training and Strategy.

Life Impact Story: Ben & Faith

BEN: Firstly, MTS involves 'real' ministry to 'real' people. Why did I want to do MTS? I wanted to do it because I wanted to share the gospel with those who didn't know. I wanted to teach the Bible and wanted people to know God, believe in His Son and submit to the Lord Jesus. I'm glad that MTS wasn't just some 'theoretical' course, not some mere exercise where what you did didn't really matter to anyone. Secondly, MTS involves training. Why did I want to do MTS? I wanted to do it because I wanted to learn how to share the gospel, teach God's word and make him known better. MTS provided real opportunities for ministry, but always with the guidance and support of a trainer, someone who was able to help me interpret my experiences and assess my position and progress. Finally, MTS involves a strategy which sheds some light on both ministry and training. It helped create and shape my framework for understanding Christian ministry and helped me to consider how I could be involved not just in ministry, but in strategic ministry. It's great to work hard, but better to work both hard and smart!

To sum up, MTS was a great time of serving people, evangelising, teaching God's Word and learning how to do it under the guidance of a Godly and better-skilled servant. It also shaped my thinking on how best I can be involved in God's work; giving shape, direction and understanding to the pursuit of further theological studies and the decisions I make about what future ministries I would like to be involved in.

FAITH: My 2 years of MTS were the best 2 years of my life! God taught me so much about myself, but most of all, how big, powerful and sovereign He is as I went about being involved in growing His kingdom. I learnt that God holds people's hearts in his hands, and that he transforms or hardens people according to His will. Now, as I minister to people, I'm acutely aware of God's sovereignty over their lives and it drives me to pray for them, because it is God who will finish the good work He has started in them. My time on MTS was also really beneficial because I got to think through how to set up and run ministries from scratch. Being an apprentice is great because you get to try new ideas and things without being entirely responsible for them! It was always reassuring knowing that my trainer and pastor were guiding me and yet, giving me freedom to make mistakes. Now, no matter where my husband and I end up serving, I know I won't feel so intimidated starting or running a mother's group or a women's ministry if I need to.

Lastly, MTS has been great in training me to be a wife and a mother. Having experienced a full-time ministry lifestyle on MTS, I now have some idea of the ups and downs my husband will experience when he begins a full-time ministry position. Having taught Scripture at primary school and having ran a training course for Sunday School teachers, I think I have a better idea of how to teach my little girl about who God is. Maybe she will do MTS one day....



Margaret Ha
St Alban's Anglican
Multicultural Bible
Ministry, Rooty Hill.

Brief description of Ministry:
I will be involved mainly in Children's ministry where I'll be leading teams at Children's Church, writing and presenting children's talks, programmes and seminars. I'll also be involved with Scripture teaching and a new Kid's Club ministry at the local school.

Fun Fact:
I love the pain of jogging!



Scott van Tuil
St Saviour's Anglican Church
Christchurch, New Zealand

Brief description of Ministry:
Bible study leading, preaching, one on one bible reading, Youth Group, bible in schools

Fun Fact:
Never entered a rodeo comp...

International Focus: Santiago, Chile

Glory to our living God!

We are very grateful to God for the first year of our Ministry Training Program called "Gimnasio" (the name comes from 1 Tim. 4:7-8)

It has been a year of much learning for the Trainer as well as for those being trained. During the process, we have rejoiced in our hearts for the possibilities God is opening in Santiago to know and serve Him better.

Our aim is to make every effort to provide the Anglican Church in Chile with a training strategy for people who are thinking of giving their lives to full time gospel ministry.

During 2007 we worked formally with 6 people who belong to three different Churches in Santiago. For 2008 we are expecting 2 or possibly 3 new trainees.

The purpose of this letter is to tell you what have we done so far and how you can help us in prayer.

We have based our working schedule on the same three areas of the Australian MTS, namely: Conviction, Character and Capacity. They have been very helpful as we try to focus the development of our trainees as they follow the program.

We are very happy with what has been achieved so far, but we know we are not where we want to be yet and so look forward to keep growing in faith and practice during 2008.



If you want to pray for us you could use the following prayer points:

- 1) That we may do all this in order to glorify God and serve His Church as we proclaim the gospel of His Son in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- 2) That more pastors may become aware of "Gimnasio", realising the need for training, trusting in the program, seeing the benefits and encouraging their people to be a part of it.
- 3) That God may provide the finances to be able to raise a Training Staff (of at least three leaders) and to support people from local churches who are not able to raise their own funds.

Much Love in Christ Jesus,

Cristóbal Cerón (in picture above)
Trainer Director, Gimnasio

GPS Scholarship Recipients



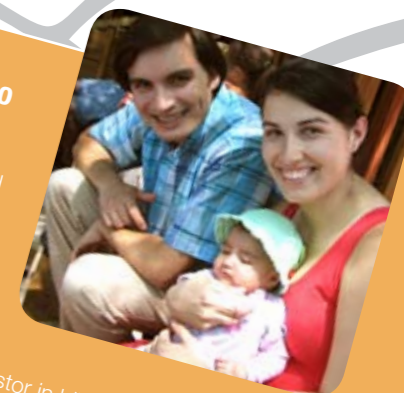
Sam Rae
University of WA

Brief description of Ministry:
I'll be working with the AFES group at UWA, the Christian Union. I am one of three trainees who will be working under Tim Thorburn to get training and experience in ministry. I'll be leading small group Bible studies, meeting with students 1-1 to read the Bible and trying different aspects of ministry and getting feedback when it all goes wrong! Specifically I'll be in charge of coordinating the first year students and the Commerce/Economics faculty. I'll also be running some training courses in evangelism and Christian doctrine.

Fun Fact:
It's taking a while to adapt to the Perth heat after spending the last two years working as an engineer in Norway.

Juan Miguel Merino Renca, Santiago.

Juan Miguel Merino married to Andrea Norambuena with a little girl Micaela Merina (daughter) and a second child due in August.



Brief description of Ministry:
My ministry will be helping our pastor in bible teaching to both adults and the youth. Sometimes I will be helping with the music and I am particularly interested in the planting of a new church about 45 mins away from Santiago. It will be a good place for me to practice and do real ministry. I will train with Cristóbal at Gimnasio.

Fun Fact:
Before I became a Christian I used to make loads of jokes regarding Christians meeting. I used to laugh about the way they sang, they clapped, they lifted their hands...and I find it funny what the Lord has done to me by making me a musician who encourages the church to do all those funny things I used to laugh about!
I thank all those Australians, from the bottom of my heart, for supporting me in my training.



Letter from Ben

Dear Friends,

I hope this letter finds you encouraged in your walk with Christ.

I am so grateful to God for you - the numerous Christian brothers and sisters in Australia, and around the world, who support the work of MTS by praying, volunteering and giving money.

MTS is well under way for 2008 . . . I attended an MTS training day in Sydney on February 7th. It was a buzz gathering with 185+ men & women training in order to train others. Ray Galea preached through Luke 15 and reminded us afresh that God the Father celebrates when the lost are found . . . in fact it is a necessity to celebrate! Luke 15 spurred me on to love the lost, to keep proclaiming Christ, and to care about the millions of Australians who do not yet love Jesus Christ.

In fact I will be travelling the breadth of Australia in 2008 to spur the Church on to seek out the lost. I'll be going on a "Calling 10,000 Tour" with the intention of challenging hundreds, if not thousands, of Australian Christians to go and become fishers of men.

2008 will also be an exciting year for the following reasons:

- Brand new MTS apprenticeships will be starting up in Carlingford (NSW), Canberra (ACT), Santiago (Chile) and Christchurch (New Zealand) in 2008. See pages 2 and 3 for more details. Each of these new apprenticeships have been made possible by the Gospel Patrons Society (a group who support the ministry training movement). They have provided 10 apprentice scholarships for 2008. These 10 apprentices kicked off in January!
- MTS NSW will run its first outdoor adventure Challenge conference on the "Six Foot Track" near Katoomba (March 15-16). Please pray that this event will raise up workers for the harvest.
- We will be building a new Website for MTS with the funds that were raised in the latter half of 2007. The target for the 'audio-visual & website appeal' was \$55,000. The total raised was \$56,931. We are so grateful to God for that result. Please ask God to help us as we build the website and learn to create better audio-visual resources.
- We've published and distributed the inaugural "MTS in a Nutshell: NSW 2008." This booklet details the why, when, where and how of MTS. The NSW booklet (enclosed) is the template for the rest of the country. . . in fact "MTS in a Nutshell: Victoria 2008" will come off the press this month too!

Thank you again for supporting MTS. Please continue to pray for the growth of the ministry training movement. Please ask God to work in His Church so that all believers will be faithful to the great commission of Matthew 28:16-20.

Your brother in Christ

Ben

Upcoming Events

:: 6ft Track Challenge Sat 15th - Sun 16th March

This year MTS is running an outdoor Challenge event!

The Six Foot Track is a 42 km walk from Jenolan Caves to Katoomba – we will be taking 30 people for a two day hike over the weekend Sat 15th - Sun 16th March.

Along the way we will be discussing the question, "Why shouldn't I do full time paid Gospel ministry?" It's a hard trail. And they are hard questions. But then again, Jesus was a hard bloke ... Are we willing to follow Him?

:: MTS Training Day 24th June 2008

Join us for training, inspiration and fellowship from 9am to 3:30pm on Tuesday 24th June at Scots Presbyterian Church, Corner of Margaret & York Streets, Sydney.

Andrew Heard is our keynote speaker and the theme of the day is "Evangelism Now – In the Church". Andrew is the minister at Central Coast Evangelical Church.

Please register online at www.mts.com.au by Sun 22nd June

See website re: MTS Training Days near you