



Ridley Log

In This Issue:

- ◆ Book Review: Every Good Endeavour
- ◆ Theology study around the world: Tales from our sister college in Central Asia!
- ◆ Story + Puppets = Relaxed and Clear
- ◆ Reflections on Struggling to Love Ridley

WHY I CANNOT SING, 'WHERE, O DEATH, IS NOW YOUR STING?' AT EASTER

Anonymous

On Resurrection Sunday, as per every other year at my church, the first hymn sung in triumphant exultation was, 'Christ the Lord is risen today. Hallelujah!'

The truth of this hymn echoes throughout churches on this day year after year. Yet this time, conscious of the painful reality of death, I objected to the line, "Where, O death, is now your sting? Hallelujah!"

The implication being, as we joyfully sing these words, that for the Christian death is no longer a reality.

I couldn't honestly sing these words in praise to God. I restrained my voice as everyone else continued in what felt like fabricated praise. The rest of the song I held as true, but these words, on this particular day, did not match how I felt.

Once we sat down I turned to the bible, troubled by the disconnect between my

feelings and what I was 'supposed' to believe and celebrate.

Thinking about these words and knowing they echoed something from 1 Corinthians 15, I turned to it. I scanned to verse 55 which reads, 'Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?'

Paul is quoting Isaiah 25* in defending the truth of the future resurrection.

I turned to Isaiah 25, and found the words of the prophet, written in the *future tense* to speak of a time *when* God *will* swallow up death forever.

Slowly I was being vindicated. The pain and sting of death *will* be removed by God in the *future!*

But why is Paul saying this about the present age and why am I subjected to

singing this as if it's true for me today?

I recalled the tone of Paul's message. I realised that yes, in a sense, the future reality where death is no more has been inaugurated by Jesus' resurrection. Yes, I know that it's true that in light of the gospel the future has really squashed the present (1 Cor. 7:29). Yes, there is a sense in which death has been defeated and lost its sting.

But on the other hand, I still know that death hurts. It really hurts. Death is still very much a reality that stings and pangs to the core. I hate death and I hate speaking glibly or singing trivially about it as if it no longer exists. It is real and its right for a Christian to say

Continued on next page...

so and to cry out to God in pain.

I do look forward to the day when death finally is swallowed up and God removes every tear from our eyes (Isa 25:8). We are to

look to the truth of the resurrection proclaimed by Isaiah, Paul, and Wesley. But let us never ignore or discard the pain of death that makes resurrection so beautiful.

* Author's note: I subsequently realised that 1 Cor 15:55 actually quotes Hosea 13:14, following the quotation of Isaiah 25 in v54. Above is an honest account of my immediate thoughts and feelings.

Book Review: *Every Good Endeavour*

Timothy Keller & Kathryn Leary Alsdorf

Kirrily Drew

I've just finished reading *Every Good Endeavour* for Ridley's Introduction to Workplace Ministry class. I found this book so encouraging and inspiring – I can't recommend it highly enough. If you, like me, have ever found yourself wondering why you bother getting up in the morning to face the same tasks, the same people, the same politics, the same frustrations – in short, the repetitiveness that is our fifty-odd-year-long working life (even if you *are* Gen Y and change jobs every three years) – then this book is for you!

Every Good Endeavour begins by outlining a biblical theology of work. It argues that work is an integral part of being human; a crucial aspect of being created in the image of God. For this reason, work is inherently good, valuable, and glorifying to God. This section of the book celebrates and values work in and of itself, reminding us that to be truly human is to work (and therefore, to be

without work – for any reason – is dehumanising).

The second section explains how the Fall has infected work, so that it is frustrating, difficult, and less than perfect. As a perfectionist, what stood out most to me from this section is that because of the Fall, 'we will be able to envision far more than we can accomplish, both because of a lack of ability and because of resistance in the environment around us' (p90). I experience this frustration constantly in all my 'work': as a student, an admin assistant, a library helper, a child-minding auntie, a writer for the Log, or a volunteer at church. I desire to perform my work with a certain level of skill, and to achieve a certain quality, but so often these desires are thwarted by the realities of time pressure, over-commitment, or lack of skill. It was a revelation to me (though it should not have been) that this fruitlessness is a result of the Fall!

Continued on next page...

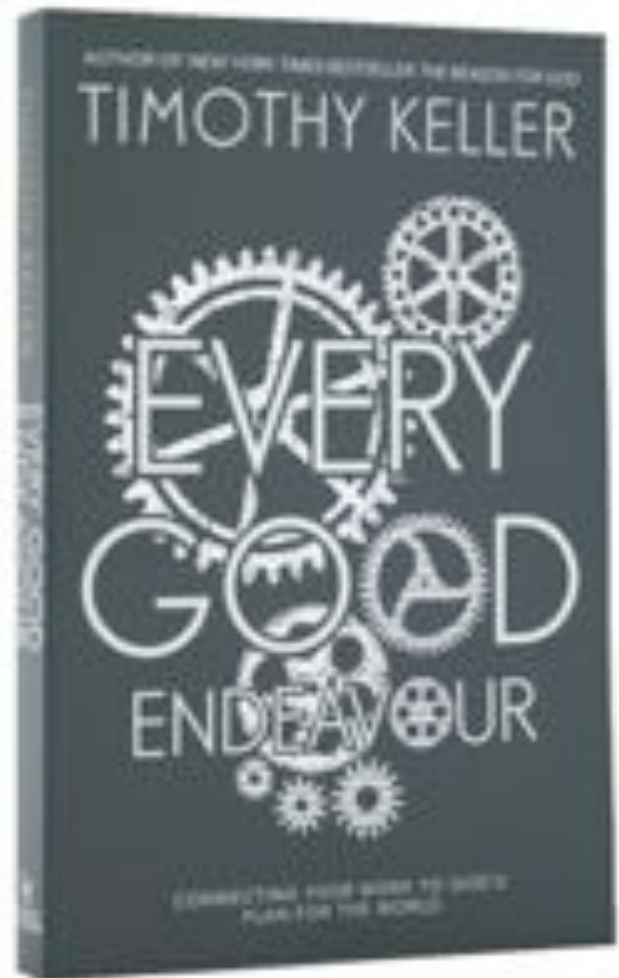
The final chapters of the book consider how God, in Christ, has redeemed and is continuing to redeem work from the curse of sin, and how we can play our part in bringing this redemption to bear in our own workplaces. Practical examples are given of how the Gospel impacts business, journalism, higher education, medicine, and

“Because of the Fall, ‘we will be able to envision far more than we can accomplish, both because of a lack of ability and because of resistance in the environment around us’”

the arts. This section also covers the Gospel’s interaction with worldview, popular culture, and ethics, and sets a new vision for work: Christians speaking and living the truth – about God, about work, about life to the full – and shining the light of the Gospel into our workplaces.

Every Good Endeavour is packed with real-life examples, though I would have liked a whole book, not just a section, on the practicalities of redeeming work! Sometimes I felt that the authors belaboured their point, or pushed their applications of biblical teaching further than they could really stretch (particularly in the section of Chapter 7 that deals with being ‘in the palace’ in the story of Esther).

Overall, though, *Every Good Endeavour* is a wonderful celebration of the inherent value of work, and an inspiration to me as I seek to view work as good, flawed, valuable, human, frustrated, yet ultimately redeemed, and glorifying to our great God.



Theology study around the world: Tales from our sister college in Central Asia!

**Names have been changed for security reasons.*

Margaret*, Oct 2013

Margaret* dreams of one day being a teacher at a Bible Seminary. There are not too many young women around here who would say the same. She loves to study, she already has a Degree in Maths and Statistics, and has done some OTS courses (basic Bible and Christian living subjects). A few years ago she did a short course on Sunday School Training at the college, and now she is in first year of a Bachelor of Theology with the college. Margaret* still lives with her family, quite close to the Seminary, and her father drops her off every day on the back of his motorbike.

For the last ten years Margaret* has been serving at her local church, a Brethren house church in her neighborhood. Her parents and four brothers are all very active, they help clean the church and support the leader with services and extra meetings. Margaret* loves to teach. She runs the Sunday School and youth group programs and even gives the sermon at church every now and then. It is a small church, reduced in numbers over the years due to social problems. Apparently the two Christian graveyards in the city only offer places to the registered churches, so Margaret's* church lost a few families who wanted to be a part of a bigger church to ensure places in the graveyard for their family members. The surrounding community is largely illiterate and struggling with numerous social and health problems. It is a hard place to serve.

“As she understands God and his purpose throughout history, as she studies the story of the nation Israel, then she can see more clearly what our role is, and even what purpose the Christian minority have in her country”

Margaret* particularly enjoys the Old Testament subjects at the college and leaning more about Bible history. She explains that as she understands God and his purpose throughout history, as she studies the story of the nation Israel, then she can see more clearly what our role is, and even what purpose the Christian minority have in her country. She wants to take her place amongst the Christians here and help to raise up more leaders to work for the spread of God's

kingdom. Margaret* believes that teaching at a Seminary would be such a strategic place to influence young leaders from all denominations to serve the country through proclaiming Christ. The gospel touches our lives on every level: spiritually it reveals grace in salvation, and it impacts on the church's many social problems too. Through finding our purpose in Christ, we are motivated to serve him and his people, to care for each other and the environment, and to work for the healing of a society experiencing crisis in so many areas.

Pray for Margaret* as she studies and seeks to know God more through his Word. Pray that God will give her wisdom and guidance as she seeks to do his will now and in the future.

Continued on next page...

Rachel*, Sept 2013

Rachel's* husband would really like to be studying at the college, but he needs to be supporting the family, so Rachel* gets to study now instead. He plans to start in a couple of years. Together they have been active in their community church throughout the sixteen years they have been married. For Rachel*, being at the college is an answer to many prayers. Yet, in a lot of ways she has very little to smile about; her life seems so difficult. She is living in a poor part of the town, set apart for Christian families, is busy taking care of their three sons, managing all the household jobs, working for the church in the evenings and on weekends, and studying during the day. A big load, and still she rejoices to be at the college.

Over the last few years, Rachel* has been studying theological courses at her church. She has done five books so far, and has been encouraged in her faith by studying God's word at a deeper level. It gave her a taste for further study and God used these books to help her grow in Christian maturity. She particularly liked the course on "Christian family life" that she studied with her husband. Their three boys are all active alongside them in church and involved in playing instruments during services. One son plays the tabla, traditional drums, and another the harmonica. They seek to serve God as a family and Rachel* would love her boys to follow them in ministry and study at the college too.

She wants to be more effective in prayer ministry and to know the Bible better, so she can encourage and comfort her people with God's words and show them who Jesus is.

In Rachel's* suburb, the houses are densely packed in and connected by narrow lane-ways. About fifteen years ago their minister planted a church in their midst, in his own house. At the start very few of the families came. Rachel* and her husband worked alongside the minister and visited these families, one by one. Now about twenty-five families meet together every week. Rachel* recalls one woman, Sarah*, whom she visited quite often. Sarah* was regularly beaten by her husband and often had no money to buy food for her four children. She didn't attend church, and was consumed by worry and fear for the family. Rachel* would sit with her and listen and pray. She prayed for Sarah* to turn to God with her worries, she assured her that God listens and cares, and is indeed Lord of all. Over the weeks Sarah* started coming to her for help; she sensed that Rachel* could help her by praying. She has started coming to church now, with the children. Rachel* is still praying for God to grow Sarah's* faith and help her to take her anxieties to him herself. She explains that "Sarah* still needs to know and grow in God's peace".

Rachel* is keen to learn as much as she can at the college. She wants to be more effective in prayer ministry and to know the Bible better, so she can encourage and comfort her people with



Story + Puppets = Relaxed and clear

Stephen Urmston

Previously printed in Press Service International - Conference of Young Emerging Writers - Australia

<http://au.christiantoday.com/article/story-puppets-relaxed-and-clear/16815.htm>

Is there a story that you love to hear? Stories have always made me smile. When I was 11, a story that I loved was the musically animated version of Anastasia. Yes...a musical about a Russian girl, who was a princess, then following a revolution she forgets her royal status.

It wasn't that I could relate, but rather the way in which the story was told with the combination of the music really resonated with me. I ended up watching the movie three times in a row.

There is nothing better than a well-told story. The continued popularity of scripted television shows and the massive movie industry show us that stories are very much alive and well. Even "reality" TV tries to construct a story each episode. Stories told through song can bring people to tears, make them smile, or even make them angry. It is stories that enlighten the soul.

As someone who teaches and entertains children, stories are very dear to me. The way I most love to tell stories is through



puppets. This has been the way for over 13 years and is unlikely to change any time soon. What once started as a voluntary helping hand in a children's program, has grown into what I want to do for the rest of my life: the combination of story-telling and puppetry.

Stories and puppets offer a unique blend of entertainment and learning simultaneously. The story continues to be the method through which I communicate, but the puppet (or puppets, and it sometimes is) is 'how' I do that.

It's amazing watching how both children and adults relax and smile within a matter of seconds when talking to a puppet. When a puppet arrives on a scene it's as if instantly the storytelling rules change, and in a manner of speaking, they do.

Expectations

We have expectations when hearing a story. The story starts. Characters emerge. We wait for the story to grow, tension builds, suspense as to what will happen, the possibility of a bad choice or wrong motivation, a continued build as decisions are made and finally the eventual climax of the story where conflict is at its peak. At the end, a resolution is found and the story reaches its conclusion.

Continued on next page...

If you bring a puppet into this mix the rules subtly change. Our expectations differ as soon as a non-realistic character is present. It doesn't matter if the puppet is a human puppet or not, the realism is both there and not there at the same time. The story can continue to be told realistically, but, once the puppet is there, something is different.

The puppet has the power to say things that a normal storyteller cannot. The puppet is outside of the expectations. In a similar way, cartoons and animations can say things that would take much more energy or skill for an actor. When puppets speak people naturally smile. They relate to the puppet, even though they know the puppet is not real, it is 'just a puppet'.

This actually gives the puppet a greater freedom of expression, a licence if you will, to say what he or she wants. This is why very simple movements made by puppets can be very funny. So much is conveyed without words!

Teaching the Bible using puppets

It has been my job to teach children the Bible, and also to write material for other teachers. Using puppets gives me and the children watching a chance to learn as the puppet "learns". The puppet can ask questions as the story progresses. The

puppet can have its own story that then leads to the telling of a Bible story.

I try to use the puppet quite strategically: where I think there are questions that need to be clarified, or something that doesn't make sense, I never address the topic myself. I always have the puppet ask those questions and it is the puppet who helps make different themes clear. This is particularly helpful when talking about abstract concepts.

Ideas such as happiness, faith, hope, love, grieving, loss, consequences etc. are hard to talk about and explain to anyone, let alone children. Really, the puppets are doing us a favour. The puppets are helping our communication become clearer, more engaging, and easier to understand.

We live in a culture where stories are still incredibly popular. We forget this sometimes, and think that we will be fine if people just see our logic. In a postmodern world where truth is seen to be relative, I think we need to return to stories. Jesus himself often used stories as his main method of teaching.

Stories and puppets are a wonderful mix. They disarm the listener and can help make our teaching sharper. A skilfully made argument may win someone's intellect, but stories address our intellect while winning our hearts.



Reflections on Struggling to Love Ridley

Miriam Dale

I think I kind of came to Ridley with guns blazing.

I was not particularly happy to be here, but I thought perhaps God wanted me here anyway, so I came. I thought it was all too much my parents' turf – and my uncle's, and my aunt's, and everyone who hung out in mainstream church circles and smiled cleanly at each other over congregational morning tea.

“With a foot in Ridley and a foot in some other, very different, worlds, I was torn between the two”

Having been brought up in an intensely Christian family, my faith was my own but the Anglican Church was not, so I came with defenses up and ‘hippy-social-justice-activist-non-mainstream-I-don't-believe-in-Calvinism-so-suck-it!’ flags flying. Studying part time was an extra challenge – with a foot in Ridley and a foot in some other, very different, worlds, I was torn between the two and cynical about any chance of unity. In fact, cynical was probably a good word to describe much of my outlook, and it's something I still wrestle with.

I asked God for just one or two good friends each semester – and He was gracious and gave me some very special people to walk me through my time here, and to suggest I break down a few of my barriers. They helped, bless them, as did some incredible prayer triplets, but I was still pretty determined to not enjoy myself too much. In the meantime, I boxed most of my classmates into one-dimensional categories (for which I apologize), and made sure I maintained the outsider attitude as a way to keep my identity.

Chapel, of all things, I found most challenging. Having felt distinctly over-churched during my high-school years, I was not particularly eager to spend more time there, particularly if it involved prayer books. On top of that, I did (and still very much do) have my best experiences of God's presence alone and in nature, and the corporate worship experience has never been an aspect of faith that I find particularly easy.

The big change came, I think, somewhere between going on a study tour, and beginning to study full-time. Suddenly, I was living with Ridley girls (bless you!),

eating Ridley food and hanging out with Ridley people all the time. I became aware of the depth, complexity, commitment, and love of the people around me. And... well, it didn't all change overnight. But in some ways it *did*, because interaction with Ridley in such an intensive way forced me to finally release my grip on some of my prejudices. *None* of these people, it turned out, were one-dimensional.

Which did not, of course, make all my cynicism disappear in one fell swoop. Nor did it break down all my barriers at once, or deal with my identity issues. And I do still prefer time with God by myself, although I have found myself often very blessed by chapel recently. But I am learning to have more humility, to unbox my peers, and to understand the wisdom, life-lessons, and academic learning which Ridley, though not perfect, still has to offer me. I have also come to deeply love the Church, which was something of a shock. And while I still struggle with things at Ridley sometimes, I am learning that these issues are often as much to do with me as anything, and I pray God will continue to teach me more about Himself, His church, and myself in the process.

YOUNG AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN WRITER

\$2500 PRIZE

Entries close 31 May.

A prize is given for the best unpublished manuscript by an Australian citizen under 30 years of age.

[Conditions & Entry Form](#)

JOIN

YOUNG WRITERS ON
facebook

Northstar Christian Literature Award
CALL FOR ENTRIES
Under 30?
Under 18?
Got a good story?
Why not share it with us?





Ridley Hoodies On The Way!

Check out our new design, and look out for the order sheets, coming soon to a Bible College near you!



*Colours to be confirmed at a later date.



KEEP

CALM

AND

STUDY

THEOLOGY