

### C. MAKING THINGS NEW, BUILDING TRUST

What are some of the ways you suggest that Christians can help to restore trust and confidence in the Gospel of Jesus in the light of such serious breaches highlighted by recent royal commissions?

What lessons from tonight's bible study from Mark 10:35-45 might be relevant to apply to the Church's life and ministries to help prevent breaches of trust and misdemeanours by its leaders and members in future?

What alternatives to the traditional structures, buildings, liturgies, ministries of most churches in Melbourne might be important to explore and implement in the immediate future?

### 3. PRAYER AND NOTES FOR ACTION



## CONVERSATION STARTERS

### Moral Failure & Public Trust

#### 1. Warm Up

OOPS (THEY) DID IT AGAIN!

What reactions do you commonly hear/see by voters to errors, misdemeanours, or backflips by political leaders?

Are there noticeable differences in reaction when the leaders criticized are representatives of the Church? What differences?

How do you feel when (even if it's a rarity) a representative of the Church is commended in the media, or is reported as positively as honest, honourable, transformative? Any examples?

#### 2. Public Accountability

- A. The new world of the 21st century  
In the 21st Century the Church worldwide has been scrutinized publicly in a comprehensive manner for many cases of child sexual abuse and other abuses of power and trust. Instruments of **public accountability** in recent years, such as the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* and the *Royal Commission into Family Violence* in Australia, have

brought into everyone's view the role that some churches have played, directly and indirectly, in contributing to the pain, injury and even death of many victims.

With regard to offences of the Church towards children, take note of this summary statement from the Royal Commission report:

“...the failures of religious institutions are particularly troubling because these institutions have played... an integral and unique role in the lives of many children. They have also been key providers of education, health and social welfare services to children in Australia for many years. They have been among the most respected institutions in our society. The perpetrators of child sexual abuse in religious institutions were, in many cases, people that **children and parents trusted the most and suspected the least.**

The impact upon victims has been and continues to be profound and deserves the full attention of all Australians. The commission states:

“Many people who experience child sexual abuse have the course of their lives **altered forever**. Many of the survivors we heard from continue to experience the **ongoing impacts**. For some, these impacts have been **profound**. They include a devastating **loss of religious faith and loss of trust** in the religious organisation that was once a fundamental part of their life. The impacts have rippled out to affect their parents, siblings, partners, children and, in some cases, entire communities. Some victims have not survived the abuse, having since taken their own lives.



**Royal Commission  
into Institutional Responses  
to Child Sexual Abuse**

## B. REPENTANCE & REPARATION

The **Prime Minister of Australia** will make an apology to survivors of child sexual abuse in October 2018. This will be another reminder to us all of the devastating impact of abuse in our recent history.

The Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, in responding to the two Royal Commissions mentioned above, has been penitent, cooperative, and active in apologising and seeking to make appropriate reparation to victim/survivors whenever complaints have been raised. The **Archbishop of Melbourne** and Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia, Dr. Philip Freier, said in his recent synod address:

“I reiterate my apology to all survivors of abuse at the hands of those whom they trusted and in whose care they relied upon, especially within the Anglican Church. We have failed you, we believe you and we are sorry.”

Thirty-three recommendations have been presented by the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* to Religious Institutions. Part of that response is financial compensation. The Archbishop recently noted:

(Our commitment to the) “Federal Government’s National Redress Scheme (is) estimated... to fall somewhere between \$12.2m and \$21m.”

These funds will be sourced mostly by way of the diocese shelving or delaying vision/action plans for expansion and growth, and via donations to reparation fund.

New, **mandatory regulatory requirements** of professional standards for clergy and church workers are being implemented across the whole Church to ensure as far as is possible no such crimes are committed again in religious institutions.