Mapping Missional Conversations:

Part 1: Western Voices

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This is a two-part map of the missional terrain. **Part 1** focuses on Western authors. **Part 2** focuses on Majority World (which some call Third World), indigenous, First Nations, and diaspora (immigrant) voices.

Here are the 3 Categories & 13 Sub-Categories (in the Western Conversation):

CATEGORY 1: GOSPEL

1 Missional theology (missiology)
2 Missional gospel (gospel, hermeneutics & biblical interpretation)

CATEGORY 2: CHURCH

3 Missional ecclesiology
4 Missional praxis
5 Missional leadership
6 Missional discipleship/spirituality
7 Missional worship
8 Missional education
9 Missional reformation

CATEGORY 3: CULTURE

10 Missional emergence
11 Missional prediction
12 Missional contrast
13 Missional analysis

I locate the first two within the broad category of *gospel*, the next six within *church*, and the final four within *culture*.

Two Important Notes:

1. To reduce the size and the bibliographical data in this blog, when I list the "foundational books" for each area, **I try to limit it to one per author** (sometimes I break this rule, but I try to stick to it). For example, Christopher Wright, Lesslie Newbigin, and David Bosch have each written more than one foundation book for "missional theology." **But, as far as possible, I try to limit my list to one book per author**. This means that many excellent books didn't find their way into this blog. I hope my author friends will forgive me for this, and understand the limitations I face in a blog post.

The absence of a particular book is no reflection on its importance. Instead, it's the result of my effort to limit my lists (as far as possible) to one book per author per sub-category.

2. **Part 1** focuses on Western authors. **Part 2** will focus on Majority World (which some call Third World), indigenous, First Nations, and diasporic voices.

GOSPEL

1. Missional Theology (Missiology)

Rich theological material fills this area. Foundational books in this area include:

- Roland Allen's *Missionary Methods*
- Stephen Bevans' *Models of Contextual Theology*
- Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder's *Constants in Context*
- David Bosch's *Transforming Mission*
- Francis DuBose's *God Who Sends*
- Ross Hastings' *Missional God, Missional Church*
- Paul Hiebert's *Transforming Worldviews* and *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*
- David Fitch's *Prodigal Christianity*
- Andrew Kirk's *What is Mission?*
- Scott Moreau's *Introducing World Missions*
- Lesslie Newbigin's *The Open Secret* and *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*
- Michael Pocock's *The Changing Face of World Missions*
- Robert Schreiter's *Constructing Local Theologies*
- Andrew Walls' *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*
- Ralph Winter's (ed.) *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*
- Christopher Wright's *The Mission of God*
- John Howard Yoder's *Theology of Mission*

This literature explores themes to do with a biblical theology of mission. It considers the shape and implications of missional theology. And it looks at the missional basis of the gospel, revealed throughout Scripture. Biblical theology is described as missional theology. This literature explores the relationships between various branches of theology. These include systematic theology, missiology, Christology, Trinitarian theology, and biblical theology. These authors use biblical texts and themes to construct a biblical basis for mission. They also analyze and defend the missional basis of the Bible. A theology of mission is necessary for ministry and missional engagement.

In *Transforming Mission*, David Bosch shows how a theology of mission is necessary and relevant. It is especially important for "emerging missionary paradigms." These paradigms include cultural and contextual analysis, and a missional theology of the church. Bosch also deals with a theology of salvation. He explains the role of compassion and justice, and the way culture shapes us. He considers how we should understand witness, interfaith dialogue, and diverse modes of mission. Bosch believes that a robust theology of mission will awaken within us a fresh passion to serve Christ. It will inspire us to take part in Christ's mission in the world.

In *The Mission of God*, Christopher Wright shows how theological themes are missional. These include Scripture, the Trinity, the church, creation, humanity, the kingdom of God, and the nations. Wright also looks at the missional implications of ethical, ecological, and social challenges.

Tite Tiénou and Paul Hiebert call for a movement from systematic and biblical theology, to missional theology. "Missional theology is at the heart of the church's call to live in the world, but not to be of it, and to bear witness to God's transforming power in individuals and societies."[2]

Among a wide range of theological themes, other matters are considered. For definitions of most of these terms, see the downloadable glossary on my website:

- The missional nature of the Trinitarian God, and the way in which he shapes and sends his missional church;
- The missional nature of the gospel of Jesus Christ;
- The essentially missional nature of the church;
- The implications of the church's missional nature for its theology and practice of mission;
- The implications of missional theology for the church's ministries, structures, and discipleship;
- The relationship between God's mission, the church's mission, and God's kingdom and reign;
- The missional vision and actions of Jesus Christ;
- Incarnational and fresh approaches to mission, church, and evangelism;

- The way that missional theology enriches, and is enriched by, conversation. This includes conversation with Evangelicalism, Pentecostalism, and other ecclesial traditions. And conversation with liberation theology, interfaith forums, Trinitarian scholarship, postcolonial theology, cultural theory, and eco-theology;
- Missiological insights gained from ecumenical discussions, New and Old Testament scholarship, post-liberalism, and neo-Reformed and neo-Anabaptist thought;
- The way that a theology of mission informs a theology of culture: especially Western, post-Christendom, globalized, and pluralistic cultures;
- There is a growing awareness of the need to rethink a theology of mission, in the light of postcolonial, indigenous, and Majority World thought.

One area that is rarely explored is the relationship between the Spirit of Christ and the mission of the church. This is problematic, given the Trinitarian basis of mission. And also given the crucial role of the Spirit in constituting and empowering the church. It is time missional theology seriously considered the relationship between the Spirit and the missional church.

2. Missional Gospel (Gospel, Hermeneutics & Biblical Interpretation)

Missional interpretation of Scripture has matured and thrived during the last couple of decades. Important texts in the field of missional interpretation include:

- Dan Beeby's *Canon and Mission*
- David Bosch's *Witness to the World*
- James Brownson's *Speaking the Truth in Love*
- John Driver's *Images of the Church in Mission*
- Arthur Glasser's *Announcing the Kingdom*
- Michael Goheen's *A Light to the Nations*
- Scot McKnight's *The King Jesus Gospel*
- Johannes Nissen's *New Testament and Mission*
- James Okoye's *Israel and the Nations*
- Howard Peskett and Vinoth Ramachandra's *The Message of Mission*
- Brian Russell's *(re)Aligning with God*
- Christopher Wright's "Mission as a Matrix for Interpretation of Scripture and Biblical Theology" in Craig Bartholomew's (ed.) *Out of Egypt*
- Christopher Wright's *Truth with a Mission*

This literature seeks a missional interpretation of the nature, formation, and application of Scripture. Missional interpretations of Scripture pursue sophisticated approaches to biblical interpretation. They show the relationship between the missional nature of the Trinity, the kingdom, the Scriptures, and the church. This isn't just gathering biblical proof texts for the church's mission. This is tracing the missiological themes that run throughout Scripture.

Missional interpretation scrutinizes historical approaches to biblical and theological interpretation. It questions the influence of modernity, Christendom, and Western prejudices (among other things). It approaches biblical interpretation through three key lenses. These are: (1) the whole of Scripture, (2) the broad experiences of God's people, (3) and the diverse contexts and cultures in which the gathered and sent church exists.

David Bosch asserts that the Scriptures are a "missionary document." David Bosch (*Transforming Mission*) and Christopher Wright (*The Mission of God*) agree here. They want to move away from superficial missional interpretations. These include such things as "Biblical Foundations for Mission."[3] Wright cautions that, "In searching the Scriptures for a biblical foundation for mission, we are likely to find what we brought with us—our own conception of mission, now comfortingly festooned with biblical luggage tags."[4] Ouch!

Christopher Wright goes on to outline the ways in which mission produced the Bible. He shows how mission redefines our understanding of biblical authority. A missional interpretation of Scripture leads us to reading biblical imperatives and indicates together. "God with a mission" is our interpretive starting point. This has missional implications for our theologies of church and mission. "God with a mission" shapes our biblical interpretation. It forms our expressions of faith, church, and mission.[5]

In his historical analysis, David Bosch draws on the work of Martin Hengel and Martin Khalif. Bosch shows how missionary zeal and problems shaped early Christian theology and history. Early Christians forged their theology "in the context of an 'emergency situation', of a church which, because of its missionary encounter with the world, was *forced* to theologize."[6]

A missional interpretation of the Bible does not attempt to domesticate the Scriptures. Domestication often occurs when we read Scripture through one, exclusive interpretive approach. Missional interpretation demands a broader and more open and courageous approach. Missional interpretation must be multi-voiced and multi-cultural to be worthwhile.

Johannes Nissen writes, "A missiologically relevant reading of the Bible will not lead to any universal missiology but (as in the New Testament itself) to a variety of missiological perspectives. Different theologies of mission do not necessarily exclude each other, 'they form a multicolored mosaic of complementary and mutually enriching as well as mutually challenging frames of reference.' Instead of trying to formulate one uniform view of mission we should rather attempt to chart the contours of a pluriverse of missiology in a universe of mission."[7]

Similarly, David Bosch speaks of the "theologies of mission" present in the New Testament.[8] We must complement these theologies of mission with a broad range of missional interpretations of Scripture. We need to stay open to fresh possibilities and perspectives, especially in a globalized, multi-vocal context.

God's people need to cultivate missional interpretations of Scripture. We do this for and through a global church.

CHURCH

3. Missional Understandings of the Church (Missional Ecclesiology)

Michael Goheen's *A Light to the Nations* introduces key themes found in missional ecclesiology. *Missional ecclesiology* is a term used for a *missional understanding* of the nature, structures, ministries, and purposes of the church. Goheen introduces the biblical and theological themes that guide and undergird missional ecclesiology.

Michael Goheen doesn't emphasize missiology at the expense of missional ecclesiology. Instead, he shows the link between missional ecclesiology and the mission of God in the world and in human history. We can never appreciate our missional identity without a robust missional ecclesiology. This ecclesiology places mission at the center of the church's essence, identity, and activities. Goheen shows how the church's self-understanding as a missional community has been obscured. This is especially the case at particular times in its history. He explains how ecclesiological images shape the church. These images influence its self-understanding and pursuit of mission. Goheen roots missional ecclesiology in the gospel and Scripture. He is careful to paint a biblical picture of the relationship between the gospel, the missional church, and the biblical story.

Michael Goheen returns to central themes. He uses these themes as he traces the missional nature of the church in the biblical narrative. Together, as the church, we take part in God's mission. We understand our mission in the light of the biblical narrative. We have a communal mission. And, while there are points of continuity and discontinuity, we continue the mission of Israel, Jesus, and the early church. We do this as we recognize God's missional nature and the missional nature of the church. We take part in God's mission to humanity. God outworks this mission in human history, and invites our participation.

Key works in missional ecclesiology include:

- Johannes Blauw's *The Missionary Nature of the Church*
- Rodney Clapp's *A Peculiar People*
- John Driver's *Images of the Church in Mission*
- Michael Goheen's *A Light to the Nations*
- Darrell Guder's (ed.) *Missional Church*
- Darrell Guder's *The Continuing Conversion of the Church*
- Graham Hill's *Salt, Light, and a City* [9]
- Scot McKnight's *Kingdom Conspiracy*
- Jürgen Moltmann's *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*
- Alan Roxburgh and M. Scott Boren's *Introducing the Missional Church*

- Howard Snyder's *The Community of the King*
- Craig Van Gelder's *The Essence of the Church*
- Miroslav Volf's *After Our Likeness*

Missional ecclesiology deals with such themes as:

- The ontological ground of the church's missional nature (i.e. the Trinity's missional nature and purposes);
- The *missio Dei* and the church's nature, community, and mission;
- A missional theology of the church—its nature, purpose, structures, activities, and ministries;
- The relationship between the church and the kingdom and reign of God;
- The correspondence between the Trinitarian mission and the church's mission (and the limits of the analogy);
- Missional models, practices, and images of the church.

The area of missional ecclesiology is too thin. We need many more works, given its importance to missional theology and practice.[11]

4. Missional Praxis

Praxis means the embodiment, realization, and practical application of ideas and theologies. There are many quality books in the field of missional praxis. There have been many contributions to this area during the last few decades. This area includes reflection on missional leadership, discipleship, worship, education, and reformation. I have separated these five into their own sections below (see areas 5 to 9). I have done this because they all involve significant bodies of literature.

Some influential books on missional praxis include:

1 ***On missional churches:***

- Neil Cole's *Organic Church*
- Mike Breen's *Leading Missional Communities*
- Brad Brisco and Lance Ford's *Missional Essentials*
- Dave Ferguson and Jon Ferguson's *Exponential*
- David Fitch's *The Great Giveaway*
- Kim Hammond and Darren Cronshaw's *Sentness*
- Alan Hirsch and Michael Frost's *The Shaping of Things to Come*
- Alan Hirsch's *The Forgotten Ways*
- Hugh Halter and Matt Smay's *The Tangible Kingdom*
- Erwin McManus's *The Unstoppable Force*
- Reggie McNeal's *The Present Future*
- Milfred Minatrea's *Shaped by God's Heart*

- Alan Roxburgh's *Missional*
- Ed Stetzer and David Putman's *Breaking the Missional Code*
- Craig Van Gelder's *The Ministry of the Missional Church*
- JR Woodward's *Creating a Missional Culture*

2 ***On missional church planting:***

- Dave and Jon Ferguson's *Exponential*
- Ed Stetzer's *Planting Missional Churches* and *Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age*

3 ***On missional denominations:***

- Craig Van Gelder's (ed.) *The Missional Church and Denominations*
- Eddie Gibbs's *Church Next*
- Chapter 3 of Darrell Guder's (ed.) *Missional Church*

4 ***On missional evangelism:***

- Paul Chilcote and Laceye Warner's (eds.) *The Study of Evangelism*
- George Hunter III's *How to Reach Secular People* and *The Celtic Way of Evangelism*

5 ***On missional house churches:***

- Robert Banks's *Paul's Idea of Community*
- D. Payne's *Missional House Churches*
- Wolfgang Simson's *Houses that Change the World* and *The House Church Book*

6 ***On missional practices:***

- Lois Y. Barrett's *Treasure in Clay Jars*
- James Brownson' *Stormfront*
- Brad Brisco and Lance Ford's *Missional Essentials*
- Michael Frost's *Surprise the World*
- Milfred Minatrea's *Shaped by God's Heart*
- Christine Pohl's *Making Room*
- Rick Rouse and Craig Van Gelder's *A Field Guide for the Missional Church*

7 ***On missional practices in urban settings (urban mission):***

- Ash Barker's *Make Poverty Personal*
- Viv Grigg's *Companion to the Poor*

The type of issues covered by missional praxis include:

***1. Missional Leadership*:** There are many books on missional leadership. This includes developing missional leaders, and cultivating missional leadership teams. Much of this material reflects on the nature, outlook, and practices of missional leadership. See the section that follows later in this blog, on the area of *missional leadership*.

2. Missional Systems, Structures, and Programs: Missional books explore how missional ecclesiology shapes the church's systems, structures, and programs. Scripture, context, experience, culture, and prayer must guide the church's missional life. These things influence the church's mission. We must root them in the missional structures of our churches.

Local churches need to explore Scripture and missiology, as they remissionalize structures and ministries. They must reactivate their missional passion and life together. They do this in the light of many things. These include urbanization, secularism, technology, social mobility, and multiculturalism. In this environment, remissionalization of churches is crucial.[12]

Organizations often operate with either *bounded-set* or *centered-set* structures and relationships. *Bounded-set churches* establish rigid spiritual, social, and cultural boundaries. These boundaries define who is in or out. *Centered-set churches* are more flexible. They invite people to join them on a pilgrimage toward a central set of values and commitments. *Missional communities* have structures and systems that reflect both these dynamics. They are welcoming centered-set congregations, with incarnationally shaped mission strategies. At the same time, they have a bounded-set identity, as a counter-cultural covenant people.[13] The Gospel and Our Culture Network in North America examine bounded and centered sets. They describe the interaction between these sets in missional congregations. Missional communities may act as "a continuum from centered to bounded set."[14]

Missional communities have Christ-centered systems, structures, and programs. Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch say missional churches design these as "(1) organic, (2) reproducible, and (3) sustainable learning systems."[15] Renewal of churches involves reshaping systems and structures. This means applying systems thinking in congregations.[16]

3. Missional Experimentation: Innovation is a core value among missional practitioners. The Gospel and Our Culture Network in North America examine nine congregations that are experimenting with mission. These groups show that innovative mission is present in both new and established churches.[17]

Stuart Murray categorizes missional churches. He shows the range of missional experimentation happening in Western cultures. These include churches in cafés and workplaces, pubs and clubs, cyberspace and specific subcultures. There are churches in youth settings, indigenous neighborhoods, and marginalized contexts. Other experiments have emerged. These include midweek churches, 7-day-a-week churches, and post-Alpha-course churches. Murray describes "organic" churches, "menu" churches, and contemporary liturgical churches. Multi-congregational and multicultural churches are becoming common. New forms of monasticism have emerged. These include "common-purse" communities and "boiler rooms." These modern monastic churches practice imaginative and ancient-future forms of prayer and worship.

All this shows the extent to which experimentation is developing alongside the missional literature.[18] Unfortunately, most of these examples are edgy, urban, artistic, or young-adult. We need more experimentation among established, older, and mainstream churches. Ordinary churches and pastors often find it difficult to relate to edgy examples. We need more examples of innovation from ordinary congregations. This will help established churches and their leaders see that experimentation is possible.

4. Planting New Missional Communities: An emphasis on planting new missional communities complements the focus I've described on experimentation. The literature also describes the shape of specialized training for planters.[19] It is vital to plant "new, organic, missional-incarnational communities of faith in multiple contexts." This is because planting embodies missional theology. Planting is "an essential part of any authentic missional strategy." Worthwhile planting is culturally specific and pluriform. It isn't "constrained by the belief in the parish model of church territorialism."[20]

5. Releasing all Believers for Service, Ministry, and Mission: This is an emphasis on the participatory nature of Christian community and mission. Missional witness is more credible and effective if it comes from the whole body, and not merely from a professional guild. David Bosch says that it's not good enough for only *a religious class* to take part in ministry. The whole, local, missional, and worshiping community must serve and minister. All believers need opportunities to take part in mission. When this happens, the division between sacred and secular diminishes. David Bosch appeals to Lesslie Newbigin as he makes this case. "The only hermeneutic of the gospel is a congregation of men and women who believe it and live by it."[21]

6. Missional Spirituality and Discipleship: Authentic spirituality and discipleship involves participation in the trinitarian communion and mission. This participation is personal. But, above all, it is within community. Such discipleship leads to communion with others and God. It also leads to personal, spiritual, and relational growth. Genuine discipleship manifests itself in a missional and fellowshipping lifestyle. See the section on the area of *missional discipleship*.

7. Embracing Communitas: Drawing on the research of Victor Turner, Alan Roxburgh and Alan Hirsch introduce the concept of *communitas*.[22] *Communitas* is a term used by cultural anthropologists. It refers to the profound community, solidarity, and togetherness felt by groups in transition. This is especially the case if the change and transition is extreme. In these periods of social upheaval, a group's social relationships alter. They form a new collective identity. These can be periods of uncertainty, chaos, upheaval, and fear. But they can also be times of courage, fresh identity, common mission, and deep community.

Churches can go through similar periods of upheaval and *liminality*. Groups are in a *liminal* stage, when they are in transition from their old ways of conceiving their identity, theology, mission, or community, and a new way. Positive changes can occur, if they work with the Spirit, embrace the change, and receive help. They can experience community in fresh and profound ways. And express renewed identity, purpose, and mission.[23]

8. Reinventing Theological and Ministry Education: Some missional leaders examine the changes needed in theological education. Theological curricula, methods, and ethos need renewal, to equip people for mission. And to help students understand faith and church through a missional lens. See the section on the area of *missional education*.

9. Pursuing Justice, Mercy, and Compassion: Churches need a biblical theology of God's concern for the poor, oppressed, and needy. Justice, mercy, and compassion are primary themes in Jesus' description of the values of his kingdom. These are our *missionary* responsibilities. This is integral to any theology that embraces a missional understanding of the nature and purpose of the church.[24] Additionally, missional apologetics and evangelism must be holistic.[25]

The missional church needs to get better at listening to the voices of the marginalized and vulnerable. We are good at *taking about* these groups, but terrible at *listening to* and *learning from* them.

10. Worship, Liturgy, the Arts, Sacrament, and Tradition: In the missional literature, there are diverse views on the role of these. See the section on the area of *missional worship*.

11. Denominations, Unity, and Cooperative Mission: Books on mission leadership rarely deal with the role of denominations and cooperative mission. Craig Van Gelder and Darrell Guder are beginning to address this issue. *Missional Church* dedicates a chapter to the historic development of denominations. The book considers the biblical, theological, historical, sociological, and organizational role of missional denominations.[26] The authors conclude, "A missional ecclesiology takes seriously the organizational life of the church, both in its expressions of local missional congregations and in paralocal missional structures." They call for an evaluation of these systems through the lens of missional ecclesiology.

Denominational leaders need to reflect the missional aspects of unity, catholicity, and apostolicity. Craig Van Gelder follows this work up with *The Missional Church and Denominations*. Missional thinkers need to do more work in this area. How do we help denominations grasp the value of missional systems and structures and leadership?

12. Missional Evangelism: This is another underdeveloped area of missional praxis. George Hunter III looks to Celtic mission and to communication theory for inspiration. He reflects on the evangelistic challenges and opportunities of secular cultures. Hunter asks, "How do we develop evangelistic approaches with an apostolic impulse and relational theology?" Such evangelism involves the whole people of God and releases apostolic congregations. Hunter calls this recovering the *lay apostolate*. "Our greatest imperative in the secular West is to recover the apostolic mission of the laity."[27] "Our greatest priority is to raise up a very great number of intentionally missionary congregations."[28]

In *The Study of Evangelism*, Paul Chilcote and Laceye Warner compile a formidable collection of essays on evangelism. These lay theological foundations for evangelism and missional ecclesiology. In the process, they have done evangelism a great service. This area requires further research and examination. How do we catalyze mission among local neighborhoods, which takes evangelism and relationship serious?

13. Missional House Churches: Robert Banks, J. D. Payne, and Wolfgang Simson analyze the history, profile, practices, and multiplication of missional house churches. They call for the reformation of the church through the multiplication of house churches. They write of the missional DNA of house churches. House churches have missional enzymes. They are decentralized, apostolic, acephalous, persecution-proof, and replicable. House churches can also release the fivefold ministry gifts (Ephesians 4:11).

14. Missional Practices: Many books have shown up recently, outlining the practices of missional disciples and leaders and congregations. Missional practices are regular, disciplined, and missional habits and commitments. Individuals and communities form these practices. They do so for the sake of worship, discipleship (personal and corporate), and mission.

Milfred Minatrea writes much on the practices of missional churches. "Perhaps the most basic characteristic of missional churches is that they consistently focus beyond their own survival as an entity and invite others in the journey toward the heart of God. Observation soon reveals other common practices. Nine such practices repeatedly surfaced in churches that have committed to the missional journey."[29] Minatrea lists these (here I mostly use his own words):

1 Having a high threshold for membership;
2 Being real, not real religious;
3 Teaching to obey rather than to know;
4 Rewriting worship every week;
5 Living apostolically;
6 Expecting to change the world;
7 Ordering actions according to purpose;
8 Measuring growth by capacity to release, not retain;
9 Placing Kingdom concerns first.

Christine Pohl challenges the church to reclaim the practice of hospitality.[30] Lois Y. Barrett et al. describe eight practices of missional congregations. Rick Rouse and Craig Van Gelder list seven. Michael Frost defines six. As you can see, missional theologians and practitioners are deeply interested in missional practices. How do we nurture and catalyze and reimagine Christian practices, cultivating missional disciples?[31]

5. Missional Leadership

Missional leadership is a burgeoning area of research and practice. Mark Lau Branson teaches alongside Alan Roxburgh in the Fuller Seminary Doctor of Ministry "Missional Leadership Cohort." Branson says that apostolic, missional leadership functions in at least three ways in congregations:

- *Interpretive leadership* cultivates a community of interpreters. These pay attention to God, texts, contexts, and congregations.
- *Relational leadership* nurtures human connections—groups, teams, networks, partnerships, friendships, and families.
- *Implemental leadership* fosters strategies and structures. These help congregations embody gospel's message, reconciliation, and justice in local and broader contexts.

For Mark Lau Branson and Alan Roxburgh, these arenas of leadership enable congregations to pursue mission. Missional leadership interprets cultures and communities, and builds healthy relationships. And it develops organizational practices, strategies, systems, and structures that enable mission. "It is crucial that a congregation's primary leaders nurture capacities and skills in all three spheres, and that they are attentive to cohesive and coherent practices in the context of constant change."[32]

Some of the better books on missional leadership include:

- Mike Breen's *Multiplying Missional Leaders*
- Neil Cole's *Organic Leadership*
- Earl Crep's *Off-Road Disciplines*
- Lance Ford's *Unleader*
- Will Mancini's *Church Unique*
- Alan Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk's *The Missional Leader*
- Alan Roxburgh's *Missional Map-Making*
- Craig Van Gelder's (ed.) *The Missional Church and Leadership Formation*
- JR Woodward's *Creating a Missional Culture*

The literature on missional leadership asserts that missional leaders have these characteristics:

1. Missional Leadership is Apostolic: Christendom churches place undue emphasis on pastors and teachers. Too often, hierarchical leadership replaces servantship. The church needs to recover the fivefold leadership gifts of Ephesians 4:11-–13. Apostles, prophets, and evangelists (APEs) compliment the other gifts. They restore the missional impulse of congregations, in apostolic and incarnational ways.[34] Their functions act in synergy. This builds community, releases mission, leads through organizational lifecycles, and creates leadership systems. The effectiveness of this system breaks down without the groundbreaking leadership of APEs. Apostolic spirit, imagination, and pioneering are crucial. These release and magnify the mission and health of the church.[35] Each of the APEPT gifts is necessary for congregational wholeness and missional effectiveness. APEPT leadership, when practiced well, counters the leadership excesses of traditional or renewalist churches.[36]

***2. Missional Leadership is Cultivation*:** In recent times, pastoral images have accumulated. Pastoral images now include such things as therapist, spiritual guide, caregiver, entrepreneur, and strategist. Robert Banks and Bernice Ledbetter examine the origins and developments of leadership images. They show how Christian leadership images reflect those in popular culture. Images are products of their time.[37] Missional leadership, however, is the art of cultivation. Missional leaders foster cultural analysis in congregations. They encourage co-learning networks, fresh approaches to Scripture, and new practices, habits, and norms.[38]

3. Missional Leadership is Multifaceted: Missional leadership has interrelated themes. These include:

- A missiological understanding of leadership, and its nature and functions;
- The priesthood of all believers;
- Team ministry consensus, and leading within missional leadership communities;
- Leadership recognition that results from a deep spiritual life and calling;
- Leading missional change and transition (including navigating the dynamics of liminal seasons);
- Leadership is cultivation of a congregation's missional imagination, culture, actions, and change readiness;
- Organic, intuitive, quiet, upside-down, "unleading", and "servantship" approaches to leadership. These push back on models of leadership shaped by controlling metaphors.[39]

Robert Webber claims that this "new leadership is a dynamic, unfolding interplay of 'action-reflection-action' that touches every aspect of Christian life, thought, and ministry."[40] Various types of reflection accompany missional action. Reflection may be cultural, missiological, ministerial, collegial, spiritual, and theological. The *missio Dei* shapes this reflection.

4. Missional Leadership is Servantship: Here's my definition of servantship:

Servantship is following Jesus Christ, the servant Lord, and his mission. It's a life of discipleship to him. It's patterned after his self-emptying, humility, sacrifice, love, values, and mission. *Servantship* is humbly valuing others more than yourself. It's looking out for the interests and wellbeing of others. *Servantship* is the cultivation of the same attitude of mind as that of Christ Jesus. It's making yourself nothing. It's being a servant and humbling yourself. And it's submitting yourself to the will and purposes of the triune God. Since *servantship* is the imitation of Christ, it involves an unreserved participation in his mission. (By this, I mean the *missio Dei*—the trinitarian mission of God). *Servantship* recognizes in word and thought and deed that Christian leaders are servants. "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

6. Missional Discipleship/Spirituality

The missional conversation needs to further explore the shape of missional discipleship and spirituality. The lack of material in this area is perplexing. It is especially mystifying given the multiplication of books on discipleship over the past twenty years. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Richard Foster, Bill Hull, Greg Ogden, Dallas Willard, Eugene Peterson, and others have helped us understand Christian spirituality. It is time to examine the contours and practices of missional spirituality.

A few authors explore the shape of missional discipleship and spirituality. These include:

- Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch's section on "Messianic Spirituality" in *The Shaping of Things to Come*
- Michael Frost's *Exiles*
- Scot McKnight's *The Jesus Creed*
- Roger Helland and Leonard Hjalmarson's *Missional Spirituality*
- Alan and Debra Hirsch's *Untamed*
- Barry Jones' *Dwell*
- Mark Maddox and Jay Richard Akkerman's *Missional Discipleship*
- David Platt's *Radical*
- David Putman's *Breaking the Missional Code*
- Ed Stetzer and Philip Nation's *Compelled by Love*

These writers have begun to consider particular themes:

- Approaches to missional discipleship and spirituality in post-Christendom, pluralistic, globalized, and consumerist cultures.
- In *Exiles*, Michael Frost investigates diverse and interrelated discipleship themes. Frost says that we must appreciate the role of community in discipleship. We ought to pursue a radical and subversive discipleship, modeled on the life of Jesus, and committed to Christ's cause. We need to be authentic, offering generous and hospitable service. And we must respond to injustice, oppression, and ecological challenges.
- In *Breaking the Discipleship Code*, David Putman deals with the nature of missional discipleship. Missional disciples engage the world around them. They engage politics, church structures, military conflict, and ecology. They address consumerism, suffering, education, religiosity, and family. Their contemplation leads to radical action.
- In *Untamed*, Alan and Debra Hirsch show how missional disciples respond to culture, personal spirituality, mission, and God.
- In *Compelled by Love*, Ed Stetzer and Philip Nation show the connections between our theologies and our practices of love, mission, and discipleship.
- In *The Jesus Creed*, Scot McKnight shows how discipleship on mission is essentially about loving God and loving others.

These books on missional discipleship are thought provoking. Hopefully, the next decade will see many more treatments on missional spirituality and discipleship.

7. Missional Worship

Missional writings contain mixed perspectives on the role of worship and the creative arts in mission. Missional authors have mixed views on contemplative traditions and liturgies and sacraments in the church's witness and worship. Some writers consider these things central. Creative worship is relevant for postmodern cultures, and facilitates the church's mission. Others see these matters as peripheral: other missional issues are more important. Craig Van Gelder places all the church's activities in the context of worship. He says that even though there are specific forms and occasions for worship, the truth is that all Christian life is worship.[41]

Let's turn to those who consider gathered worship dynamics as pivotal for missional churches. These writers often identify with—or are sympathetic to—the alternative worship movement. *Alt.worship* is big in North America and Europe. Generation X and Y tend to make up alternative worship churches. Alt.worship churches shape creative, postmodern worship services by blending many things. These include liturgy, hymns, charismatic gifts, contemporary styles, narrative messages, poetry, the creative arts, hybrids of ancient and contemporary music (for example, Gregorian chants mixed to techno beats), and labyrinths and other contemplative prayer practices.

Alt.worship churches blend many other forms of participatory, multisensory worship experiences. The goal is to make churches and their worship relevant for an emerging, younger generation. It is to explore worship with creativity and passion.

The emerging-missional church movement and the alternative worship movement are not synonymous. And neither movement is *necessarily* missional. But emerging-missional and alt.worship churches "share in common the desire to be authentic, to be contextual, and to be community."[42]

Influential books in this field include:

- Mike Riddell, Mark Pierson, and Cathy Kirkpatrick's *The Prodigal Project*
- Jonny Baker and Doug Gay's *Alternative Worship*
- Mark Liederbach and Alvin Reid's *The Convergent Church*

For these authors, creative worship through liturgy, sacred space, prayer, contemplation, music, symbols, ritual, creative arts, and sacraments, means enhanced relevance and mission.[43] These churches explore ancient-future approaches to faith and worship. The aim is mission to postmodern cultures. Alt.worship leaders draw on the Church Fathers, mystical Christian traditions, and historical theology. They consult these for apologetic, spiritual, and missional guidance.[44]

The theologically oriented books in this field include:

- Ruth Meyers's *Missional Worship, Worshipful Mission*
- Clayton Schmit's *Sent and Gathered*
- Steven Croft, Ian Mobsby, and Stephanie Spellers's *Ancient Faith, Future Mission*

Let's turn to authors who see creative worship and the arts as peripheral or secondary when establishing missional communities. Alan Roxburgh serves as an example. He sees discipleship emerging "out of prayer, study, dialogue, and worship by a community learning to ask the questions of obedience *as they are engaged directly in mission*."[45] Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch see most of these things as optional in missional communities. When used, these arts should "provoke a sense of wonder and awe." They should inspire creativity, and lead to authentic incarnational mission. Leonard Sweet describes gathered worship that is "experiential, participatory, image-driven, and communal."[46]

These authors are not discounting the significance of creativity in corporate worship. Nor are they dismissing the need for the people of God to worship in public ways. Yet, they are keeping mission central. Experimentation in worship must never become an end in itself.

It seems that the place of worship and liturgy in the missional church is not settled. This discussion requires further work during the next few decades.

8. Missional Education

Few authors have explored missional approaches to theological and ministry education. Some important and provocative texts include:

- Daniel Aleshire's *Earthen Vessels*
- Robert Banks's *Reenvisioning Theological Education*
- Jeffrey Greenman's *Toward a Missional Paradigm for Theological Education*
- Bernhard Ott's *Beyond Fragmentation*
- Peter Penner's (ed.) *Theological Education as Mission*
- JR Rozko's *Toward a Missional Vision of Theological Education: http://www.academia.edu/4148045/Toward_a_Missional_Vision_of_Theological_Education*

Missional authors question the shape of established forms of theological and ministry education. There is an important reason for this. The shape of theological education has real implications for the mission and health of the church in the West. Webber writes, "The mission of the church in education is not to provide factual information that is memorized but wisdom that forms character and is embodied in life."[47]

Missional education contextualizes curricula, ethos, and methods. Missional education prioritizes missional theology when it develops these three areas. Seminaries that are serious about mission invite students, pastors, and churches to help them shape education. They foster accountability and dialogue with their students and the churches. People training for missional leadership need tools. Tools that help them diagnose and engage their particular, individual, societal, and contextual needs. They also need opportunities to plan the integration of theoretical and practical experiences. Such integration helps them address the needs they have diagnosed. And form relevant missional responses.

Students need forums to test their individual and collective progress in missional tasks. They need to form deep missional theologies that sustain missional practices. Training bodies need to show a reciprocal, democratic, enabling, and participatory style of leadership. This way graduates learn to reflect this in their own ministries and missional contexts.

Missional education requires an *Instruction-Action-Reflection* or *Action-Learning-Discipleship* approach to missional and pastoral education.[48] This involves integration. Colleges need to integrate theology and practice with fieldwork. Opportunities should exist for students to integrate theology, spiritual growth, and missional competencies. The aim is to equip students for missional leadership. This leadership equipping is for local and broader contexts. Students must develop within their local churches and communities. They need competent mentoring and supervision. And they need coaching. As they integrate theology, theory, practice, and spirituality, they become competent missional leaders.[49]

Many seminaries now offer training in missional leadership and theology. This includes postgraduate awards, ministry cohorts, and research programs. Sometimes these are pastoral leadership programs with a missional flavor.

Here are some examples of seminaries running such programs:

- Asbury Theological Seminary, KY
- Cliff College, UK
- Durham University, UK
- Fuller Theological Seminary, CA
- George Fox University, OR
- Houston Graduate School of Theology, TX
- Luther Seminary, MN
- Morling Theological College, Sydney, Australia
- Multnomah University, IL
- Northern Seminary, IL
- Northwest Nazarene University, ID
- Northwest University, WA
- Princeton Theological Seminary, NJ

- Redcliffe College, UK
- Regents Theological College, UK
- Ridley Theological College, Melbourne, Australia
- Rochester College, IN
- Seattle School of Theology, WA
- Springdale College, UK
- Stirling Theological College, Melbourne, Australia
- Wales Evangelical School of Theology, UK
- Wheaton College, IL
- Whitley Theological College, Melbourne, Australia
- Wycliffe College, Canada

That's just to name a few. When this book goes to print there will most likely be many more.

9. Missional Reformation

Over the last few decades, there has been a clear resurgence in Reformed theology. These theologians are sometimes called the neo-Reformed. I am sure you know that "missional" is not the primary way these writers describe themselves (if they use it at all!). But a few of them explore the missional dimensions of Reformed, Calvinist theology. Neo-Reformed views about God, the church, the world, and the gospel, shape their theology of mission. Many are reading mission theology and adapting it to their neo-Reformed theological perspectives.

This has resulted in some valuable missiological reflection. Missional theologians dare not ignore the reflections of this group. Notable persons include Tim Chester, Mark Dever, Mark Driscoll, Tim Keller, John MacArthur, and John Piper.

Tim Chester, Mark Driscoll, and John Piper have been especially influential among younger evangelicals. Starting with Reformed theology, six of Chester's books deal with mission-related themes. Chester considers missional churches, social engagement, hospitality, justice, and mercy. These books are: *A Meal with Jesus*; *Everyday Church*; *Good News for the Poor*; *Justice, Mercy and Humility*; *Mission and the Coming of God*; and, *Total Church*.

Mark Driscoll has had public quarrels with the emerging church, of which he was once a part. He has particularly disagreed with *Emergent Village* in North America. But Driscoll is enthusiastic for Reformed theology and passionate about evangelism. He is an advocate for Reformed-missional churches (hence his term "Reformission").

Other important neo-Reformed books on missional engagement and theology include:

- Mark Dever's *The Gospel and Personal Evangelism*
- John MacArthur's *Evangelism*
- Mark Driscoll's *Confessions of a Reformission Rev.* and *The Radical Reformission*
- John Piper's *Let the Nations Be Glad*

In *Let the Nations Be Glad*, John Piper calls for a broad approach to mission. Piper says that mission should not only be interest in local neighborhoods, cities, and networks. Mission must focus on unreached people groups, nations, and languages. Like other neo-Reformed thinkers, Piper has a Reformed and Calvinist vision of missional churches. He prioritizes the sovereignty of God and the supremacy of Christ. Piper writes a lot on the fallenness of humanity, and the nature of the atonement. He values the proclamation of the gospel. And he frames gospel-centered mission around obedient worship. This is a passion for a glorious, merciful, holy, loving, gracious, and just God. This passion inspires mission.

John Piper writes, "Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Mission exists because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man… Worship, therefore, is the fuel and goal of missions. It's the goal of missions because in missions we simply aim to bring the nations into the white-hot enjoyment of God's glory. The goal of missions is the gladness of the peoples in the greatness of God."[50]

CULTURE

9. Missional Emergence

Emerging churches focus on relevance to postmodern cultures. They experiment with alternative worship. They advocate a "generous orthodoxy," as Christians from all persuasions learn from each other. They nurture missional living and authentic community.

Some of the main books in this area include:

- Ray Anderson's *An Emergent Theology for Emerging Churches*
- Kester Brewin's *The Complex Christ*
- Eddie Gibbs and Ryan Bolger's *Emerging Churches*
- Dan Kimball's *The Emerging Church*
- Gerardo Marti and Gladys Ganiel's *The Deconstructed Church*
- Brian McLaren's *A Generous Orthodoxy*, *A New Kind of Christian*, and *The Church on the Other Side*
- Michael Moynagh's *intro*
- Doug Pagitt and Tony Jones's (eds.) *An Emergent Manifesto of Hope*
- Steve Taylor's *The Out of Bounds Church*

Eddie Gibbs and Ryan Bolger provide the best overview of this group. *Emerging Churches* is a well-written text. It demonstrates the breadth of groups participating in the emerging church conversation. It examines the nine coherent and identifiable practices of emerging churches. And it provides concrete examples of such communities around the world. Fifty leaders of emerging communities tell their stories and share their aims. According to Gibbs and Bolger, the nine practices of emerging churches are:

- Identification with Jesus
- Desire for social transformation
- Community orientation
- Hospitality and welcome
- Generosity
- Participation
- Creativity
- Mutual and egalitarian leadership
- An emphasis on spirituality

Emergent Village is the best-known network of emerging church leaders. Emergent claim four values and "practices that flow from them." Here are the values: (1) Commitment to God in the way of Jesus; (2) Commitment to the church in all its forms; (3) Commitment to God's world, and; (4) Commitment to one another. They have come under scrutiny in recent times for their theology. Don Carson has been especially critical. But there have been some recent changes in this group. Among this group, there has been a shift away from a focus on emerging forms of church, and a shift toward a focus on missional theology.[51]

10. Missional Prediction

A few Christian futurists have had a particular enthusiasm for missional theology and praxis. The best-known futurists with such a missional concern are Leonard Sweet, and Tom and Christine Sine.

In *SoulTsunami*, Leonard Sweet invites the church to engage with changing Western cultures. "Leonard Sweet explores ten key 'futuribles' (precision guesses that fall short of predictions), expanding on and relating topics ranging from the re-entry of theism and spiritual longing in contemporary society, to the impact of modern technology, to the global renaissance, to models for the church to reach people caught in the cultural maelstrom."[52]

In *The Mustard Seed Conspiracy* and *The New Conspirators*, Tom and Christine Sine call Christians to radical discipleship. According to the Sines, simple living and Christian discipleship go hand in glove. God is "conspiring through those in the emerging, missional, mosaic, and monastic streams of the church to give creative expression to that world that is already there."[53] *The New Conspirators* surveys important changes in Western cultures. Our understanding of God's kingdom and reign must influence our engagement with the world. The Sines call the church to embrace missional imagination. Such imagination pursues stewardship, presence, simple living, community, innovation, and mission. This is about the "sowing of small seeds."

12. Missional Contrast

The growth of neo-Anabaptist theology parallels the resurgence in neo-Reformed theology. Like the neo-Reformed, the neo-Anabaptists care about the church's mission in contemporary culture. But they come at the question from different assumptions. And their ecclesiologies are different.

I might have placed the field of *missional contrast* under the broad category of *church* in this blog. But I have chosen the category of *culture* because of the concerns of these writers for various cultures. They write about the different cultures of the church, the kingdom, and the world. And they examine the relationships between these cultures.

The neo-Anabaptist evangelicals embrace the political and missional dimensions of the Radical Reformation. The Radical Reformation included the Anabaptist, Mennonite, and Confessing Churches. Neo-Anabaptists embrace pacifism and social justice. They believe that the church should be counter-cultural. The politics and ethics and economics of Christ's kingdom are different from those of the world. The church must witness to Christ as an "alternative culture" in today's post-Christendom settings. Neo-Anabaptists see the church as a contrast-society. They describe the relationship between God's reign and the public and political life of the church. This political and public dimension of the church can aid or inhibit its mission. These days, many people put missional theology into conversation with Radical Reformation thought.

A growing number of missional theologians and practitioners show affection for Radical Reformation ideas (or at least express sentiments that remind one of Radical Reformation thought). Key personalities include Lois Y. Barrett, Greg Boyd, Barry Harvey, Douglas John Hall, Stanley Hauerwas, Alan Kreider, Philip Kenneson, Scot McKnight, Shane Claiborne, Stuart Murray, Wilbert Shenk, William Willimon, and John Howard Yoder.

Foundational books include:

- Shane Claiborne's *The Irresistible Revolution*
- Darrell Guder's (ed.) *Missional Church*
- Barry Harvey's *Another City*
- Stanley Hauerwas's *After Christendom?*
- Philip Kenneson's *Beyond Sectarianism*
- Scot McKnight's *Jesus Creed*
- Stuart Murray's *Post-Christendom* and *Church After Christendom*
- Wilbert Shenk's *Write the Vision*
- Tom Sine's *The New Conspirators*
- Miroslav Volf's *Exclusion and Embrace*
- John Howard Yoder's *Body Politics* and *The Royal Priesthood*

A few examples illustrate the missional and neo-Anabaptist ideas in this group.

1. In *Beyond Sectarianism*, Philip Kenneson says the church must be a contrast-society in the world. This is as true in post-Christendom as in Christendom. A contrast-society has missional potential. It is communal and incarnational. It forms an alternative ethic and politic and social matrix. It witnesses to the world through these things. Kenneson says that this presents a challenge for the church. How does a contrast-society resist becoming sectarian, and remain missional?

2. In *Another City*, Barry Harvey also says that the church needs to be a contrast-society. The church contrasts the worldviews, political ideologies, and lifestyles of other cultures. This is as true in contemporary Western and globalized cultures, as it was in ancient Rome. The church needs to be "another city." An alternative city: not aligned with or characterized by the politics and ethics and systems of this world. Harvey's scholarship is the strength of the book. He builds his case by examining church history. This includes the following: (1) The Early Church's self-identity as *altera civitas*. (2) The polity and politics of the pre-Constantinian church. (3) The ecclesiologies of the Constantinian, Christendom, and Modern eras. (4) And the church's posture in postmodernity. Harvey offers intriguing proposals for the church as a contrast-society in post-Christendom.

3. In *Write the Vision*, Wilbert Shenk shows how God's people move between apostasy and renewal. The church also moves between missional fervor and disinterest. This has been the case throughout church history. For Shenk, the Christendom period illustrates this. Christendom led to deficient missiology, cultural conformism, and moral ambiguity. During Christendom, the church diluted the gospel and misinterpreted Scripture. And the church formed archaic institutions and practices. Shenk examines the history of the Western church. He considers its integrity, missional vision, and self-understanding. He demonstrates how the church is constantly called back to faithfulness and integrity.

Frequently, the Spirit calls the church back to mission. This happens repeatedly in the history of the church. In post-Christendom, Jesus Christ is again calling his church back to faithful witness. Shenk quotes Karl Rahner. “The community… although a minority… stands under order to engage in missionary activity.”[54] Shenk looks forward to renewed missional passion and integrity in post-Christendom.

In chapter five of *Missional Church*, Lois Y. Barrett articulates this neo-Anabaptist position. I’ve listed a summary of Barrett’s assertions below. And I’ve included supporting perspectives from other writers:[55]

- *The Apostolic Church:* The church is apostolic, unmasking and examining culture, when it does key things. (1) It rejects Christendom accommodation to the principalities and powers. (2) It disestablishes itself. (3) It lets go of a positivistic view of mission, and pursues missional faithfulness. Christendom suppressed authentic mission.
- *The Transforming Church:* The church is a culture. Congregations must be “in the world, but not of the world." The church seeks to transform cultures, and be transformed in the process.
- *The Contrasting Church:* “The missional church in the world is a holy nation among the nations... [This is in contrast] to contemporary understandings of the church as voluntary association, chaplain to society, or vendor of religious goods and services.”[56]
- *The Missional Church:* Mission is about the essential nature of the church. The church is a “city set on a hill,” sharing in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The church has a holy, set-apart, and eschatological nature. It needs to express this holiness and mission within the world, and in contrast to other cultures. Only then will the church be the “light of the world.” This light expresses itself through participation in God’s redeeming activities. Mission is to the world and to all creation.
- *The Jesus-Centered Church:* The church continues Jesus’ work, joining in his ministry, and following his mission. The church has an apostolic mission. It preaches (announcing God’s reign) and teaches (develops citizens for God’s kingdom). It heals and reconciles. The church must embody the “narratives, practices, and convictions” of the reign of God.[57]

Stuart Murray is an influential neo-Anabaptist writer. Murray says that the Anabaptists teach us a lot about being the church in marginalized contexts. Anabaptists help us understand how to do mission in a post-Christendom mode. The church follows Jesus as it relates to cultural and political authorities counter-culturally. The church is prophetic when it provides a just, ethical, and biblical critique of cultures.[58]

13. Missional Analysis

The final area is cultural commentary and analysis. Many books examine cultural and epistemological changes in Western settings. They consider the implications of these for the mission, theology, community, and forms of the church.

Lesslie Newbigin set the standard. His cultural analysis is brilliant in *A Word in Season*, *Foolishness to the Greeks*, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, and *The Other Side of 1984*. David Bosch also wrote a provocative little book called *Believing in the Future*. In that book, Bosch proposed "a missiology of Western culture."

The books on cultural analysis are so many that they are not easily summarized. But when they have missional concerns, they tend to focus on these things:

- The shape of Western, secular, pluralistic, multicultural, consumerist, postmodern, globalized, post-Christendom cultures
- The diverse cultures of contemporary Western churches
- The missional implications of these cultures

Significant books in this field include:

- John Drane's *The McDonaldization of the Church* and *After McDonaldization*
- Michael Frost's *Incarnate*
- Paul Hiebert's *Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts*
- George Hunsberger and Craig Van Gelder's (eds.) *The Church Between Gospel and Culture*
- Gerard Kelly's *Retrofuture*
- Michael Pocock and Gailyn Van Rheenen's *The Changing Face of World Missions*
- Alan Roxburgh's *Reaching a New Generation*
- Mark Sayers's *The Trouble with Paris*
- Robert Webber's *The Younger Evangelicals*

These writers see cultural analysis as critical for the church's mission in changing cultures.

Missional Futures: Glocal Conversations Shaping Missional Theologies & Practices

What is the shape of the Western missional conversation? What themes need further exploration as we consult Majority World and indigenous Christians?

The Western missional conversation challenges us to do the following:

- Allow confronting, uncomfortable questions about the forms and practices and theologies of our churches. And have the courage to respond and change.
- Embrace these questions. Respond with courage. Let go of institutional inertia and personal pride. Pursue the mission of God.
- Construct a missional understanding of the church. And a broader missional theology. These theologies must be robust, systematic, and biblical.
- Move from *attractional* modes of church (*come* to us) to *incarnational* modes (*going* in mission).
- Read the Bible as a missionary document. This means developing many missional theologies and interpretations of Scripture.
- See mission as "a permanent and intrinsic dimension of the church's life."[59] Mission is central, pivotal, and constitutive of the church's nature. Mission is not a contingent, peripheral, optional activity of the church. The church "is missionary by its nature" and "exists by mission, just as fire exists by burning."[60]
- Respond to Lesslie Newbigin's challenge. Congregations are the "only hermeneutic of the gospel." All missionary efforts "have power to accomplish their purpose only as they are rooted in and lead back to a believing community."[61]
- Foster missional imagination and experimental. Such innovation might be in cafés, workplaces, pubs, clubs, and other places. We need to experiment with fresh expressions of church planting.
- Release missional forms of Christian leadership. This includes complementing pastoral and teaching gifts with apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, and pioneering gifts.
- Develop missional approaches to discipleship and spirituality, and to theological and ministry education. Approaches adequate for post-Christendom, secular, multireligious, pluralistic, globalized, networked, and consumerist societies.
- Constantly look out for new horizons. "A church which pitches its tents without constantly looking out for new horizons, which does not continually strike camp, is being untrue to its calling… [We must] play down our longing for certainty, accept what is risky, live by improvisation and experiment."[62]

But we have also identified some themes that need more exploration. This exploration needs to give attention to Majority World, female, and indigenous voices. Missional works do not consult these voices enough.

Underdeveloped themes include fresh approaches to integral and holistic mission, and the formation of missional theologies of the Spirit (we need more missional pneumatologies and pneumatological missions). We also need further missional theologies of Scripture, ecology, justice, race relations, interfaith dialogue, beauty, and servantship. And we need fresh approaches to discipleship, spirituality, education, and ethics.

Another critical question emerges. How do the margins, shunned, despised, silenced, and vulnerable transform and reframe Western missional conversations?

These omissions in the Western missional conversation testify to the need for a fresh set of dialogue partners. Voices from the Majority World and indigenous cultures need inclusion. It is time to do that with the Western missional church conversation.

White, middle-class, Euro-American, tertiary educated males dominate the Western missional conversation. I know I fit that profile! This group still monopolizes missional church conferences and seminars. They get all the book contracts. In fact, this group still controls theology and church in many settings. But this is changing. New voices are rising. These include women, minorities, the poor, indigenous groups, and Majority World leaders. The missional conversation isn't attentive to the Spirit and to God's mission if it ignores these voices. Majority World and indigenous churches often have extraordinary missional vitality. Openness to other voices needs to happen now. It is time for the missional conversation to mature, and to reflect God's global mission.

Philip Jenkins describes how Christianity has moved from the West to Africa, Asia, and Latin America. By the year 2050, only one-fifth of the world's three billion Christians will be non-Hispanic Caucasian. Jenkins believes that this will result in religious, political, and social transformation and struggle. The corresponding growth in Islam will result in tensions and missional challenges.

New Christendoms in the Majority World aren't usually middle class. Poor non-whites living south of Europe and North America are now forming new Christendoms. These new Christendoms are unique. They express the concerns, values, spiritualities, and cultures of those outside the "global north."[63]

The future of the missional conversation is located in *glocal* conversations. Western, Majority World, indigenous and First Nation missional theologians and practitioners will shape the future of the church on mission, through global-local (*glocal*) conversations.

Missional Futures & Glocalization

Glocalization is a term developed by Japanese economists. Roland Robertson popularized the idea. The local (the local, contextual, homogenous) and the global (the global, universal, heterogeneous) interconnect. Our globalized world has blurred the boundaries between the local and the global. The local is a dimension of the global. The global shapes the local. The two are interdependent. They enable each other. They form each other, reciprocally. While tensions exist, the global and local are not opposing forces. They connect—deeply and inextricably. "Not only are the global and the local inseparably intertwined; they also determine each other's respective forms. From a sociological perspective the, *glocalization* means generally the organic and symbiotic relationship between the global and the local."[64]

Al Tizon says that transformational mission is always contextual. It is always rooted in the local and particular—as local churches embody the gospel and witness to Christ. These churches forge their own theological understandings as they do mission together. They engage in transformational practices among the people in their settings. They enjoy worship, mission, and community in their local and particular context. Ideally, the result is unique, contextual theologies and missions.

Simultaneously, global conversations form. They form because of this multitude of local theologies and practices. Local conversations inform and enrich other local conversations, catalyzing global themes and voices. Tizon observes that the global, "owes its existence to local contexts... Shared convictions among the theologies and practices of local contextual realities give shape to its global dimensions."[65]

Majority World, indigenous, and Western theologies are equally contextual. They are equally culture-bound. They are equally particular to their time and location. At times, they are all enlightened or myopic, liberating or constraining, humanizing or objectifying, beautiful or offensive, prophetic or tepid. The local, particular, and cultural shape all these theologies. Conversely, these particular theologies feed and influence global conversations. There is no place, then, for ethnocentrism, colonialism, or elitism. There is no place for theological, missional, cultural, or institutionalized arrogance.

Multiple local contexts and voices come together—intentionally or not—to form global themes and theologies. Conversely, these global realities shape local contexts. Today, local contexts must grapple with "an emerging global culture, i.e., the interacting realities of modernity, postmodernity, and the phenomenon of globalization."[66] Hence, the interdependent and symbiotic relationship between the *local/particular* and the *global/universal*. We call this interdependent relationship between the local and the global, *glocalization*.

The global church needs a thrilling glocal exchange. We need one that we characterize by mutuality, respect, partnership, and symbiosis. Such exchange helps Majority World, indigenous, and Western churches learn from each other. It enables them to pursue missional theology and practice. Together, the church becomes a "city on a hill."

GlobalChurch: Reshaping Our Conversations, Renewing Our Mission, Revitalizing Our Churches

In my new book *GlobalChurch*, I examine the thought of over 100 Majority World thinkers and practitioners (I prefer the term *Majority World* to *non-Western* or *third world*, for reasons I explain in my book). These people come from Africa, Latin America, Asia, indigenous groups, and other parts of the Majority World. One of the reasons I do this is so that Western churches and leaders can better understand the missional nature and practices of the church. These voices help us appreciate what it means to be a radical, striking, alternative city. The quality and quantity of Majority World and indigenous theology is considerable. It will have a lasting and profound impact on the missional conversation in the West.

I have arrived at a firm conviction: worthwhile treatments of the missional church will engage Majority World and indigenous voices. It's time for the church to begin this glocal and intercultural journey, as we explore what God is doing in his global church.

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