

3-1-2011

# The Nature of Evangelism in Missional Churches

Russell York  
ryork@mccs.edu

This research is a product of the Doctor of Ministry (DMin) program at George Fox University. [Find out more](#) about the program.

---

## Recommended Citation

York, Russell, "The Nature of Evangelism in Missional Churches" (2011). *Doctor of Ministry*. Paper 156.  
<http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/dmin/156>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctor of Ministry by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact [arolfe@georgefox.edu](mailto:arolfe@georgefox.edu).

GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

THE NATURE OF EVANGELISM IN MISSIONAL CHURCHES

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF GEORGE FOX EVANGELICAL SEMINARY  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY  
LEADERSHIP IN THE EMERGING CULTURE

BY  
RUSSELL YORK

PORTLAND, OREGON

APRIL 2011



# **DISSERTATION ACCEPTANCE CERTIFICATE**


**RUSSELL YORK**

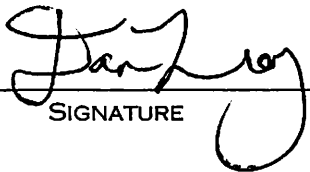
**DATE: MARCH 8, 2011**

**TITLE:**

**THE NATURE OF EVANGELISM IN MISSIONAL CHURCHES**

***WE THE UNDERSIGNED CERTIFY THAT WE HAVE READ  
THIS PROJECT AND APPROVE IT AS ADEQUATE IN  
SCOPE AND QUALITY TO COMPLETE THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY IN  
LEADERSHIP IN THE EMERGING CULTURE DEGREE***

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE DATE 3.8.11

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE DATE 3-8-11



**GEORGE FOX  
EVANGELICAL  
SEMINARY**

## ILLUSTRATIONS

### Figure

1. Evangelical and Mainline Protestant Views on Evangelism ..... 61

### Tables

1. Outsiders' Perceptions of Christianity..... 21
2. Outline of Acts..... 121

## CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	vii
ABSTRACT.....	viii
Chapters	
1. Introduction.....	11
Identifying the Problem .....	11
Reasons Some Missional Churches are Reluctant to Tell the Gospel Story .....	20
Context .....	26
Outline .....	34
2. Cultural Changes Affecting the Church in America.....	37
The Earliest Church and the Birth of Christendom .....	38
The Modern Era: The Death of Christendom.....	41
The Postmodern Era: The Beginning of a Post-Christian America .....	45
Effects of Christendom on Ecclesiology .....	48
Impact of a Changing Culture: Declining Church Attendance .....	51
3. History of Evangelism .....	57
Late Eighteenth through the Early Twentieth Centuries .....	57
Mid-Twentieth Century .....	61
Late Twentieth Century .....	62
4. History of the Missional-Church Movement.....	71
Current Context .....	71
Origins of the Missional-Church Movement.....	74
Lesslie Newbigin's Influence on the Missional-Church Movement.....	77
Evangelical and Mainline Protestant Division .....	89
Gospel and Our Culture Network.....	93
Other Notable Contributors .....	98
5. Mission and Evangelism in Scripture .....	104
Biblical Authority.....	105
Sending Language in the Old Testament: <i>קָנָה</i> .....	107
Sending Language in the New Testament:	
<i>Ἀποστέλλω/Ἀπόστολος</i> , and <i>Πέμπω</i> .....	108
Evangelism Language in the New Testament:	
<i>Εὐαγγελιόν/Εὐαγγελίζω</i> and <i>Κηρύσσω</i> .....	110
The Meaning of Mission in Scripture.....	112
The Meaning of Evangelism in Scripture.....	119
Exposition of the Great Commission .....	122

6. Conclusion .....	132
The Nature of Evangelism in Missional Churches.....	132
Suggested Areas for Further Study.....	138

## Appendices

1. Sending Language in Scripture.....	141
Sending Language in the Old Testament: πλῶ.....	141
Sending Language in the New Testament:	
Ἀποστέλλω/Ἀπόστολος and Πέμπω.....	147
2. Evangelism Language in the New Testament.....	161
Εὐαγγέλιον .....	162
Εὐαγγελίζω/Εὐαγγελίζομαι.....	164
Κηρύσσω/Κηρύσσειν .....	166
3. The Social-Gospel and Fundamentalism Movements .....	169
The Social-Gospel Movement.....	169
The Fundamentalism Movement.....	172
4. History of the Emerging-Church Movement.....	176
Begininings of the Emerging-Church Movement .....	179
The Emergent Organization .....	185
Defining the Emerging-Church Movement.....	187
Five Streams of the Emerging-Church Movement.....	188
Three Practices of the Emerging-Church Movement.....	195
Three Categories of the Emerging-Church Movement .....	202
Origins .....	205
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	209

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank the faculty and staff at George Fox Evangelical Seminary for their competent work and constant encouragement. Wanting to be more effective in training young men and women for ministry in this ever-changing world, I looked for a doctoral program that would take me to the edge of what we know about our culture and to peer into the future. The person I thought most capable of leading me on that journey was Leonard Sweet. I was right. My humble thanks go to Len. Laura Simmons, my faculty and dissertation advisor, deserves my heartfelt thanks. Her scholarship, high expectations, and attention to the smallest detail made me a better student, a more critical thinker, and a better teacher. She has my deepest respect. Loren Kerns's ability to keep us on the right path has been extraordinary. The friendships developed with those in my cohort have been a special gift. I thank Randy Ingmire, academic dean at Manhattan Christian College where I teach, for his support.

The person who deserves my deepest appreciation and honor is Kristi, my wonderful wife, chief encourager, and persistent proofreader. She is truly the greatest servant I have ever known. We have served Jesus together for thirty-two years, all of them an adventure. She has blessed my life. Our two children, Jessica and Jonathan, are another of my life's great blessings. They have not only been supportive during the writing of this dissertation, but for their entire lives have usually understood when their father was away telling someone about Jesus.

To those who have allowed me the privilege of telling the life-changing story of Jesus over the years, I owe my heart-felt thanks. Most importantly, I thank Jesus for his great love and grace, which I have had the privilege and honor of sharing with others.



## ABSTRACT

Evangelism has long been at the heart of God's mission for the church. The arrival of the twenty-first century brought with it renewed interest in both the mission of the church and evangelism, a practice central to the church's mission. A leading factor in this resurgence is the decline in church attendance over the past several decades. The most influential factors leading to the decline in attendance are culture changes from modernism to postmodernism and from a Christendom society to a post-Christian pluralistic society. These culture shifts resulted in the diminishing influence of the church and non-Christians' often harboring hostile feelings toward the church. Some missional churches, attempting to contextualize the gospel by not offending or alienating non-Christians, emphasize a nonverbal form of evangelism through blessing others with good deeds. Verbally telling the gospel story of Jesus is deemphasized.

The problem this dissertation addresses, as presented in chapter 1, is, What should be the nature of evangelism in missional churches? Should evangelism take the form primarily of nonverbal proclamation, or should evangelism include verbally sharing the gospel of Jesus alongside blessing others by good deeds? To answer this important question, I propose finding the answer in Scripture. Otherwise, missional churches may be behaving in ways not entirely congruent with scriptural guidelines for evangelism. My claim is that evangelism in missional churches should be verbally telling the gospel message in the context of blessing those in one's community with good deeds carried out with love, compassion, and respect.

Chapter 2 explores the culture changes affecting the church from earliest Christianity to today, especially noting the effects of Christendom on ecclesiology. The

chapter is divided into three periods: The Earliest Church and the Birth of Christendom, The Modern Era: The Death of Christendom, and The Postmodern Era: The Beginning of a Post-Christian America. A statistical portrait showing the declining church attendance in America is included.

Chapter 3 surveys a history of evangelism beginning in the late eighteenth century. Particular to this discussion is the division between mainline Protestants and evangelicals over the definitions of evangelism, which reveals that nonverbal proclamation had its roots in the mainline Protestant movement.

Chapter 4 examines the history of the missional-church movement, which was born in response to culture and church crises described in chapter 2. Emerging from these crises is a missional theology and ecclesiology that focuses on the *missio Dei*, the mission of God. Lesslie Newbigin's influence on the development of a missional hermeneutic receives special attention.

Chapter 5 presents a biblical rationale for answering the question, What should be the nature of evangelism in missional churches? First, biblical authority is established. Then, I survey the sending language in the Old and New Testaments and evangelism language in the New Testament. The meaning of mission and evangelism are explored, including an exposition of the Great Commission.

Chapter 6, the concluding chapter, addresses what should be the nature of evangelism in missional churches. Based on the biblical rationale presented in chapter 5, there is clear evidence that evangelism in missional churches should include verbal proclamation in the context of blessing people with good deeds. Finally, I suggest areas for further study.

Four appendices provide additional information for understanding the context of what should be the nature of evangelism in missional churches. Appendix 1 provides examples of sending language in Scripture. Appendix 2 examines evangelism language in Scripture. Appendix 3 surveys the Social Gospel and fundamentalism movements. Appendix 4 presents a history of the emerging-church movement.

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

Jesus<sup>1</sup>

### Identifying the Problem

“Have you read Reggie McNeal’s new book, *Missional Renaissance*?” In the late summer of 2009, several people asked me that question. After repeatedly saying, “No” and feeling embarrassed that I had not taken time to read anything about the popular missional-church movement, I decided to stop procrastinating and read McNeal’s book.

As I sat down to read, I felt excitement and anticipation as if I were about to enter both a new world and an old, familiar one. McNeal would guide me into the new, missional world. However, the world of mission was common-place for me. After all, is not the word “missional” just an adjective describing mission and what missionaries do, which is to love and serve our neighbors, and to pray for an opportunity to tell them the good news of Jesus Christ?

Jesus, the Bible, the church, and the church’s mission have not always been familiar territory; I did not grow up in a Christian home. By the time I finished high school, I could count on both hands the number of times I had attended church, which

---

<sup>1</sup> Luke 4:18-19. Unless otherwise noted, all Bible references are from the Holy Bible, New International Version.

included occasional Easter Sundays and Vacation Bible School. Soon after entering college, I found myself facing several painful, life-altering crises. During that time, a friend introduced me to a group of Christians who were associated with a college ministry. Their lives seemed to be more peaceful, joyful, and meaningful than mine. When I probed into the reason, the answer was always the same: “Jesus.” Not knowing much about him, I bought my first Bible and, with some skepticism, began to read it.

After a year and a half of reading the Bible, getting to know Jesus, and living among Christians, I decided to become a follower of Jesus. It had been a long, arduous journey. The discovery that Jesus actually loved me and wanted me as one of his disciples, and that Jesus would let me start over and would give purpose to my life, was too good to keep to myself. I would gladly spend the rest of my life telling the world about him.

Furthering my preparation, I attended seminary with emphases in New Testament and missiology. Since that time, I have served as a foreign missionary, college pastor, outreach pastor, lead pastor, church planter, and now professor of pastoral ministry. For the past thirty-seven years, I have devoted my life to carrying out Jesus’s mission of serving people and developing trusting relationships with them so I could work alongside the Holy Spirit to tell the life-changing message of Jesus to as many people as possible. Being one of Jesus’s missionaries has been my life.

With McNeal’s book in hand, I felt as if I was about to enter into a fraternity of fellow missionaries. We would share the same missionary theology, the same missionary life, and the same missionary heart. I would be among brothers and sisters, fellow

missionaries who were passionate not only about living like Jesus, but also passionate about telling the story of Jesus to those who need new life now and for eternity.

McNeal opens his book with a powerful statement placing the missional-church movement among the greatest occurrences in church history: “The rise of the missional church is the single biggest development in Christianity since the Reformation.”<sup>2</sup> A major theme in his book is that the defining characteristic and the primary mission of missional churches is they are externally focused.<sup>3</sup> This is a shift from traditional churches, which are internally focused. Missional-church members go outside the church walls to “partner with God in blessing the people in their sphere of influence.”<sup>4</sup> They “look for ways to bless and to serve the communities where they are located.”<sup>5</sup> McNeal states, “The missional church engages the community beyond its walls because it believes that is why the church exists.”<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the Church* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), xiii.

<sup>3</sup> McNeal identifies three changes traditional churches must make to become missional churches: (1) from internal to external in terms of ministry focus; (2) from program development to people development in terms of core activity; and (3) from church-based to kingdom-based in terms of leadership agenda.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 159. “Blessing” is McNeal’s terminology for serving others, helping others, good deeds, or social action. These terms are used interchangeably in this dissertation.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

McNeal dedicates a large portion of his book to externally focused churches and the ways they bless those in their communities. As his subtitle, *Changing the Scorecard*, suggests, the church needs a new scorecard. Rather than traditional church-measurement criteria, such as offerings and attendance, McNeal states that missional churches should measure how the church is blessing those in their communities (the amount of time spent in meetings that lead to people development, the number of life-story interviews during a sermon, the number of people involved in strengthening marriages, etc.).<sup>7</sup>

No one questions whether there is biblical authority for the church performing good deeds in their communities. Jesus set the standard for blessing others. It was Jesus who reminded the teacher of the law that the greatest commandment is to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” and the second is to “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22:37, 39). In Luke 4, Jesus states that he has been anointed to free the prisoners, to free those who are oppressed, and to give sight to the blind (Luke 4:18-19). On almost every page in the Gospels, Jesus cares for people. Jesus not only blessed others, but he also taught his followers to bless others. One of the distinguishing marks of the early church was its hospitality.

God sends the church on a mission to bless others, especially those in need. All missionaries are on God’s mission. Part of God’s mission, as revealed in Scripture, is to bless others by doing good deeds. McNeal’s emphasis on blessing those in our communities is certainly justified. In a culture that is often hostile toward the church,

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 111-27.

blessing others is, in many instances, the only way Christians will have an open door to tell the story about Jesus.

However, as I read McNeal's book, I kept expecting him to present a second vitally important aspects of mission: evangelism. I had always defined evangelism as the verbal telling of the gospel message of Jesus Christ. Doing good deeds, as I understood, is part of building relational bridges to others in hopes of having the opportunity to share the gospel with them in a trusting environment. I waited, page after page, for McNeal to discuss how God sends out missionaries into their communities to tell the gospel story. After all, how can there be a missional renaissance without Jesus being at the center? How can churches be missional churches if they neglect their mission to verbally share the message of Jesus with those in their communities? Furthermore, how will people in their communities know about Jesus unless they are told? The words from Paul's letter to the Romans kept ringing in my ears: "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'" (Rom. 10:14-15). Why does McNeal almost completely avoid talking about verbal proclamation of the gospel? A missional-church movement without missionaries talking about Jesus seemed like a contradiction.

McNeal finally commented briefly about verbal proclamation. He does not reject verbally telling others about Jesus as part of God's mission. This is revealed in the following quotation:



Whenever I make the assertion that demonstration has eclipsed proclamation as the way of gaining a hearing for the gospel, some people think I am denigrating Bible study and preaching. I am not. People need biblical truth for living.<sup>8</sup>

The missional movement understands that both truth and love must be present to reflect the whole heart of God for people. Not telling the truth doesn't serve them fully even if you love them. Improving people's lives cannot just be seen as a prelude to evangelism. On the other hand, people need the truth of God's insights in order to be fully blessed.<sup>9</sup>

McNeal acknowledges that people need to hear the gospel in the sentence, "Not telling the truth doesn't serve them fully even if you love them." Then, in a strange reversal,

McNeal places responsibility for hearing the gospel on the person receiving the blessing:

Missional churches recognize a different dynamic at work. Missional Jesus followers believe that the way they demonstrate love and service will intrigue people to pursue getting to know the God who inspires such service. Our acts of service and love, not our oratorical brilliance and institutional success, will intrigue people with our message.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> McNeal, *Missional Renaissance*, 57.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 57. The words of St. Francis of Assisi, the twelfth-century monk, "Preach the gospel at all times; when necessary, use words," are sometimes invoked to support the view that deeds are an adequate form of proclamation. However, Mark Galli disputes that Francis said these words, noting that no biography was written until 200 years after he died. Furthermore, the saying does not fit with Francis's personality; he was known for his fiery preaching. Galli states, "We hope against hope that we won't have to take the trouble to figure out how exactly to talk about the gospel—our unbelieving friends will 'catch' the gospel once our lifestyle is infected with it. 'Preach the gospel; use words if necessary' goes hand in hand with a postmodern assumption that words are finally empty of meaning. It subtly denigrates the high value that the prophets and Jesus and Paul put on preaching. But the Gospel is a *message*, a news about an event and a person upon which the history of our planet turns." Mark Galli, "Speak the Gospel; Use Deeds When Necessary," *Christianity Today* 53 (May 2009): 2, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2009/mayweb-only/120-42.0.html>.

These few sentences are the only ones in McNeal's book that address verbal proclamation of the gospel. Clearly, McNeal believes that in a post-Christian culture where many people are often hostile toward Christians, the best method of evangelism is nonverbal evangelism in the form of blessing others. Hearing the gospel is secondary, as indicated by the lack of attention verbal proclamation receives.

McNeal is representative of numerous missional theologians and practitioners who emphasize social action but give little attention to verbal proclamation. For example, Brad Brisco, a church planting strategist for a network of churches in Kansas City, and host of the "Missional Church Network" website, lists three theological distinctions for missional churches: (1) The missional church is about the missionary nature of God and his church; (2) The missional church is about the church being incarnational rather than attractional; and (3) The missional church is about actively participating in the *missio Dei*, or mission of God. Brisco then lists five "missional postures" churches must take if they are to be missional: "(1) Start with spiritual formation; (2) Emphasize the priesthood of all believers; (3) Create a new scorecard; (4) Search for third places (places where the unchurched visit); and (5) Tap into the power of stories." All of Brisco's categories are concerned with building relationships in the community. None of his categories mention telling others about Jesus.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Brad Brisco, "Missional: More Than a Buzz Word," The Missional Church Network, entry posted June 23, 2008, <http://missionalChurchnetwork.com/history-of-the-missional-Church-part-i/> (accessed October 2, 2010).

Walter Hobbs lists twelve missional indicators, none of which mention verbally telling others about Jesus.<sup>12</sup> Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch add three missional-church principles to Hobbs's indicators: incarnational, messianic, and apostolic. By "apostolic," Frost and Hirsch mean a leadership model that follows the one found in Ephesians 4:11 where Paul says God gave various ones gifts to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Again, none of the principles refers to verbal proclamation as a characteristic of missional churches.<sup>13</sup> Dan Kimball describes seven characteristics of missional churches; none address verbally sharing the gospel.<sup>14</sup>

These authors, and others who write about the missional church, want people to become followers of Jesus Christ. Verbally telling outsiders about Jesus, however, is relegated to a secondary place of importance.

## The Problem

The problem this dissertation addresses is, What should be the nature of evangelism in missional churches? Should the nature of evangelism in missional churches be almost exclusively nonverbal proclamation in the form of blessing others, as

---

<sup>12</sup> Walter C. Hobbs, "Method," in *Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness*, ed. Lois Y. Barrett (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 160. See chapter 4 for the list.

<sup>13</sup> Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 12. Cf. Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006). See chapter 4 for more details of Frost and Hirsch's principles.

<sup>14</sup> Dan Kimball, *They Like Jesus But Not the Church: Insights from Emerging Generations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 20.

some missional church leaders believe? Or, should the nature of evangelism in missional churches include verbally sharing the gospel of Jesus alongside blessing others?<sup>15</sup> The answer to this very important question must be found in Scripture. Otherwise, the nature of evangelism in missional churches may not be what the Bible says it *should* be.

My claim is that the nature of evangelism in biblically-missional churches should emphasize the verbal telling of the gospel message to those in one's community in the context of blessing people with good deeds done with compassion, respect, and love.<sup>16</sup>

What should be the nature of evangelism in missional churches? The answer to this question is vitally important. At the heart of the question lies the mission of the church and the reason the church exists. Every church desires to carry out its God-given mission. In fact, the church has been involved in mission from its earliest days to today. The centuries are strewn with martyrs who were intent on carrying out God's mission to the very end. The mission of God provides inspiration and direction for the church. It guides the church forward through whatever storms it encounters. Every church leader

---

<sup>15</sup> I do not include as an option proclamation only without social action. This form of evangelism has historically been propositional in nature. Sometimes propositional proclamation has even been abusive and is partially responsible for the hostility toward the church today. Whenever the term "proclamation" or "verbal proclamation" is used in this dissertation, it should be understood as verbally telling the gospel story about Jesus Christ in the context of a personal, trusting relationship and without any propositional overtones.

<sup>16</sup> An assumption is that all churches that claim to be missional genuinely desire to be biblical in both theology and ecclesiology. However, mistakes sometimes are made that inadvertently lead to moving away from theology and ecclesiology's biblical center.

acknowledges that the mission of the church is God's mission. The mission of God is at the heart of the theology of the church.

Therefore, it is essential that missional churches have the correct answer. All church leaders must have a clear understanding of the church's mission if they are to lead followers of Jesus in carrying out the mission on which they are sent. It is well within reason to say that the question this dissertation is addressing may be the most important question the church must ask. The answer may be the most important answer the church will ever receive.

### **Reasons Some Missional Churches are Reluctant to Tell the Gospel Story**

McNeal and others with similar views have an understandable rationale for avoiding verbal proclamation of the gospel. Christians in today's post-Christian culture have a heightened awareness that many people have a hostile attitude toward Christians and the church. The most common reasons for avoiding topics about anything Christian are the fear of possible rejection from outsiders, not wanting to alienate them further.<sup>17</sup>

David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons's, in *UnChristian*, help believers better understand their post-Christian, and often anti-Christian, audience.<sup>18</sup> The first line of their

---

<sup>17</sup> In a questionnaire to ninety-eight college students, the question was asked, "What is the number one reason you do not talk about Jesus with outsiders more often?" One hundred percent of the students answered, "fear of rejection." Russell York, questionnaire by author, Manhattan, Kansas, December 9, 2010.

<sup>18</sup> David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity ... And Why It Matters* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007). For another excellent resource on outsiders' views about Jesus, Christianity, and the church see Dan Kimball, *They Like Jesus But Not the Church: Insights from*

book declares, “Christianity has an image problem.”<sup>19</sup> Describing the problem further, they write,

Christians are primarily perceived for what they stand against. *We have become famous for what we oppose, rather than who we are for.* [Outsiders view Christians as] entrenched-thinking, antigay, antichoice, angry, violent, illogical, empire-building, convert-focused people who cannot live peacefully with others. Christians are known for having an us-versus-them mentality. Outsiders believe Christians do not like them because of what they do, how they look, or what they believe. They feel minimized—or worse, demonized—by those who love Jesus. Only a small percentage of outsiders strongly believe that the labels “respect, love, hope, and trust” describe Christianity.<sup>20</sup>

Kinnaman and Lyons support their conclusions with thoroughly researched data.

The following statistics help paint a picture of outsiders’ perceptions of Christianity:<sup>21</sup>

Table 1. Outsiders' Perceptions of Christianity

Unfavorable Image	A lot	A lot or some
Antihomosexual	66%	91%
Judgmental	57	87
Hypocritical—saying one thing, doing another	54	85
Too involved in politics	46	75
Out of touch with reality	37	72
Old-fashioned	28	78
Insensitive to others	27	70
Boring	28	82
Not accepting of other faiths	22	64
Confusing	19	61

---

*Emerging Generations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007). I will stay consistent with Kinnaman and Lyons’s use of the term “outsider” as a way to identify those who are not followers of Christ. There is no intention for the label “outsider” to be derogatorily judgmental by excluding someone from being an “insider.”

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 26-7.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 28. The polling data is for sixteen to twenty-nine-year-olds.

Favorable Image	A lot	A lot or some
Teaches same basic idea as other religions	28%	82%
Has good values and principles	26	76
Friendly	18	71
A faith you respect	16	55
Consistently shows love for other people	16	55
People you trust	9	52
Seems genuine and real	11	41
Something that makes sense	9	41
Relevant to your life	10	30

Kinnaman and Lyons's report validates why Christians are reluctant to talk about the gospel story. Not wanting to receive rejection or cause further alienation, missional churches that retreat from telling the gospel story seem to have swung to the opposite extreme, away from using high-pressure evangelistic tactics, which historically have been part of the reason for people's defensive posture toward Christians and the church.

An example of someone who is highly sensitive to the negative image that Kinnaman and Lyons document is Jonathan Dodson, pastor of Austin City Life, a missional church in Austin, Texas. Following McNeal, Dodson leads his congregation to place emphasis on nonverbal evangelism by doing good deeds in the community. In his article, "Evangelistic-Driven Mission," Dodson explains why missional churches should not be evangelism-driven.<sup>22</sup> He writes, "These [evangelistic-driven] churches focus almost exclusively on evangelism. Their view of the gospel leads them to see social

---

<sup>22</sup> Jonathan Dodson, "How Not to be a Missional Church: Evangelistic-Driven," Resurgence, entry posted November 18, 2009, <http://theresurgence.com/2009/11/18/how-not-to-be-a-missionalChurch-evangelism-driven> (accessed September 18, 2010).

action as optional. They focus on training individuals through evangelism training programs, apologetics, and use of evangelistic tracts.”<sup>23</sup>

Dodson then asks the rhetorical question, “What is wrong with evangelistic-driven methodology?” and replies with four reasons. First, “Evangelism-driven mission is often answer-based and heaven-centered.”<sup>24</sup> A common question asked by those using the evangelistic-driven method is, “If you died tonight and stood before God and he said: ‘Why should I let you into my heaven?’ What would you say?”<sup>25</sup> The goal is to get the hearer to have the right answer because having the right answer will get one into heaven, thus “answer-based and heaven-centered.” Dodson points out that one can have the right answer, but not have the faith or the life of a follower of Christ.

Second, Dodson considers the evangelistic-driven methodology incorrect: “Evangelism-driven mission can be defensive and fact-oriented.”<sup>26</sup> By “defensive and fact-oriented,” Dodson is referring to an “apologetic mission” where the conversion is intellectual rather than from the heart.

Third, “Evangelism-driven mission is often outdated and fails to contextualize [the gospel].” Dodson believes that prepackaged methods often use terms that no longer

---

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 1. Dodson’s past experiences certainly have resulted in a biased view. Evangelism-driven does not necessarily imply evangelism training programs, apologetics, and tract distribution. One can be evangelism-driven and use a relational approach, not be defensive, and not use a packaged program.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 2.



relate to the current audience. He says that “if we fail to express the gospel in context and vocabulary that our listeners can understand, we fail to share the gospel.”<sup>27</sup>

Dodson’s fourth indictment is, “Evangelism-driven mission is individualistic.”<sup>28</sup> He argues that individuals are more likely to be “converted to communities before they are converted to doctrines.”<sup>29</sup> Dodson continues, “Individual evangelism doesn’t create community because it doesn’t convert people to the church. It aims at converting individuals to a set of answers and to heaven.”<sup>30</sup>

By Dodson’s use of the term “evangelism-driven,” he clearly understands that evangelism is verbal proclamation of the gospel message delivered in a propositional style. It is propositional proclamation that Dodson opposes. Dodson does not say missional churches should not be evangelistic, that is, to share verbally the gospel message with outsiders. Interestingly, Dodson provides thorough criticism of deserved evangelism abuses, yet, while vying for a missional praxis, he is silent regarding an appropriate context for sharing the gospel message with outsiders. In practice, Dodson

---

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. I find this quotation intriguing. Dodson seems to ignore individual conversion to Jesus Christ and hold a view of conversion to the church.

and the Austin City Life church place a heavy emphasis on city transformation, which is a popular, nonverbal form of evangelism practiced among some missional churches.<sup>31</sup>

The missional church's response to a culture that is antagonistic against Christians is nonverbal proclamation by doing good deeds. However, Andrew Kirk believes that the reason also extends to ambiguity about the gospel:

Mission, which in some circles used to be almost identified with evangelism, is now almost completely disassociated from it. It is now aligned, more or less, with service to the community and ethical pronouncements and action in the political sphere, referred to as the prophetic ministry. Such a limited understanding of mission appears to take its cue partly from the surrounding culture. ... However, one suspects that for some Christians the basic cause of hesitancy about evangelism is due to uncertainty about the truth of the message of Jesus Christ in the light of so many competing claims to truth.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> See the following websites for more information about Jonathan Dodson and the Austin City Life Church: Austin City Life, <http://www.austincitylife.org/menu/i-m-new-here/about> (accessed September 2, 2010), and Resurgence, <http://theresurgence.com/> (accessed September 2, 2010). Cf. Rick Rusaw and Eric Swanson, *The Externally Focused Church* (Loveland, Colorado: Group Publishing, 2004); Rick Rusaw and Eric Swanson, *The Externally Focused Quest: Becoming the Best Church for the Community* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010); and Eric Swanson and Sam Williams, *To Transform a City: Whole Church, Whole Gospel, Whole City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010). Swanson, Rusaw, and Williams seem to have citywide transformation as a goal. Their method is to work and serve alongside other churches and community organizations. Although they strongly emphasize social deeds on a large citywide scale, they still maintain a strong emphasis on evangelism. At a recent conference I attended, Swanson stated, "Good deeds create good will which opens doors to good news." Eric Swanson, "Combining Good News and Good Deeds" (lecture, Kansas City Missional Network Conference, Kansas City, Kansas, November 10, 2009).

<sup>32</sup> J. Andrew Kirk, *Mission Under Scrutiny: Confronting Contemporary Challenges* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), xi, 47. I am grateful to Christopher R. Little for noting this valuable insight in his excellent article, "In Response to 'The Future of Evangelicals in Mission,'" in *MissionShift: Global Mission Issues in the Third Millennium*, eds. David J. Hesselgrave and Ed Stetzer (Nashville: B&H Publishers, 2010), 206.

There are certainly rational reasons for being reluctant to tell the gospel story to outsiders. However, whether the reasons are justifiable is in question. To what extent will the cultural context of the church dictate the theology, the mission, and the ecclesiology of the church? As this dissertation asks, What should be the nature of evangelism in missional churches?

### Context

A brief context for the missional-church movement is presented in this section. More thorough details are provided in chapter 2, "Cultural Changes Affecting the Church in America;" chapter 3, "History of Evangelism;" and chapter 4, "History of the Missional-Church Movement."

The missional-church movement's origins began in the mid-1980s, in response to a critical decline in church attendance in both Europe and America. The cause of the decline is attributed to many factors, but certainly, the most influential was the dramatic culture shift from modernism to postmodernism that began a century earlier.<sup>33</sup> With this great change in culture came a diminishing influence of Christendom, which led to a new post-Christian era. Realizing that Europe and America had become the mission field, predecessors to the missional-church movement began to examine the Bible using a missional-theology hermeneutic rather than a historical-criticism hermeneutic.<sup>34</sup> Armed

---

<sup>33</sup> Chapter 2, "Cultural Changes Affecting the Church in America," provides a history of culture changes and decline in church attendance.

<sup>34</sup> David Congdon writes, "... when one looks at Scripture theologically and canonically, beyond the myopia of historical criticism, one sees a missional narrative," in

with a new way to view Scripture, that is, by viewing Scripture through the lenses of missional theology, the missional-church movement promotes restoring a missional ecclesiology. A missional ecclesiology, among other things, includes an evangelistic methodology contextualized for a twenty-first century, post-Christian audience that is often hostile toward Christians.

Little more than a decade ago, the term “missional” was rare in discussions among Christians. As one would expect, not much had been written using the term. However, during the mid-1990s, the popularity of the term missional quickly rose. The critical decline in church attendance by young people led to a growing readership by church leaders of books by Lesslie Newbigin, such as *The Other Side of 1984*, *Foolishness to the Greeks*, and *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*.<sup>35</sup> Another important publication was Darrell Guder’s *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the*

---

“Why I think Missional Theology is the Future of Theology, or, Why I think Theology Must Become Missional or Perish,” *Theology and Praxis* (August 2008): 1 <http://theologyandpraxis.wordpress.com/papers-and-discussion/august-2008-why-i-think-series-missional-theology-is-the-future-of-theology-by-dw-congdon/> (accessed August 21, 2010). A good example of studying Scripture using a missional theology hermeneutic is Christopher J. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006). From this point, the term “missional-theology hermeneutic” will be referred to by the more common term, “missional hermeneutic.”

<sup>35</sup> Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1989); Lesslie Newbigin, *The Other Side of 1984: Questions to the Churches* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1983). Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel in Western Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986). The growth in the numbers of people reading Newbigin’s books was primarily due to the popularity of the Gospel in Our Culture Network (GOCN) in America. For further information about Newbigin, see chapter 4, “History of the Missional-Church Movement.” In 1996, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company became the publishing company for the GOCN thereby providing an outlet for the publication of missional materials.

*Church in North America*.<sup>36</sup> Soon to follow was a continuing flood of books, articles, blogs, conferences, and videos exploring a variety of aspects pertaining to missional church, such as definitions, early proponents, theology, and ecclesiology.

Missional theology, in its simplest form, is the theology that God is a “missionary God,” who sent “missionary Jesus,” who sends a “missionary church” into the world.

Charles Van Engen offers a more thorough definition of missional:

With the term *missional*, I emphasize the essential nature and vocation of the church as God’s called and sent people. A missional ecclesiology is biblical, historical, contextual, praxeological (it can be translated into practice), and eschatological. With reference to the church, the term sees the church as the instrument of God’s mission in God’s world. Following L. Newbigin and others, a church that is missional understands that God’s mission calls and sends the church of Jesus Christ, locally and globally, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to be a missionary church in its own society, in the cultures in which it finds itself, and globally among all people who do not yet confess Jesus as Lord. Mission is the result of God’s initiative, rooted in God’s purposes to restore and heal creation and to call people into a reconciled covenantal relationship with God. *Mission* means “sending,” and it is the central biblical theme describing the purpose of God’s action in human history, with God’s people (now the church) being the primary agents of God’s missionary action.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> Darrell L. Guder, ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998). Two other early contributors are Francis Dubose, *God Who Sends: A Fresh Quest for Biblical Mission* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1983), and Charles Van Engen, *God’s Missionary People: Rethinking the Purpose of the Local Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991).

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 24. Cf. Van Engen’s definition of “mission” at the end of his essay on page 27. Van Engen credits Darrell Guder for providing the basis for his definition. Darrell Guder, ed., *Missional Church*, 4-5, 11-12. Guder also references David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 390.

The word missional, an adjective, comes from the Latin word *missio*. Francis DuBose was the first to use the term in *God Who Sends*, published in 1983.<sup>38</sup> Missional is often associated with the phrase *missio Dei*, which simply means “sent from God.”<sup>39</sup> Although the phrase *missio Dei* is not found in Scripture, it is a major theme that weaves its way through the Bible. The entire Bible is a missional book. As Leonard Sweet so aptly writes in his book, *So Beautiful*, “The ultimate story of the Bible, the metanarrative that unlocks the whole story, is that God is on a mission, and we are summoned to participate with God on that mission.”<sup>40</sup>

Perhaps the Bible verse most referenced by missional writers is John 20:21: “Again Jesus said, ‘Peace be with you! As the Father has *sent* me, I am *sending* you.’”<sup>41</sup> Just as Jesus is sent on a mission, Jesus’s followers are also sent on a mission. All who claim to be missional Christians understand that they are sent on a mission into their communities, not by the church, but by God. Their mission is from God.

---

<sup>38</sup> DuBose, *God Who Sends*. This information is cited in Ed Stetzer, “Thursday is for Theology of Missions: Meanings of Missional, part 3” The LifeWay Research Blog, entry posted August 29, 2007, <http://www.edstetzer.com/2007/08/thursday-is-for-theology-of-mi.html> (accessed September, 2010).

<sup>39</sup> See chapter 4, “History of the Missional-Church Movement,” regarding Johannes Hoekendijk’s understanding of *missio Dei* as God working in the world independently of the church.

<sup>40</sup> Leonard Sweet, *So Beautiful: Divine Design for Life and the Church* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2009), 58. For an excellent treatment of the theme of mission in Scripture, see Wright, *The Mission of God*.

<sup>41</sup> Italics added.

During the early years, many scholars and practitioners looked at the term missional with skepticism. People saw it as a fad that would soon fade; missional was just a new word for the familiar and well-worn terms, mission and missionary.<sup>42</sup> Clearly, missional was not a fad; if anything, it is more popular than ever. Being missional, living the missional lifestyle, the missional conversation, the missional movement, and the missional church are now common language among a large population of Christians, including evangelicals, in the Western world.

Nevertheless, questions about the mission of the church and what it means to be a missional church remain, in spite of having a new missional hermeneutic, the popularity of the term missional, and the enormous effort scholars and practitioners have invested into studies of missional theology and missional ecclesiology.<sup>43</sup> As Todd Mangum notes,

---

<sup>42</sup> I was one of the skeptics who refused to use the term missional in its earliest days. Fearful that if I introduced a term to the congregation I led and then jumped to another and another, I would create concern among our members that I was a leader who was just trying to keep up with the latest fad. Instead, I stuck with the older and more commonly accepted words, mission and missionary, and continued what I had begun two decades prior—to teach and challenge those in my congregation to live as missionaries within the context of the local community. I developed an incipient missional theology and ecclesiology during seminary in the late 1970s; my minor was missiology. Looking back, I did not realize that my approach was unique. There were few others focusing on mission in their local churches.

<sup>43</sup> For additional references see James V. Brownson, *Speaking the Truth in Love: New Testament Resources for a Missional Hermeneutic* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 1998); Darrell Guder, “Missional Hermeneutics: The Missional Authority of Scripture,” *Mission Focus: Annual Review* 15 (2007): 106-21, [http://www.ambs.edu/files/documents/news-and-publications/publications/mf/Mission\\_Focus\\_Vol\\_15.pdf](http://www.ambs.edu/files/documents/news-and-publications/publications/mf/Mission_Focus_Vol_15.pdf) (accessed December 28, 2010); Darrell Guder, “Missional Hermeneutics: The Missional Vocation of the Congregation and How Scripture Shapes the Calling,” *Mission Focus: Annual Review* 15 (2007): 125-42, [http://www.ambs.edu/files/documents/news-and-publications/publications/mf/Mission\\_Focus\\_Vol\\_15.pdf](http://www.ambs.edu/files/documents/news-and-publications/publications/mf/Mission_Focus_Vol_15.pdf) (accessed December 28, 2010);

Everyone from conservative Baptists like Ed Stetzer and Timothy Gombis, to grounded evangelicals like Scot McKnight and Christopher Wright, to hard-to-classify evangelicals like David Fitch and Tim Keel (from the U.S.) and Alan Hirsch and Darrell Guder, to edgy emergents like Tony Jones and Brian McLaren, all claim the moniker “missional” as fundamental to their thought. With that kind of spectrum representing what is “missional,” it is no wonder that evangelicals are wrestling with some confusion about both the term and the concept.<sup>44</sup>

---

George R. Hunsberger, “Proposals for a Missional Hermeneutic: Mapping the Conversation,” The Gospel and Our Culture Network, <http://www.gocn.org/resources/articles/proposals-missional-hermeneutic-mapping-conversation> (accessed December 28, 2010). Other articles on missional hermeneutic are also available on the Gospel and Our Culture Network website just referenced.

<sup>44</sup> Todd R. Mangum, “How is ‘Missional Christianity’ Any Different from ‘the Social Gospel,’” (lecture, Eastern Regional Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Capital Bible Seminary, Lanham, MD, March 27, 2009, [http://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:AnjWIOZvj6kJ:www.shapevine.com/action/file/download%3Ffile\\_guid%3D9638+missional+social+Gospel&hl=en&gl=us&pid=b1&srcid=ADGEESgNjwQtT-1Ig4jLvJgQRgTdH57wEcKrY-D73D7bdTnxCDVwCpQuY5rZxyhvlS5O57w-bGj49fNNTq0yIeljYUqnQ-OXbfzmD3M6tHndSBfBbLLG6MBGFoLDOSyANjF-5X2qWoJv&sig=AHIEtbRm9WINEwn6xHebTGwMi\\_5VKEwY1g](http://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:AnjWIOZvj6kJ:www.shapevine.com/action/file/download%3Ffile_guid%3D9638+missional+social+Gospel&hl=en&gl=us&pid=b1&srcid=ADGEESgNjwQtT-1Ig4jLvJgQRgTdH57wEcKrY-D73D7bdTnxCDVwCpQuY5rZxyhvlS5O57w-bGj49fNNTq0yIeljYUqnQ-OXbfzmD3M6tHndSBfBbLLG6MBGFoLDOSyANjF-5X2qWoJv&sig=AHIEtbRm9WINEwn6xHebTGwMi_5VKEwY1g) (accessed August 21, 2010). One group Mangum describes is the “edgy emergents” and mentions Tony Jones and Brian McLaren as proponents. The missional connection can be seen in the lengthy title to McLaren’s controversial book, *A Generous Orthodoxy: Why I am a Missional, Evangelical, Post/Protestant, Liberal/Conservative, Mystical/Poetic, Biblical, Charismatic/Contemplative, Fundamentalist/Calvinist, Anabaptist/Anglican, Methodist, Catholic, Green, Incarnational, Depressed-yet-Hopeful, Emergent, Unfinished Christian* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan/Youth Specialties, 2004). Terms such as “emerging” and “emergent” are used to describe churches that are reaching postmoderns within their context. These churches eventually became a major movement that split into two movements, Emergent Village and Origins. Both groups have close connections to the missional movement, yet, because of differing theological hermeneutics, come to different conclusions. A major criticism of the emergent movement, also called Emergent Village, is that they are trying to deconstruct theology and accommodate culture. See Jim Belcher, *Deep Church: A Third Way Beyond Emerging and Traditional* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2009) for an excellent critique of Emergent Village from a former insider. Belcher looks particularly at the theological mistakes of the emergents, critiques traditional churches, and offers suggestions for a middle ground. Cf. Kevin DeYoung and Ted Kluck, *Why We’re Not Emergent: By Two Guys Who Should Be* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2008). Because the emerging and emergent church movements are part of the missional conversation and because they have caused a great deal of confusion, I have



Today, a decade into the twenty-first century, due to a host of influences that include the missional movement, the definition of evangelicalism is being questioned as many of its adherents are claiming to be missional. Typically, evangelicals have held to a strict view of evangelism as verbally telling the gospel message. This view is seen as recently as 2008 in the document, “An Evangelical Manifesto,” which states,

We believe all followers of Christ are called to know and love Christ through worship, love Christ’s family through fellowship, grow like Christ through discipleship, serve Christ by ministering to the needs of others in his name, and share Christ with those who do not yet know him inviting people to the ends of the earth and to the end of time to join us as his disciples and followers of his way.<sup>45</sup>

Most evangelicals desperately want to reverse the exodus from their churches. Leaders of the missional movement are making a significant theological and ecclesiological change in course. Van Engen points out, “Increasingly, Evangelical missiologists have adopted the biblical notion of God’s mission (*missio Dei*) as pointing

---

included a history of these movements in appendix 4, “A History of the Emerging and Emergent-Church Movements.”

<sup>45</sup> “An Evangelical Manifesto: A Declaration of Evangelical Identity and Public Commitment,” Evangelical Manifesto Steering Committee, (May 7, 2008): 6. In an attempt to clarify confusion about the definition and position of evangelicals, a group of eight steering committee members, including Os Guinness, John Huffman, and Richard Mouw, published “An Evangelical Manifesto” in 2008. Their intent was to place themselves somewhere between the Fundamentalists and the more liberal mainline Protestants. On the opening page, they give the following definition: “Evangelicals are Christians who define themselves, their faith, and their lives according to the Good News of Jesus of Nazareth. (The Greek word for good news was *euangelion*, which translated into English as *evangel*.) This Evangelical principle is the heart of who we are as followers of Jesus.” For a survey of Fundamentalism, see appendix 3, “The Social-Gospel and Fundamentalism Movements.”

toward a more holistic view of mission.”<sup>46</sup> By holistic, Van Engen means some evangelicals now embrace the mainline Protestant position that includes social action as a nonverbal form of sharing the gospel alongside verbal proclamation.<sup>47</sup> Christopher Little recognizes the same trend: “Evangelicalism can no longer be characterized by a one-sided concern for humanity’s spiritual welfare.”<sup>48</sup>

Realistically, McNeal is correct when he says, “demonstration has eclipsed proclamation.”<sup>49</sup> In fact, verbally telling the gospel of Jesus Christ is, in some instances, almost forgotten, abandoned for the softer, more acceptable approach of doing good deeds. Perhaps the recipient of the good deeds will be intrigued enough to ask why they are being blessed.

---

<sup>46</sup> Charles Van Engen, “‘Mission’ Defined and Described,” in *MissionShift: Global Mission Issues in the Third Millennium*, eds. David J. Hesselgrave and Ed Stetzer (Nashville: B&H Publishers, 2010), 22.

<sup>47</sup> The kingdom of God is a common theme around which their theology is developing. David Fitch recently referred to the current era as “post-evangelical.” David Fitch and Gary Nelson, “Missional: Does the Word Still Have Value?” Church Leadership for the Twenty-first Century, Vimeo (August 2010) <http://vimeo.com/15676775> (accessed December 12, 2010).

<sup>48</sup> Little, “In Response to ‘The Future of Evangelicals in Mission,’” 205. Little validates his conclusion by saying that in 2001, agencies in Canada spent 58.7 percent of money allocated to foreign ministries on evangelism or discipleship and 35.1 percent was spent on relief and development. In 2005, the amount spent on evangelism and discipleship dropped to 46.1 percent and the amount spent on relief and development increased to 46.1 percent. Additionally, income for evangelism and discipleship increased by 2.7 percent while money for relief and development increased by 73.4 percent. Little concludes that this same trend is occurring in America.

<sup>49</sup> McNeal, *Missional Renaissance*, 57.

If missional churches are to fulfill their God-given mission in a God-honoring way, they must go forward with a biblically sound understanding of mission and of what it means to live missionally. Furthermore, missional churches must have a biblically sound understanding of evangelism and of how social action and verbal proclamation fit into God's mission.

This dissertation is presented as a contribution toward clarifying the definition of missional, particularly regarding the question, What should be the nature of evangelism in missional churches. My research will assist evangelical, missional churches to understand and practice biblical approaches to evangelism within the context of missional theology.

### **Outline**

Chapter 1 presents the problem this dissertation addresses: What should be the nature of evangelism in missional churches? Should evangelism take the form primarily of nonverbal proclamation, or should evangelism include verbally sharing the gospel of Jesus alongside blessing others by good deeds? To answer this important question, I propose finding the answer in Scripture. Otherwise, missional churches may be behaving in ways not entirely congruent with scriptural guidelines for evangelism. My claim is that evangelism in missional churches should be verbally telling the gospel message in the context of blessing those in one's community with good deeds carried out with love, compassion, and respect.

Chapter 2 explores the culture changes affecting the church from earliest Christianity to today, especially noting the effects of Christendom on ecclesiology. The chapter is divided into three periods: The Earliest Church and the Birth of Christendom, The Modern Era: The Death of Christendom, and The Postmodern Era: The Beginning of a Post-Christian America. A statistical portrait showing the declining church attendance in America is included.

Chapter 3 surveys a history of evangelism beginning in the late eighteenth century. Particular to this discussion is the division between mainline Protestants and evangelicals over the definitions of evangelism, which reveals that nonverbal proclamation had its roots in the mainline Protestant movement.

Chapter 4 examines the history of the missional-church movement, which was born in response to culture and church crises described in chapter 2. Emerging from these crises is a missional theology and ecclesiology that focuses on the *missio Dei*, the mission of God. Lesslie Newbigin's influence on the development of a missional hermeneutic receives special attention.

Chapter 5 presents a biblical rationale for answering the question, What should be the nature of evangelism in missional churches? First, biblical authority is established. Then, I survey the sending language in the Old and New Testaments and evangelism language in the New Testament. The meaning of mission and evangelism are explored, including an exposition of the Great Commission.

Chapter 6, the concluding chapter, addresses what should be the nature of evangelism in missional churches. Based on the biblical rationale presented in chapter 5,

there is clear evidence that evangelism in missional churches should include verbal proclamation in the context of blessing people with good deeds. Finally, I suggest areas for further study.

Four appendices provide additional information for understanding the context of what should be the nature of evangelism in missional churches. Appendix 1 provides examples of sending language in Scripture. Appendix 2 examines evangelism language in Scripture. Appendix 3 surveys the Social Gospel and fundamentalism movements. Appendix 4 presents a history of the emerging-church movement.

## Chapter 2

### Cultural Changes Affecting the Church in America

I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some.

Paul<sup>1</sup>

The message of the gospel is always communicated within culture and it must be contextualized to that culture. Contextualizing the gospel does not mean that the gospel is changed to fit that culture, but rather that the gospel is communicated in such a way that the culture will understand and receive the message of the gospel. Culture changes, but the gospel does not change.

However, history reveals that contextualization of the gospel has not always happened in America or abroad.<sup>2</sup> This dissertation focuses on answering the question, What should be the nature of evangelism in missional churches? Contextualization of the gospel is important to missional ecclesiology. If a healthy missional ecclesiology regarding evangelism is to be developed, then it is essential that missional churches understand the culture in which they live as well as the history of the cultural changes leading up to the present time. Otherwise,

---

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 9:22

<sup>2</sup> One of the chief failures of colonial evangelistic methodology among foreign missionaries of the last several centuries is that Americans did not contextualize the gospel. Early American missionaries were known for copying the gospel contextualized for American culture and pasting both gospel and culture into the culture in which they worked.

there is danger of inappropriate identification of the nature of evangelism within that culture.

### **The Earliest Church and the Birth of Christendom**

Roman authorities and their local neighbors labeled the earliest Christians as renegade and cultish. Christians were shunned, ridiculed, and relegated to the margins of society. At times, they were physically persecuted.<sup>3</sup> Surprisingly, against almost insurmountable odds, their numbers grew. Some scholars estimate as high as 10 percent of the Roman Empire was Christian by the time Constantine came to power in 306 A.D.<sup>4</sup> The primary reason the church grew was because the stories about Jesus were told in the context of the way the early Christians lived and in the presence of the Holy Spirit.<sup>5</sup> The early Christians practiced Jesus's teachings. They loved one another and, in spite of the way they were treated, they loved their neighbors, which opened doors to tell the gospel.

The first churches were small, autonomous, and informal gatherings that usually met in homes. In some instances, they met in caves or other hidden

---

<sup>3</sup> For an excellent source on the persecution of early Christians see Gerald L. Sittser, *Water from a Deep Well: Christian Spirituality from Early Martyrs to Modern Missionaries* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007). Cf. Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries* (San Francisco: Harper, 1996).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>5</sup> The book of Acts presents a theology of the Holy Spirit; it is the power of the Holy Spirit that empowers both growth and change.

locations. Although worship of pagan gods was often institutionalized and centered around temple worship, the same could not be said of Christianity. An institutionalized form of Christianity was either nonexistent or incipient in the early days of the church. Evangelism was done by common, lay Christians and within the context of their communities. The practice of the clergy being responsible for evangelism did not exist. The early Christians lived missionally and incarnationally, opening doors for natural, organic evangelism to take place through relationships. Having developed trusting relationships, Christians could tell the stories about Jesus and the hope he gives people.<sup>6</sup>

However, with the succession of Constantine to the throne of the Roman Empire in 306 A.D., life as the early Christians knew it dramatically changed. The missional and incarnational nature of the church would soon vanish. Constantine issued the Edict of Milan in 313 A.D., legalizing Christianity and making it the state religion.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, the church suddenly moved from being a persecuted, or at best ridiculed, group of illegal outsiders to being the only legal religion in the Roman Empire. This small marginalized group of Christians that was formerly forced to meet clandestinely in the shadows now found itself with a Christian emperor who was spending large sums of money to build lavish church

---

<sup>6</sup> This description of early Christianity aptly fits the heart of what the missional-church movement today is seeking to reproduce.

<sup>7</sup> Lois Barrett et al., "Missional Challenge: Understanding the Church in North America," in *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, ed. Darrell L. Guder (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 46-76.



buildings across the Empire. The church, whose spiritual direction had been autonomous, was now controlled by a powerful theocracy. Together, these forces changed the church from being very organic, missional, and incarnational to being very institutional and political. Eventually Christianity became the state religion across all of Europe with the church seeing itself as the religious institution for everyone.

The institutionalization of the church that resulted from the rule of Constantine came to be called “Christendom.” The church’s institutionalization had a profoundly negative effect both on the standards of discipleship and on evangelism. It resulted in the lowering of standards for discipleship. Furthermore, in a society where Christianity reigned supreme, the church no longer saw the need to tell the gospel story of Jesus. Except in a few small, exclusive groups, incarnational and missional living lost its value.<sup>8</sup> Gerald Sittser declares, “In less than a generation, therefore, Christianity ceased to be a persecuted faith and became a privileged faith.”<sup>9</sup> As Wilbert Shenk states, “The church of

---

<sup>8</sup> Sittser, *Water from a Deep Well*, 80-85. Sittser points out that there were a group of “desert saints” who, wanting to maintain the old standards of discipleship, moved to the desert in protest and to practice church as it had been formerly practiced. They came to be called the “bloodless martyrs” and the “athletes of God.”

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 80. Cf. Wayne A. Meeks, *The Origins of Christian Morality: The First Two Centuries* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1993), 109.

Christendom was a church without mission.”<sup>10</sup> By the mid-fourth century in most parts of the Roman Empire, incarnational and missional evangelism had become a mere icon.

The institutionalized Christendom church spread across the Roman Empire, throughout Europe, and later across the Atlantic to North America. Christendom was the leading influencer of Western culture throughout the 1,000-year Medieval Era (approximately 500 A.D. to 1,500 A.D.).<sup>11</sup> To a lesser degree, Christendom continued to maintain a powerful influence for another 500 years during the Modern Era. Even today in some communities and in many churches, Christendom is still a significant cultural force in America.

### **The Modern Era: The Death of Christendom**

In the early sixteenth century, the Medieval Era began to lose its place as the Modern Era was taking shape. Against great resistance, people began pulling away from their medieval moorings. Theologians like Luther and Erasmus

---

<sup>10</sup> Wilbert R. Shenk, “The Culture of Modernity as a Missionary Challenge,” in *The Church between Gospel and Culture: The Emerging Mission in North America*, ed. George R. Hunsberger and Craig Van Gelder (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 71.

<sup>11</sup> Recognizing that large cultural shifts take time, these dates are general with the intent to help us grasp the larger picture of culture shifts. Brian McLaren provides the following breakdown of large culture shifts: Prehistory – prior to 2,500 B.C, Ancient World – 2,500 B.C. to 500 A.D., Medieval World – 500 A.D. to 1,500 A.D., Modern World – 1,500 A.D. to 2,000 A.D., Postmodern World – 2,000 to present. Brian McLaren, *A New Kind of Christian: A Tale of Two Friends on a Spiritual Journey* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001), 14-15.

contributed to the Modern Era by challenging the authority of the very powerful medieval Catholic Church. Scientists, mathematicians, theologians, artists, and explorers, such as Columbus, Bacon, Newton, Galileo, Descartes, Copernicus, Michelangelo, and da Vinci, laid the foundation for modern science. They postulated that science could rationally disprove long held theories regarding the universe and prove new ones. They believed that understanding the laws of science would allow control over the universe.

Philosophers like Locke, Hume, and Kant tried to establish or disestablish the *reasonableness of Christianity*.<sup>12</sup> Charles Darwin, with the publication of his *On the Origin of Species*,<sup>13</sup> further fueled the fires of modernism by scientifically “proving” that the biblical account of the origin of humanity was a fabrication; humans evolved from an earlier simple life form. Many in intellectual circles concluded that there is no place for a God whose existence cannot be proven, and thus sought to remove God from culture.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> *The Reasonableness of Christianity* is the title of John Locke’s most read book.

<sup>13</sup> Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species By Means of Natural Selection*, vol. 49 of *The Great Books of the Western World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952).

<sup>14</sup> For further discussion, see Michael Lienesch, *In the Beginning: Fundamentalism, The Scopes Trial, and the Making of the Antievolution Movement* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

In the end, those swayed by modernism moved science to the center and relegated God and the church to the margins of culture. In 1882, Frederick Nietzsche implicated modernism as the cause of the decline of society in general and of Christianity in particular. Nietzsche viewed the modern world as having degraded to a “state of cultural decline into what he called a condition of nihilism.”<sup>15</sup> In a short, one-page parable entitled *The Madman*, Nietzsche hurls his famous line, “‘Whither is God?’ He cried. ‘I shall tell you. We have killed him—you and I. God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him.’”<sup>16</sup> Both modernism and Christendom were spiraling downward nearing the end of their lives. For the first time in two thousand years, the world was speeding toward becoming secular and post-Christian.

Constantine’s legalization of the church brought the church into the center of the Roman world. The result was a politicizing of the mission of the church, which gave birth to Christendom. Christendom led to a serious undermining of the missional and incarnational lives of the early Christians, thereby turning the church into a religious institution. Modernism did nothing to return Christianity to the missional and incarnational nature of the earliest, pre-Constantine days of the church. Rather, modernism led the church even further away from its organic

---

<sup>15</sup> James C. Livingston, *Modern Christian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Vatican II* (New York: Macmillan, 1971), 195. Nietzsche, the father of postmodernism, had himself become a nihilist.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 196.

origins by questioning and eventually disavowing the very existence of God. Compared to the rationalism of modern culture, the values and religious beliefs of the church were often seen as superstitious, subjective, unverifiable, and irreconcilable with science. The church rarely had well-thought-out responses to the scientific and philosophical barrages regularly unleashed upon it by intellectual and scientific communities. Most of the time, the church found itself on the defensive and the object of ridicule.<sup>17</sup> Even more importantly, as Shenk observes, “The Christendom mentality inhibited the church from interacting critically, constructively, and pastorally in the modern period, when society was undergoing fundamental change.”<sup>18</sup>

While the turbulent world was changing around them, many Christians in America wore Christendom blinders, viewing almost all people in America as Christian. As Christendom Christians had experienced for centuries, their church buildings provided safe haven from the secular world around them. While ignoring the lost, they defined Christian mission almost exclusively as cross-cultural, or foreign. When they did attempt to carry out God’s mission locally, their approach was usually attractional and propositional rather than missional,

---

<sup>17</sup> Ironically, the church today often is again on the defensive and the object of ridicule.

<sup>18</sup> Shenk, “The Culture of Modernity as a Missionary Challenge,” 72.

relational, and incarnational.<sup>19</sup> Unlike the earliest pre-Constantinian Christians who lived missionally and incarnationally, and were thus able to spread the message of the gospel effectively in the midst of a culture that opposed and rejected them, Christians in America were rarely able to see opportunities before them to live missionally and incarnationally among those who were unable to rationalize God's existence.

While remnants of the effects of modernism are still present in parts of America, the major impact of modernism finally neared the end of its powerful lifecycle by the end of the twentieth century.

### **The Postmodern Era: The Beginning of a Post-Christian America**

Modernism brought the promise of a better world. Adopters thought modernism would bring a utopia, a world where the power of knowledge and science would answer all the important questions about life and bring about a comfortable, safe, peaceful, and equal society. It failed. Around the middle of the twentieth century, people began to abandon modernism, which was no longer able to live up to its promises, for postmodernism, a new way of thinking.

At the core of postmodernism was Nietzsche's nihilism. Philosophers such as Heidegger, Gadamer, Foucault, Derrida, Rorty, and others, probed the implications of modernism's failures and attempted to arrive at a more palatable view of the world than the Medieval or Modern Eras had provided. In summary,

---

<sup>19</sup> For an explanation of the terms "attractional" and "propositional," see below, pages 50-51.

where modernism promises answers but fails to provide them, postmodernism concludes that there are no answers, or, if there are answers, what are answers for one person are not necessarily answers for another. What language means for one person can rightly be interpreted differently by another. There is no right or wrong. What is right for one person may be wrong for another, and vice versa. What is truth for one person is not necessarily truth for someone else. There is no such thing as objective truth. All truth is relative.<sup>20</sup>

By the end of the twentieth century, most of the Western scientific and philosophical world had accepted modern rationalism or postmodernism's nihilistic relativism and rejected God and church. Christendom maintains influence among those with deep roots in the church. Remnants of modernism's influence are also still alive. The church tried in vain to keep a hold on its place in culture and to turn the tide of modernism and postmodernism. However, by the end of the twentieth century much of the Western world, and in particular America, was no longer predominantly Christian; the postmodern mindset was well established. In many places, the Western world has become a post-Christian world where pluralism reigns.

---

<sup>20</sup> For resources providing a general overview of postmodernism see Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), Heath White, *Postmodernism 101: A First Course for the Curious Christian* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006), and Dennis McCallum, *The Death of Truth: Responding to Multiculturalism, The Rejection of Reason and the New Postmodern Diversity* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany House, 1996).

The church, once the cultural centerpiece, is now back where it was prior to Constantine—the margins. As Michael Goheen states, “The church has lost the official power it has known for so many years and is again being pushed to the margins of society.”<sup>21</sup> No longer is the church the natural place where most people turn for spiritual answers. As Ed Stetzer and David Putman write, “today, it [the church] often does not make the top ten list. Now, many look to anybody and anything but us.”<sup>22</sup>

However, while most of America has left Christendom for pluralism, there are places where culture has changed very little and Christendom is still the predominant mindset. People in these communities live each day as generations before them lived. They attend church services every Sunday morning and hold tightly to the conservative values held dear by those who came before them. Although the church has been pushed to the margins of culture and Christendom is all but dead outside the church, Christendom is still vibrant in many churches. As Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch assert:

Taken as a sociopolitical reality, Christendom has been in decline for the last 250 years, so much so that contemporary Western culture has been

---

<sup>21</sup> Michael Goheen, “The Missional Calling of Believers in the World: Lesslie Newbigin’s Contribution,” in *A Scandalous Prophet: The Way of Mission after Newbigin*, ed. Thomas F. Foust (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 38. I express gratitude to Brad Brisco for making me aware of this and other important contributions of Michael Goheen.

<sup>22</sup> Ed Stetzer and David Putnam, *Breaking the Missional Code: Your Church Can Become a Missionary in Your Community* (Nashville: B&H Publishers, 2006), 5.



called by many historians (secular and Christian) as the *post-Christendom* culture. Society, at least in its overtly non-Christian manifestations, is “over” Christendom. But this is not the case within the Western church itself. Christendom, as a paradigm of understanding, as a metanarrative, still exercises an overwhelming influence on our existing theological, missiological, and ecclesiological understandings in church circles. Constantine, it seems, is still the emperor of our imaginations.<sup>23</sup>

Yet, few people are naïve; they are well aware of the wave of cultural change at their doorsteps. A quick glance at the way their children think and act is a clear sign that the world has changed.

### Effects of Christendom on Ecclesiology

The effects of Christendom on ecclesiology are significant. George Hunsberger, in “Sizing Up the Shape of the Church,”<sup>24</sup> brings to light the Christendom-church identity by pointing out three prevalent ways people view the church. The first two views are of the Christendom church and the third is of the missional church. The first view is that church is “the place where certain things

---

<sup>23</sup> Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st Century* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 9.

<sup>24</sup> George R. Hunsberger, “Sizing Up the Shape of the Church,” in *The Church Between Gospel and Culture: The Emerging Mission in North America*, ed. George R. Hunsberger and Craig Van Gelder (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 333-346. The missional view is not discussed here because it does not relate to the immediate context of Christendom ecclesiology. Hunsberger credits David Bosch with these identities. David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991). Reggie McNeal deserves mention for informing me of this important article by referencing Hunsberger in his book *Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the Church* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 22.

happen.” Hunsberger writes, “Their emphases on the marks of the true church—the right preaching of the gospel, the right administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of church discipline—have bequeathed to us an understanding that *the church is a place where certain things happen.*”<sup>25</sup> In this type of environment, it is assumed that everyone is Christian. One “goes to church” to participate in the “church service,” then leaves to enter other secular environments. Life is so compartmentalized that the two environments rarely, or never, intersect. What happens in the church building has no bearing on what happens outside the church building.

The second way people see the church is as “a vendor of religious services and goods.”<sup>26</sup> Hunsberger states, “A congregation becomes a retail outlet or franchise of the denominational brand. Staff members at all levels become sales and service representatives. The denomination is the corporate headquarters in charge of everything from research and development to mass media imaging.”<sup>27</sup> The staff views members and attendees as customers. Great effort goes toward making members and attendees comfortable and ensuring they have everything they need, including their favorite music, opportunities to play their favorite sport, a buffet of entertaining programs for their children and youth, and an array of

---

<sup>25</sup> Hunsberger, “Sizing Up the Shape of the Church,” 337. Italics added. Hunsberger credits the Reformers for this view of the church.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 338.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

self-help programs. “Recruitment” and “retention” are common words in these churches.

Leonard Sweet describes the Christendom church in *So Beautiful* as APC, an acronym for attractional, propositional, and colonial.<sup>28</sup> Using a simple categorization, Sweet divides culture into two periods, before Google and after Google. He calls the culture before Google, “Gutenburgers” and the culture after Google, “Googleys.” Christians in the Gutenberg culture are modern, at least in the sense of how information is processed. They create churches that are attractional, propositional, and colonial. Being attractional is about attracting as many people into one’s church building as possible with attractive facilities and attractive programs that meet the desires of consumer-minded people. Propositional refers to rules, or at least systematic patterns of belief and behavior that one must follow in order to please God. The clergy usually dictate these propositions. By colonial, one should think of ethnocentrism, that is, “The way we do things is the right, biblical, and ‘holy’ way to do them.”<sup>29</sup>

Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, in *The Shaping of Things to Come*, describe Christendom church ecclesiology as attractional, dualistic, and

---

<sup>28</sup> Leonard Sweet, *So Beautiful: Divine Design for Life and the Church* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2009), 18-19.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

hierarchical.<sup>30</sup> Attractional churches believe that if one is to “meet God and find fellowship with others,”<sup>31</sup> it must be done in specified sacred spaces—the “church building.” By “dualistic,” they are saying Christendom churches follow a Greco-Roman worldview where the world is divided into two realms, religious and nonreligious, sacred and secular. Hierarchical, the third characteristic of Christendom, describes a top-down model of leadership with clergy at the top in authoritative leadership positions and lay Christians at the bottom.

Although the Christendom mindset now holds a minority position in American culture, it is still prevalent in many churches. Christendom resulted in churches being places for religious events, vendors of religious goods and services, attractional, propositional, colonial, dualistic, and hierarchical.

### **Impact of a Changing Culture: Declining Church Attendance**

Throughout the twentieth century, church attendance has steadily declined.<sup>32</sup> As noted above, the church has been pushed to the margins, a fact that is easily seen in church-attendance statistics. The following statistics clearly point

---

<sup>30</sup> Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 18-19.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Jon Meacham stirred a variety of reactions in his headlining article, “The End of Christian America” *Newsweek* (April 4, 2009). The magazine’s cover read, “The Decline and Fall of Christian America.”

out how far the church has been marginalized and verify that culture is moving away from Christendom and toward pluralism.<sup>33</sup>

- Between 1990 and 2001, the percentage of those claiming to be Christians in the United States decreased by 9 percent, from 86 percent to 77 percent of the population.<sup>34</sup>
- Sixty-two percent of unchurched people consider themselves Christian. Four percent say they are Jewish, 4 percent are associated with an eastern religion, and 24 percent say they are atheist.<sup>35</sup>
- The majority do not see absence from church life as an indication of lack of commitment to the Christian faith. Seventy-seven percent of unchurched adults who consider themselves to be Christian contend that they are either absolutely or moderately committed to the Christian faith.<sup>36</sup>
- Thirty-three percent of the population, approximately 73 million adults, is unchurched, meaning that they have not attended any type of religious service within the past six months.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> All statistics in this list are representative of the United States and do not include Canada. Furthermore, the statistics presented only paint a picture of the past ten years. It would be an interesting study to cover statistics regarding the impact of culture change on North America for the entire twentieth century, but such thorough study would be beyond the scope of this dissertation.

<sup>34</sup> Barry A. Kosmin and Egon Mayer, "American Religious Identification Survey 2001," The Graduate Center of the City University of New York (December, 2001): 10-11, [http://www.gc.cuny.edu/faculty/research\\_briefs/aris.pdf](http://www.gc.cuny.edu/faculty/research_briefs/aris.pdf) (accessed June 24, 2010).

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> The Barna Group, "UnChurched Population Nears 100 Million in the U.S.," March 19, 2007, <http://www.barna.org/faith-spirituality/107-unChurched-population-nears-100-million-in-the-us> (accessed June 24, 2010). Barna's research indicates that the number decreased by one percent, from 34 percent to 33 percent from March 2006 to March 2007. The Barna Group, "Spirituality May Be Hot in America, But 76 Million Adults Never Attend Church," (March 20, 2006), <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/158-spirituality->

David Olson, director of The American Church Research Project, provides exceptionally thorough data, having surveyed over 200,000 churches.<sup>38</sup> His findings on the impact of culture change on the church are available in his important book, *The American Church in Crisis*.<sup>39</sup> Contradicting Barna's results—which report an average of 33 percent of the American population were church attendees in 2007<sup>40</sup>—Olson's research indicates a far smaller number, an average of 17.5 percent of the population in 2005.<sup>41</sup>

One particularly important research statistic Olson points out is that from 1990 to 2006, the average number of weekly church attenders remained unchanged at 52 million.<sup>42</sup> However, during this same period, the population of the United States increased by 15.3 percent, for an average decline in attendance

---

[may-be-hot-in-america-but-76-million-adults-never-attend-Church](#) (accessed June 24, 2010).

<sup>38</sup> The American Church Research Project, <http://www.theamericanChurch.org> (accessed June 24, 2010).

<sup>39</sup> David T. Olson, *The American Church in Crisis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008).

<sup>40</sup> The Barna Group, “UnChurched Population Nears 100 Million in the U.S.”

<sup>41</sup> Olson, *The American Church in Crisis*, 28.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

of 7 percent.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, Olson points out that in no state did weekly attendance growth keep up with or exceed population growth.<sup>44</sup>

Supporting Olson's finding is a 2004 study by Kirk Hadaway and Penny Marler. Their research data from 300,000 churches indicates an average of 52 million church attendees per week, which accounts for 17.7 percent of the total American population. This is only a 0.2 percent difference from Olson.<sup>45</sup>

Religious Landscape Survey, published by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, points out another significant change in the American church culture. Their research notes that 16.1 percent of those surveyed indicate they have no particular church affiliation. For the previous two decades, this number has ranged from 5 percent to 8 percent.<sup>46</sup> Clearly, the religious landscape of the United States has been altered dramatically by the waves of culture change. The church is in decline. The result is a secular, pluralistic, post-Christian society.

David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons provide important additional information about the place of the church in twenty-first century America in

---

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Kirk Hadaway and Penny L. Marler, "How Many Americans Attend Worship Each Week? An Alternative Approach to Measurement," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 44, no. 3 (September 2005): 307-22.

<sup>46</sup> The Pew Forum on Religious and Public Life, "U.S. Religious Landscape Survey," <http://religions.pewforum.org/reports> (accessed June 24, 2010).

*UnChristian*.<sup>47</sup> Kinnaman and Lyons's research reveals that 37 percent of "Mosaics and Busters," those who are eighteen to forty-one years old, are outsiders to Christianity and make up 34 million Americans. Forty percent of those who are sixteen to twenty-nine years old, which are approximately 24 million young people, are outsiders. As the ages increase, the percent of the population who are outsiders decreases. Twenty-seven percent of the boomers are outsiders, which make up a group of 21 million. Twenty-three percent of elders, the 12 million people ages sixty-one and older, are outsiders.<sup>48</sup>

The statistics clearly portray the decline of the church in America and reflect how damaging Christendom, modernism, and postmodernism have been to the church. However, while some see the marginalization of the church as negative, many, including myself, see the end of Christendom as opening positive opportunities for Christianity to return to a more missional, organic, incarnational, and Christ-like form not unlike that of the earliest church.

The American cultural situation illuminated in this chapter further clarifies the reasons Christianity in America is declining and why some missional churches tend to emphasize nonverbal proclamation by doing good deeds and avoid conversation about church, Christianity, or Jesus. Understanding the history of

---

<sup>47</sup> David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks About Christianity ... and Why it Matters* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007). Kinnaman is President of the Barna Group.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.



culture change and the current cultural setting of the church contributes to developing a healthy and contextual missional ecclesiology, particularly regarding the nature of evangelism. This dissertation asks the question, What should be the nature of evangelism in missional churches? The nature of evangelism in missional churches must be contextualized to culture if it is to be effective.

## Chapter 3

### History of Evangelism

“How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!’”

Romans 10:14-15

This chapter surveys the history of evangelism since the late eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

The history of evangelism provides part of the context for understanding the current missional-church emphasis of nonverbal proclamation by doing good deeds.

Understanding where missional evangelistic methods fit into the overall history of evangelism in America provides context for answering the question this dissertation is addressing: What should be the nature of evangelism in missional churches?

#### Late Eighteenth through the Early Twentieth Centuries

In 1792, William Carey published *An Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*.<sup>2</sup> Carey takes the position that Matthew 28:18-20, commonly known as the “Great Commission,” commands Christians to

---

<sup>1</sup> For earlier history see K. S. Latourette, “Pre-Nineteenth Century Evangelism: Its Outstanding Characteristics,” and “Distinctive Features of the Protestant Missionary Methods of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,” in *Evangelism*, ed. International Missionary Council (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), 1-31.

<sup>2</sup> William Carey, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* (Leicester: Ann Ireland, 1792), <http://www.wmcarey.edu/carey/Enquiry/anenquiry.pdf> (accessed April 9, 2010).

evangelize. After publication of Carey's book, most churches in America quickly promoted verbal proclamation of the gospel in foreign lands to the place of highest priority.<sup>3</sup>

The 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland opened the twentieth century with the ecumenical movement's most important theme, "the evangelization of the world in this generation."<sup>4</sup> Conference organizers were motivated by Carey's call to an obligatory response to the Great Commission. While the world stood at the threshold of war, many Christians were awakened to the needs of those who were broken, fallen, and lost. They were inspired to an evangelistic fervor for foreign mission not seen in centuries. The World Missionary Conference in 1910 provided stimulus for the start of the International Missionary Council (IMC),<sup>5</sup> which sponsored several other important conferences promoting themes of evangelism, missiology, and

---

<sup>3</sup> See chapter 5, "Mission and Evangelism in Scripture," for a more thorough discussion of Carey, especially regarding the Great Commission.

<sup>4</sup> Paul W. Chilcote and Lacey C. Warner, eds., "Introduction," *The Study of Evangelism: Exploring a Missional Practice of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), xxi.

<sup>5</sup> The International Missionary Council (IMC) was officially established in 1921 and connected fourteen denominations together. Issues chosen for study and resolution were missionary freedom, general and theological education, opium addiction, labor, slavery, racial discrimination, the church in rural and industrial society, home and family life, and the emerging ecumenical movement. "International Missionary Archives, 1910-1961," IDC Publishers, <http://www.idc.nl/?id=138> (accessed February 27, 2010).

ecclesiology (Jerusalem, 1928; Tambaram, India, 1938; Whitby, Canada, 1947; and Willingen, Germany, 1952).<sup>6</sup>

The late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in addition to devastating wars, witnessed great cultural turmoil that destabilized much of the Western world.<sup>7</sup> From the beginning of the fall of modernism near the end of the nineteenth century to the end of the twentieth century, the tsunami of postmodernism often crashed over many areas of life in both urban and rural environments in America. Deeply rooted cultural structures, including the church, were greatly impacted.

The expansion of liberalism was one of the consequences. The product of both modernism and Christendom, liberalism first became prominent in Europe in the late nineteenth century, then quickly made its way to America.<sup>8</sup> In the first decade of the twentieth century, liberalism influenced the formation of the Social-Gospel movement, a movement by churches to oppose injustices and improve living standards for those who were over-worked and underpaid, particularly children.<sup>9</sup> Although the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh often receives credit for representing the beginning of the modern ecumenical movement, it was the Social-Gospel movement that helped

---

<sup>6</sup> “History of World Mission and Evangelism,” World Council of Churches, <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/who-are-we/organization-structure/consultative-bodies/world-mission-and-evangelism/history.html> (accessed February 22, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> See chapter 2, “Cultural Changes Affecting the Church in America,” for a more thorough review of these culture changes.

<sup>8</sup> Postmodernism exacerbated the influences of liberalism rather than inhibiting it.

<sup>9</sup> Appendix 3, “The Social Gospel and Fundamentalism Movements,” provides a more detailed survey of the Social-Gospel movement.

shape the identity of the ecumenical movement and fueled its spread. In a social context of poverty and injustices, the effects of both Christendom and modernism on the church led the Social-Gospel movement to make social change the primary mission of many mainline Protestant churches. In many cases social action and justice issues became an accepted nonverbal form of evangelism or proclaiming the gospel. Verbal proclamation of the gospel (and the associated personal or individual salvation response) was no longer seen as a necessary part of evangelism.

The Social-Gospel movement, with its liberal tendencies, did not go unnoticed by conservative Christians. Reacting to growing liberalism and the Social-Gospel movement, many evangelicals took a defensive posture. One such group turned into a powerful movement called “fundamentalism.”<sup>10</sup> George Marsden describes fundamentalism as “militantly anti-modernist evangelicalism.”<sup>11</sup> Fundamentalists emphasized personal salvation, substitutionary atonement, verbal evangelism, inerrancy of Scripture, the virgin birth, and prayer, and they strongly opposed the teaching of evolution. They defined evangelism only as verbal proclamation of the gospel message about Jesus Christ; nonverbal proclamation by social action and justice issues was

---

<sup>10</sup> See appendix 3, “The Social Gospel and Fundamentalism Movements,” for a more thorough survey of the fundamentalism movement.

<sup>11</sup> George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 2d edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 4. See also Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970) 188-207.

excluded. Excessive social service was discouraged.<sup>12</sup> Before the first quarter of the twentieth century, the line was drawn between the mainline Protestants and evangelicals over differing definitions of evangelism and gospel, as figure 1 illustrates.

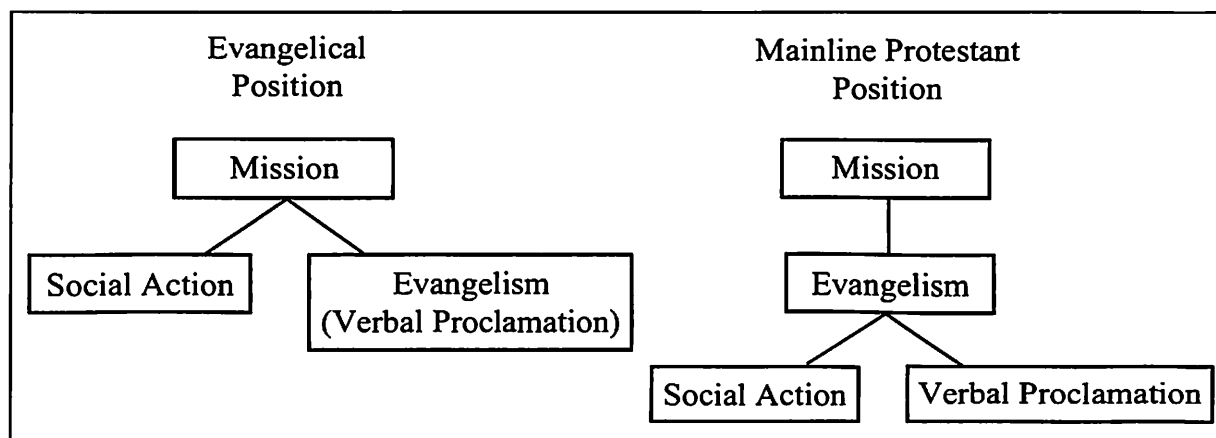


Figure 1. Evangelical and Mainline Protestant Views on Evangelism

### Mid-Twentieth Century

After two tragic world wars, which all but stopped mission work and caused tremendous loss of life, the mainline Protestant movement found itself without direction. In 1948, the World Council of Churches (WCC)<sup>13</sup> was formed and immediately began trying to renew the evangelistic emphasis that had been derailed by war.<sup>14</sup> However, it was the IMC's 1952 Willingen, Germany conference that led the way forward. The

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>13</sup> See the World Council of Churches website for their history, purpose, and association with churches. World Council of Churches, <http://www.oikoumene.org/> (accessed September 24, 2010).

<sup>14</sup> Evangelism and social action often were viewed almost as synonyms.

themes of mission and evangelism from the 1910 World Missionary Conference were brought back to the front. Not only was the trajectory set, but the leaders provided vision and inspiration that propelled mission and evangelism through the second half of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century. The most significant and clarifying resolution surfacing from Willingen was that mission is dependent on the will and action of God rather than on humans and, in particular, church institutions. With this new understanding came a resurrected vision of *missio Dei*.<sup>15</sup>

### **Late Twentieth Century**

In 1961, nine years after the Willingen conference, the IMC merged into the WCC at the New Delhi, India World Council of Churches conference to establish the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) and the Division on World Mission and Evangelism (DWME). The DWME eventually took over the work of the IMC. The result was an even larger ecumenical denominational connection that included both Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches.<sup>16</sup>

In the early 1960s, evangelicals led by Billy Graham, Carl Henry, and John Stott, and sponsored by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and *Christianity Today*

---

<sup>15</sup> Chilcote and Warner, "Introduction," *The Study of Evangelism*, xxii. As noted in chapter 1, *missio Dei* is Latin for "sent from God." *Missio Dei* is built on the theology that there is a missionary nature to God, as is seen in God sending Jesus, and that there is a missionary nature to Jesus, as is seen in Jesus sending the church as missionaries into the world. See chapter 4, "History of the Missional-Church Movement," for a more thorough discussion of *missio Dei*.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

magazine, formed an alliance similar to that of the ecumenicals. In 1966, they held their first World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin, Germany.<sup>17</sup> Twelve hundred delegates attended from one hundred countries.<sup>18</sup> Staying close to their topic of evangelism and holding firm to their evangelical roots, they reaffirmed the long-held theology of personal salvation and evangelism being verbal proclamation. This set up a rift between themselves and the ecumenicals, who included nonverbal proclamation by social and justice issues as part of evangelism. As Chilcote and Warner write, “Over the course of the decade, a classic fissure developed along the fault line of evangelism.”<sup>19</sup>

By 1973 when the mainline Protestants held the WCC mission conference in Bangkok, Thailand, the controversy between the mainline Protestants and the evangelicals was even more intense and the division wider than ever. In an attempt to reverse some of the effects of European and American colonialism such as injustice and exploitation, and to promote contextualized theology and evangelistic practices, the

---

<sup>17</sup> For further information on the 1966 World Congress on Evangelism, including access to manuscripts and audiotape recordings of the speakers, see “1966 World Congress on Evangelism,” The Lausanne Movement, <http://www.lausanne.org/berlin-1966/overview.html> (accessed September 24, 2010). See also “Archives: 1966 World Congress on Evangelism,” Billy Graham Center, <http://www.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/berlin66.htm> (accessed September 24, 2010).

<sup>18</sup> “Global Congresses,” The Lausanne Movement, <http://www.lausanne.org/global-congresses.html> (accessed September 24, 2010).

<sup>19</sup> Chilcote and Warner, “Introduction,” *The Study of Evangelism*, xxii.



conference attendees elected to propose a moratorium on sending both financial gifts and missionaries from “the North” to Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific.<sup>20</sup>

The evangelicals passionately reacted to the moratorium by holding their own conference, the International Congress on World Evangelization, held in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1974. The theme of the conference was “Let the Earth Hear His Voice.”<sup>21</sup> In a document entitled the “Lausanne Covenant,” the evangelicals disassociated themselves from the mainline Protestants and their moratorium. The opening section states:

We affirm our belief in the one-eternal God, Creator and Lord of the world, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who governs all things according to the purpose of his will. He has been calling out from the world a people for himself, and sending his people back into the world to be his servants and his witnesses, for the extension of his kingdom, the building up of Christ's body, and the glory of his name. We confess with shame that we have often denied our calling and failed in our mission, by becoming conformed to the world or by withdrawing from it. Yet we rejoice that even when borne by earthen vessels the gospel is still a precious treasure. *To the task of making that treasure known* in the power of the Holy Spirit we desire to dedicate ourselves anew (Isa. 40:28; Matt. 28:19; Eph. 1:11; Acts 15:14; John 17:6, 18; Eph 4:12; 1 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 12:2; II Cor. 4:7).<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> “History of World Mission and Evangelism,” World Council of Churches.

<sup>21</sup> “Lausanne I: The International Congress on Evangelization,” The Lausanne Movement, <http://www.lausanne.org/lausanne-1974/lausanne-1974.html> (accessed September 25, 2010). Ralph Winter, in his plenary address, introduced the term “unreached people groups” argued against those calling for a moratorium on foreign missions by emphasizing the point that there are thousands of groups of people without Christ and without Scripture in their language.

<sup>22</sup> “The Lausanne Covenant,” The Lausanne Movement, <http://www.lausanne.org/covenant> (accessed September 24, 2010). Italics added.

Then, to identify the major distinguishing difference, they define evangelism as the “proclamation” (meaning verbal proclamation) of the gospel:

To evangelize is to spread the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that as the reigning Lord he now offers the forgiveness of sins and the liberating gifts of the Spirit to all who repent and believe. Our Christian presence in the world is indispensable to evangelism, and so is that kind of dialogue whose purpose is to listen sensitively in order to understand. But *evangelism itself* is the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Saviour and Lord, with a view to persuading people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God.<sup>23</sup>

The intent was to separate word from deed, saying social action is not evangelism. Going even further, the Lausanne delegates established the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelism to provide leadership for the perpetuation of worldwide evangelism.<sup>24</sup>

Evangelicals were sometimes portrayed as having little interest in peoples’ oppression or injustices against others. Section 5, “Christians’ Social Responsibility,” was written as a rebuttal against these judgments:

We affirm that God is both the Creator and the Judge of all people. We therefore should share his concern for justice and reconciliation throughout human society and for the liberation of men and women from every kind of oppression. Because men and women are made in the image of God, every person, regardless of race, religion, colour, culture, class, sex or age, has an intrinsic dignity because of which he or she should be respected and served, not exploited. Here too we express penitence both for our neglect and for having sometimes regarded evangelism and social concern as mutually exclusive. Although reconciliation with other people is not reconciliation with God, nor is social action evangelism, nor is political liberation salvation, nevertheless we affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty. For both are necessary expressions of our doctrines of God and man, our love for our neighbour and our obedience to Jesus Christ. The message of salvation implies

---

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Chilcote and Warner, “Introduction,” *The Study of Evangelism*, xxiii.

also a message of judgment upon every form of alienation, oppression and discrimination, and we should not be afraid to denounce evil and injustice wherever they exist. When people receive Christ they are born again into his kingdom and must seek not only to exhibit but also to spread its righteousness in the midst of an unrighteous world. The salvation we claim should be transforming us in the totality of our personal and social responsibilities. Faith without works is dead (Acts 17:26,31; Gen. 18:25; Isa. 1:17; Psa. 45:7; Gen. 1:26,27; Jas. 3:9; Lev. 19:18; Luke 6:27,35; Jas. 2:14-26; John 3:3,5; Matt. 5:20; 6:33; II Cor. 3:18; Jas. 2:20).<sup>25</sup>

Evangelicals typically see social action and justice issues as separate from evangelism. They view evangelism as verbal proclamation of the good news and the most important part of God's mission. Mainline Protestants lean toward social action and justice issues, though nonverbal, being included in the definition of evangelism.<sup>26</sup>

Soon after Lausanne, Pope Paul VI presented the letter *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (Evangelization in the Modern World).<sup>27</sup> In this 1975 declaration, agreeing with the evangelicals, the Pope states, "We wish to confirm once more that the task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the church."<sup>28</sup> He further says

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. Cf. John Stott's reflections on the Lausanne conference in "The Significance of Lausanne," 64, no. 3 (July 1975): 288-94.

<sup>26</sup> See chapter 4, "History of the Missional-Church Movement," for discussion of the mainline Protestant and evangelical debate in the context of mission and the missional movement.

<sup>27</sup> "*Evangelii Nuntiandi*: Apostolic Exhortation of His Holiness Pope Paul VI to the Episcopate, to the Clergy and to All the Faithful of the Entire World," *Libreria Editrice Vaticana* (Letter to all Roman Catholics, Rome, Italy, December 8, 1975), [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/paul\\_vi/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_exh\\_19751208\\_evangelii-nuntiandi\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi_en.html) (accessed September 25, 2010).

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

that evangelism, which he defines as both verbal proclamation as well as proclamation by social action, is the responsibility of all God's people.<sup>29</sup>

In 1980, the ecumenical CWME met in Melbourne, Australia. The theme was "Your Kingdom Come." Having been influenced by Latin American liberation theology, the group centered its discussion on the role of churches in helping the poor and standing in opposition to unjust social and economic conditions. In addition to these social issues, delegates also discussed evangelism. Their position on evangelism was published in the 1982 document, "Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation."<sup>30</sup> The following quotation from the WCC reveals realignment of ecumenicals with evangelicals, at least as far as mission and evangelism are concerned:

It ("Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation") is a landmark document which draws on insights from Protestant, evangelical, Orthodox and Roman Catholic mission theologies. After the tensions experienced during the 70s with the creation of a new international Protestant mission movement (the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization in 1974), the 1982 document can be seen as an attempt by CWME at recentring [sic] ecumenical mission theology with a clearer commitment to the proclamation of the gospel without losing the prophetic challenge of conferences such as Bangkok or Melbourne.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. Pope Paul's *Evangelii Nuntiandi* is a spectacular document that clearly and extensively calls all Christians both to verbally proclaim the message of the Gospel as well as live the message of the Gospel.

<sup>30</sup> "Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation," World Council of Churches, [http://www.oikoumene.org/fileadmin/files/cwme/mission\\_statements\\_web.pdf](http://www.oikoumene.org/fileadmin/files/cwme/mission_statements_web.pdf) (accessed February 22, 2010).

<sup>31</sup> "History of World Mission and Evangelism," World Council of Churches.

Several additional ecumenical conferences and documents followed the Melbourne conference:<sup>32</sup>

- The WCC's Conference on World Mission and Evangelism in San Antonio, Texas in 1989. The consensus can be summarized by the following: (1) we cannot point to any other way of salvation than Jesus Christ, (2) at the same time we cannot put any limit to God's saving power, and (3) there is a tension between these affirmations which we acknowledge and cannot resolve.
- The WCC's 1996 Conference on World Mission and Evangelism in Salvador, Bahía, Brazil.
- In 2000, the CWME adopted the study document, "Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today."<sup>33</sup> This paper on "mission and ministry of reconciliation" was the result of preparation for the 2005 mission conference.
- The WCC's World Mission and Evangelism Conference in Athens, Greece in 2005.

On the evangelicals' side, two major conferences followed the 1966 World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin and the 1974 International Congress on World Evangelization in Lausanne:

---

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. Cf. the WCC's website "Programmes" for a complete list of WCC positions and documents. "Programmes," World Council of Churches, <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/programmes.html> (accessed February 27, 2010). Particular to this dissertation is the article "Nature and Mission of the Church," World Council of Churches, <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/programmes/unity-mission-evangelism-and-spirituality/called-to-be-the-one-Church/nature-and-mission-of-the-Church.html> (accessed February 27, 2010).

<sup>33</sup> "Mission and Evangelism In Unity Today: Preparatory Paper #1," Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, (May 15, 2005), <http://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/wcc-commissions/mission-and-evangelism/cwme-world-conference-athens-2005/preparatory-paper-n-1-mission-and-evangelism-in-unity-today.html> (accessed February 27, 2010). "Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation: Preparatory Paper #10," Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/other-meetings/mission-and-evangelism/athens-2005-documents/preparatory-paper-n-10-mission-as-ministry-of-reconciliation.html> (accessed February 27, 2010).

- The Lausanne II: International Congress on World Evangelization in Manila, Philippines in 1989, which resulted in their “Manifesto.”
- The Lausanne III: International Congress on World Evangelization in Cape Town, South Africa in 2010.

These conferences and their associated documents made significant contributions toward understanding the theology of mission and evangelism.

The following documents continue to contribute the most to defining the theology of evangelism today:

- “Mission and Evangelism in Unity,” an ecumenical document.
- The “Lausanne Covenant” (1974), a Protestant document.
- *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975), a Roman Catholic document.
- “Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation” (1982), an ecumenical document.<sup>34</sup>
- “An Evangelical Manifesto: A Declaration of Evangelical Identity and Public Commitment” (2008), an evangelical document.<sup>35</sup>

Significant attention has been given to mission and evangelism over the past century. However, Americans have for the most part viewed missions as evangelism in foreign lands to unreached people. Because of a Christendom mentality, Christians in America were lured falsely into believing that since America was a Christian nation, most

---

<sup>34</sup> “Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation,” Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/other-meetings/mission-and-evangelism/athens-2005-documents/preparatory-paper-n-10-mission-as-ministry-of-reconciliation.html> (accessed February 27, 2010).

<sup>35</sup> “An Evangelical Manifesto: A Declaration of Evangelical Identity and Public Commitment,” Evangelical Manifesto Steering Committee, (May 7, 2008) [http://www.anevangelicalmanifesto.com/docs/Evangelical\\_Manifesto.pdf](http://www.anevangelicalmanifesto.com/docs/Evangelical_Manifesto.pdf) (accessed February 4, 2011).

people in America were already Christians. Therefore, America was not in need of being evangelized. Craig Van Gelder describes this mentality when he writes,

What became embarrassingly clear through the national meetings conducted at Lausanne II, was that the delegates of every nation other than the U.S. assembled to plan national strategies for evangelization within their countries. The U.S. delegates assembled to work on the unstated, but operational second assumption ... to plan for the continued mobilization of missions "over there."<sup>36</sup>

Although major evangelistic influences in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries were often foreign in nature, these missionaries and missiologists carved out the basis for a theology of mission and evangelism in the west, including America.

Working through the issues and questions concerning evangelism has not been without schism between mainline Protestants and evangelicals. The primary dividing line, as noted, is the differing views on the definition of evangelism as it relates to forms of proclamation.<sup>37</sup> These differing views are the main reason for the numerous and varying definitions of both mission and evangelism, which provide the foundation for addressing the question this dissertation is asking: What should be the nature of evangelism in missional churches? There is little question that the history of evangelism over the past century has resulted in biases regarding the nature of evangelism in missional churches today. Evangelism by nonverbal proclamation had its roots in the mainline Protestant movement long before the birth of the missional movement.

---

<sup>36</sup> Craig Van Gelder, "Evangelicals and Lausanne II: What Happened to a 'Contextual' Gospel?" *The Gospel and Our Culture Newsletter* vol. 2, no. 1 (June 1990) 5, <http://www.gocn.org/files/021-newsletter.pdf#page=5> (accessed July 18, 2010).

<sup>37</sup> For a brief review of the current state of the relationship between mainline Protestants and evangelicals regarding mission and evangelism, refer to chapter 4.

## Chapter 4

### History of the Missional-Church Movement

It seems to me to be of great importance to insist that mission is not first of all an action of ours. It is an action of God.

Lesslie Newbigin<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this chapter is to survey the historical development of the missional-church movement. The historical background of the missional-church movement provides a context for understanding the *current* nature of evangelism in missional churches.

### Current Context

During the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Western world was in the midst of shifting from a modern to a postmodern culture and from a Christendom to a post-Christian society. The church awakened to find itself in a turbulent crisis. The culture shift was manifest in numerous ways, one of which was a drastic decline in church attendance, as seen in chapter 2, especially among young people.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, there was a loss of power and influence of the church on society. At a deeper,

---

<sup>1</sup> Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1989), 134.

<sup>2</sup> See chapter 2 for a statistical summary of the church's decline. David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks About Christianity ... and Why it Matters* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007). Cf. David T. Olson, *The American Church in Crisis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008).



foundational level, the church also experienced a crisis of identity and purpose.<sup>3</sup>

Consequential to the church's decline in both influence and attendance, America is no longer the great sender of missionaries into foreign mission fields of the world. America has become a mission field.

The shift to a post-Christian society does not mean that people in America are not spiritual, but rather that America has become spiritually pluralistic. Darrell Guder points out that "The United States is still, by all accounts, a very religious society. Pollsters affirm that Americans believe in God, pray regularly, and consider themselves religious. However, they find less and less reason to express their faith by attending or joining a Christian church."<sup>4</sup>

Against this backdrop, there has been a surge of interest among many concerned church leaders, recognizing that both missiology and ecclesiology will have to go through major reassessment and change if the church is to turn from a state of decline to growth and from disrespect to respect.<sup>5</sup> This reassessment has taken some churches in the direction of living out the mission God sends Christians on by returning to the nature and

---

<sup>3</sup> George R. Hunsberger and Craig Van Gelder, eds., *The Church Between Gospel and Culture: The Emerging Mission in North America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 1. Cf. Craig Van Gelder, ed., *The Missional Church and Denominations: Helping Congregations Develop a Missional Identity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 2.

<sup>4</sup> Darrell L. Guder, ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 1. Although the trend is toward pluralism, there is still significant interest in Jesus. Interest in the church is what is decreasing. See Dan Kimball, *They Like Jesus But Not the Church: Insights from Emerging Generations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007).

<sup>5</sup> Van Gelder, *The Missional Church and Denominations*, 2.

practices of the earliest pre-Constantinian church. As Brad Brisco states, “This recognition of the North American religiosity shift to a post-Christian, neo-pagan, pluralistic mission field has led many to return to the foundation of what it means to be the Church of Jesus Christ in the world.”<sup>6</sup> The “many” to whom Brisco refers are those associated with the missional movement.

The swell of interest over the past ten years surrounding missional theology and missional ecclesiology has been so great that one can accurately speak of the missional-church conversation as having become the missional-church movement. Many churches that are giving attention to the reason they exist—that is, the mission on which God sends them—are identifying themselves as missional churches.<sup>7</sup> In practice, if they are attempting to have an external focus, they are missional churches.

Every church should have a clear understanding of God’s mission. However, too often churches do not understand their mission. As Charles Van Engen states, “It would appear that *mission* and *missionaries* are two of the most misunderstood words in the

---

<sup>6</sup> Brad Brisco, “History of Missional Church – Part I,” The Missional Church Network, entry posted October 26, 2009, <http://missionalChurchnetwork.com/history-of-the-missional-Church-part-i/> (accessed October 14, 2010). In an interview with Lesslie Newbigin regarding his observations upon returning to Britain following forty years as a missionary in India, Newbigin states, “But it didn’t take long to discover that we are really not in a secular society, but in a pagan society—not in a society which has no gods, but a society which has false gods.” Lesslie Newbigin, “The Gospel in a Culture of False Gods,” John Mark Ministries, <http://jmm.aaa.net.au/articles/4.htm> (accessed December 5, 2009), an excerpt from Andrew Walker, *Different Gospels: Christian Orthodoxy and Modern Theologies* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1988).

<sup>7</sup> Having movement status does not imply that the definition of missional has solidified. It has not. Discussion about what is missional and missional theology is still very active.

vocabulary of North American churches today.”<sup>8</sup> Van Engen also comments on the term “missional”: “A quick overview demonstrates that the term [missional] now stands for any kind of new life, vision, vitality, and direction of the church—often with little or no theological or missiological reflection.”<sup>9</sup>

### Origins of the Missional-Church Movement

The missional movement is closely tied to the phrase *missio Dei*, which finds its beginning in the early part of the twentieth century. Karl Barth used the phrase *actio Dei*, Latin for “the action of God,” at the Brandenburg Missionary Conference in 1932, to say that God (or the Trinity) is the source of mission.<sup>10</sup> In 1934, Karl Hartenstein, a German missiologist, used the phrase *missio Dei* in response to Barth’s use of *actio Dei*. In 1952, Lesslie Newbigin presented a revolutionary paper entitled, “From Christendom to Missionary,” at the International Missionary Council (IMC) in Willingen, Germany.

---

<sup>8</sup> Charles Van Engen, “‘Mission’ Defined and Described,” in *MissionShift: Global Mission Issues in the Third Millennium*, eds. David J. Hesselgrave and Ed Stetzer (Nashville: B&H Publishers, 2010), 8.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>10</sup> For an excellent review of *missio Dei*, see Tormod Engelsen, “*Missio Dei*: The Understanding and Misunderstanding of a Theological Concept in European Churches and Missiology,” *International Review of Mission*, 92, issue 367 (October 2003): 481-97, <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?hid=113&sid=74088a2e-9522-466b-9b34-d15f46a0fb90%40sessionmgr104&vid=4> (accessed November 12, 2010). Cf. Christopher J. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006), 62-63; L. A. Hoedemaker, “The People of God and the Ends of the Earth,” in *Missiology: An Ecumenical Introduction*, ed. A. Camp, L.A. Hoedemaker, and M.R. Spindler (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 165.

Although Newbigin did not use the phrase *missio Dei*, he did use the concept. It was not until Hartenstein's post-conference report that the phrase *missio Dei* was actually used.<sup>11</sup>

Hartenstein wrote that mission is,

...participation in the sending of the Son, in the *missio Dei*, with an inclusive aim of establishing the lordship of Christ over the whole redeemed creation. Mission is not just the conversion of the individual, nor just obedience to the word of the Lord, nor just the obligation to gather the church. It is the taking part in the sending of the Son, the *missio Dei*, with the holistic aim of establishing Christ's rule over all redeemed creation.<sup>12</sup>

Georg Vicedom further popularized *missio Dei* in his book, *The Mission of God: An Introduction to a Theology of Mission*.<sup>13</sup> These events opened the doors for a new hermeneutic based on a missional theology, which would reshape the way many people, including adherents to the missional movement, would interpret Scripture.

However, with this new missional hermeneutic, mainline Protestant theologians, led by Johannes Hoekendijk, began to associate *missio Dei* with the idea that God is not only working through the church to transform all people in the world, but he is also at

---

<sup>11</sup> Goheen, "As the Father Has Sent Me," 50; David Bosch, *Transforming Mission. Paradigm Shifts in the Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books), 390.

<sup>12</sup> Engelsviken, "*Missio Dei*," 482.

<sup>13</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 63. Georg Vicedom's book was originally published in 1959 in German under the title *Missio Dei* and later translated into English under the title *The Mission of God: An Introduction to a Theology of Mission*, trans. Gilbert A. Thiele and Dennis Hilgendorf (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 1965). Cf. David Claydon, "Aims of Mission: *Missio Dei*," in *Dictionary of Mission Theology: Evangelical Foundations*, ed. John Corrie, Samuel Escobar and Wilbert Shenk (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007), 16-17; John A. McIntosh, "*Missio Dei*," *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, ed. A. Scott Moreau, Harold Netland, and Charles Van Engen (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 631-33.

work independently of the church.<sup>14</sup> Commenting on Hoekendijk's thesis, J. A. Scherer states,

God was seen to be working out the divine purpose in the midst of the world through immanent, intra-mundane historical forces, above all secularization. The trinitarian *Missio Dei* view was replaced by a theory about the transformation of the world and of history not through evangelization and church planting but by means of a divinely guided immanent historical process, somewhat analogous to deistic views of the Enlightenment. This secular view of God's mission made the empirical church virtually dispensable as an agent of divine mission, and in some cases even a hindrance.<sup>15</sup>

Hence, Hoekendijk believed that God did not need the church; in fact, the church was sometimes an obstacle to God carrying out his mission.<sup>16</sup> This radical removal of mission from the church and the church from mission led Stephen Neill to pen the famous words, "When everything is mission, nothing is mission."<sup>17</sup> Neill was trying to bring extremists back to a more central position to see that the church's primary purpose is to proclaim the gospel. Regrettably, few heeded Neill's warning. Hoekendijk's theology continues to influence the missional movement today.

---

<sup>14</sup> Johannes Christian Hoekendijk, *The Church Inside Out* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966). For a review of Hoekendijk's work, see Jan. A. B. Jongeneel, ed. *Philosophy, Science, and Theology of Mission in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries: A Missiological Encyclopedia* (Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity), Part 1 (New York: Peter Lang, 1997).

<sup>15</sup> J. A. Scherer, "Church, Kingdom, and *Missio Dei*: Lutheran and Orthodox Correctives to Recent Ecumenical Mission Theology," in *The Good News of the Kingdom: Mission Theology for the Third Millennium*, ed. C. Van Engen, D. S. Gilliland, and P. Pierson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), 86.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Stephen Neill, *Creative Tension* (London: Edinburgh House, 1959), 81.

### Lesslie Newbigin's Influence on the Missional-Church Movement

Although there are many people who have contributed to a better understanding of the theology of mission and to the missional conversation, few would question that one of the earliest to enter the discussion, and the person of greatest influence, is missionary, missiologist, and theologian Lesslie Newbigin. His work led to rethinking the relationship between church and mission. Shaking the core of the church's view of missions, Newbigin proposed that the gospel does not portray a view of mission where the church is a sender of missionaries from a specific location, but rather, mission ought to be seen as a Christian community that is formed and led by the Spirit within its own culture. This understanding formed the early foundation for what would become the missional movement. Therefore, discussion of the history of the missional-church movement must include a survey of the contributions from Lesslie Newbigin.

Lesslie Newbigin was born in Newcastle, England on December 8, 1909. He was educated at Queens' College and Westminster College in Cambridge and ordained into the Presbyterian Church in 1936. Newbigin spent the next thirty-eight years working as a missionary in Tamil Nadu in southern India.<sup>18</sup> In 1959, he became the General Secretary of the International Missionary Council (IMC) and guided its merging with the World

---

<sup>18</sup> Paul Weston provides a detailed biography of Newbigin's life in *Lesslie Newbigin: Missionary Theologian* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 1-16. Cf. George R. Hunsberger, *Bearing the Witness of the Spirit: Lesslie Newbigin's Theology of Plurality* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998). Cf. Geoffrey Wainwright, *Lesslie Newbigin: A Theological Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). Newbigin's autobiography is Lesslie Newbigin, *Unfinished Agenda: An Autobiography*, rev. ed. (St. Andrews: St. Andrews Press, 1993).

Council of Churches (WCC). He immediately became Associate General Secretary of the WCC, a position he held until 1965. In 1974, Newbigin and his wife, Helen, returned to England and settled in Birmingham. He lectured at Selly Oak College for the next five years. Newbigin was a prolific writer until his death on January 30, 1998.<sup>19</sup> Geoffrey Wainwright, speaking of Newbigin's influence on the church, declares, "his stature and range is comparable to the 'Fathers of the church.'"<sup>20</sup>

During Newbigin's earlier years as a Christian and missionary, he followed a Christendom ecclesiology. It was not until the early 1950s that Newbigin began to question this ecclesiology. The answers to his questions led him to move from a Christendom ecclesiology to a missionary ecclesiology. During the 1952 IMC conference at Willingen, Germany, Newbigin presented his new missionary ecclesiology, as mentioned above, in an address entitled, "From Christendom to Missionary."<sup>21</sup> Newbigin proposed that the very nature of God should be in the context of the mission of God. God

---

<sup>19</sup> For a list of his publications see "Newbigin.net: Online Bibliography," [http://www.newbigin.net/searches%5Cnew\\_only.cfm](http://www.newbigin.net/searches%5Cnew_only.cfm) (accessed November 28, 2009).

<sup>20</sup> Wainwright, *Lesslie Newbigin: A Theological Life*, v.

<sup>21</sup> The foundation for Newbigin was laid earlier at the International Missionary Council's Tambaram, India 1938 conference where the main theme focused on the sentness of the church and that the church and mission are one. Michael Goheen, "'As the Father Has Sent Me, I Am Sending You: J.E. Lesslie Newbigin's Missionary Ecclesiology'" (PhD diss., Utrecht University, 2000), 8, <http://igitur-archive.library.uu.nl/dissertations/1947080/full.pdf> (accessed November 12, 2009). Goheen's excellent work is a comprehensive look at the life, work, and theology of Lesslie Newbigin. Newbigin's new views are reflected in his books, *The Household of God: Lectures on the Nature of the Church* (London: SCM, 1953), and *One Body, One Gospel, One World: The Christian Mission Today* (London and New York: International Missionary Council, 1959).

the Father sending the Son (John 1:14) and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit (John 14:16-17) was expanded to include another movement, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit sending the church into the world (Matt. 28:19, Acts 1:8). As far as missionary thinking was concerned, this connecting of mission with the doctrine of the Trinity and the image of participating with God in mission constituted an important innovation. Reflecting on the theological and ecclesiological changes Newbigin discussed at Willingen, David Bosch writes, "God's salvific work precedes both the church and mission. We should not subordinate mission to the church nor the church to mission; both should, rather, be taken up into the *missio Dei*, which now became the overarching concept. The *missio Dei* institutes the *missiones ecclesiae*."<sup>22</sup> Following the Willingen conference, there was a clear move away from viewing the church as having a mission (or missions) to viewing God as a missionary God, who sends Jesus, who calls the church to participate in God's mission.<sup>23</sup>

In 1957, Newbigin once again brought into question his own missionary ecclesiology. By the time of the New Delhi Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1961, he had shifted from "a Christo-centric-Trinitarian one [ecclesiology] and from a

---

<sup>22</sup> David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 370. Newbigin began participating in ecumenical movement conferences when he attended the World Council of Churches (WCC) conference in Amsterdam in 1948. His first IMC conference was at Willingen, Germany in 1952. From 1952 on, Newbigin participated in all the conferences sponsored by the WCC, IMC, and the Committee on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) of the WCC and often wrote the reports. Goheen, "As the Father Has Sent Me," 48.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 390. Cf. Craig Van Gelder, *The Ministry for the Missional Church: A Community Led by the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007), 183, n.9.



church-centric basis for mission to a notion that places the church in the context of God's purposes for the entire world."<sup>24</sup> Factors leading up to this change were the collapse of colonialism, increased globalization, modernization of the world, and secularization of the West.<sup>25</sup> Later, reflecting on this change, Newbigin writes,

And my own point of view had changed .... Looking back in 1965 upon my earlier ministries in Kanchi and Madurai I felt that I had been too narrowly ecclesiastical in my concerns, and I resolved that I would challenge the strong churches of Madras City to think less of their own growth and welfare and more of God's purpose for the whole of the vast and growing city.<sup>26</sup>

In 1978, while part of the faculty at Selly Oaks College teaching theology of mission, Newbigin published *The Open Secret: Sketches for a Missionary Theology*.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Goheen, "As the Father Has Sent Me," 8. Newbigin's second shift in ecclesiology is reflected in *The Relevance of Trinitarian Doctrine for Today's Mission*, CWME Study Pamphlet No. 2 (London: Edinburgh Press) and reissued as *Trinitarian Doctrine for Today's Mission* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1998). One must not imply from Goheen's quote that Newbigin gives up his Trinitarian views on mission. Newbigin states as late as 1989, in his *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 118-19, "The mission of the Church is to be understood, can only be rightly understood, in terms of the Trinitarian model." "It [the mission of the Church] is continued through the presence and active work of the Holy Spirit, who is the presence of the reign of God in foretaste." "It is God who acts in the power of his Spirit, doing mighty works, creating signs of a new age, working secretly in the hearts of men and women to draw them to Christ." "It is impossible to stress too strongly that the beginning of mission is not an action of ours, but the presence of a new reality, the presence of the Spirit of God in power."

<sup>25</sup> Goheen, "As the Father Has Sent Me," 8.

<sup>26</sup> Lesslie Newbigin, *Unfinished Agenda: An Autobiography*, rev. ed. (St. Andrews: St. Andrews Press, 1993), 203.

<sup>27</sup> Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: Sketches for a Missionary Theology* (London: SPCK, 1978). In a later revised edition and with a changed subtitle, it was published as *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission*, edited by Eleanor Jackson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995). Newbigin used *The Open Secret* as his textbook for mission theology. Although Newbigin's leadership during the years he spent

*The Open Secret* is Newbigin's further development of a booklet explaining that the mission of the church must be placed within Trinitarian doctrine.<sup>28</sup> Reflecting on *The Open Secret* in his autobiography, Newbigin states, "I wanted ... something that would help these people [students headed to foreign mission fields] to understand why the church has to be missionary."<sup>29</sup> Newbigin was intent on his students understanding that mission is not an external attachment to the church, but rather the reason for the existence of the church.

In the introduction to *The Open Secret*, Newbigin deals with complexities of the theology of mission, specifically regarding the "missionary nature of the church."<sup>30</sup> With the Western world in the midst of a great cultural shift, looking through a Trinitarian lens Newbigin explores how the church can engage the changing culture. He begins by asking the question, "By what authority" is mission done?<sup>31</sup> To answer his question, he looks at Acts 4:7-10 where the apostles are asked the question, "By what power, or by what name did you do this [heal a cripple man]?" Peter's answer was, "In the name of Jesus of

---

in India was remarkable, it is his work after returning to England that stands as his greatest accomplishment.

<sup>28</sup> Goheen, "As the Father Has Sent Me," 102. Lesslie Newbigin, *The Relevance of Trinitarian Doctrine for Today's Mission*.

<sup>29</sup> Newbigin, *Unfinished Agenda*, 229. Cf. Goheen, "As the Father Has Sent Me," 102.

<sup>30</sup> Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 1.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

Nazareth.” Thus, the thesis of Newbigin’s *The Open Secret* is that the mission of God is carried out “In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”<sup>32</sup>

Having established that Jesus is the authority, Newbigin raises the follow-up question, “Who is Jesus?” From Mark 1:1-15, Newbigin makes three important summary points: (1) “Jesus announces the reign of God,”<sup>33</sup> (2) “Jesus is acknowledged as the Son of God,”<sup>34</sup> and (3) “Jesus is anointed by the Spirit.”<sup>35</sup> After dealing with the question of authority for mission, Newbigin looks at mission in three ways: (1) “Proclaiming the Kingdom of the Father: Mission as Faith in Action,”<sup>36</sup> (2) “Sharing the Life of the Son: Mission as Love in Action,”<sup>37</sup> and (3) “Bearing the Witness of the Spirit: Mission as Hope in Action.”<sup>38</sup>

In summary, mission is to be done where one lives, as opposed to somewhere else.<sup>39</sup> This view is observed in Jesus’s prayer, “your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven” (Matt. 6:10). When Christians share in the incarnation of Jesus,

---

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 21. Newbigin’s emphasis is that Jesus is not ruler of the kingdom but rather, the kingdom belongs to God.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 30-39.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 40-55.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 56-65.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 39.

they represent the kingdom. Newbigin points out that this “presence of the kingdom in the form of death and resurrection” is not merely insuring that the teaching of Jesus continues, but rather that the kingdom “is carried through history hidden and revealed in the life of that community which bears in its life the dying and rising of Jesus.”<sup>40</sup> Finally, the Spirit is the power that carries out the mission. “Mission is not just something that the church does; mission is something that is done by the Spirit, who is himself the witness, who changes both the world and the church, and who always goes before the church in its missionary journey.”<sup>41</sup>

After writing *The Open Secret*, Newbigin experienced another major turning point in his understanding. Upon returning from India, he was disturbed to find that church buildings that had been full when he left thirty-eight years prior were now almost empty. Understandably, he found himself pressed to learn why the change and, if possible, he wanted to reverse the trend. In his autobiography, *Unfinished Agenda*, Newbigin reveals the moment of discovery that provided direction for most of his remaining work.

While at St Deniol's I naturally spent time browsing among the books. The title of one caught my eye: *La Crise de la Conscience Europeenne* by Paul Hazard. The title was striking. It was a study of the eighteenth century Enlightenment, a subject about which I had never thought. I found and read the English translation (*The European Mind: 1680 to 1715*). It seemed to provide the perspective I was looking for. Here was the critical moment in which one could say that, after a very long period of gestation, modern Europe came to birth and to consciousness of its own unique character.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>42</sup> Newbigin, *Unfinished Agenda*, 250. Cf. Goheen, “As The Father Has Sent Me,” 106f for a more detailed version of Newbigin’s contributions to understanding culture.

Recognizing that the Western church had been greatly influenced by the Enlightenment,<sup>43</sup> Newbigin turned his attention toward the captivating and troubling question, “How can we find a perspective on one’s own culture?”<sup>44</sup> Wanting to bring to light the influences of modernism on Western culture and the church, in 1983, while involved with the British Council of Churches, Newbigin published *The Other Side of 1984*,<sup>45</sup> the first of three works. The popularity of this book gave rise to the “Gospel and Culture” conversation that soon came to be known as a “programme.”<sup>46</sup>

In *The Other Side of 1984*, Newbigin focuses on two themes. First, Western society is in crisis because of the Enlightenment worldview. Although science and technology promised unlimited solutions and unlimited progress, the result is not a more rational, meaningful, and peaceful world. Instead, there is a crisis of meaning and purpose and a world with less peace perhaps than ever. For Newbigin, only a return to faith can give meaning and purpose to life. The second theme deals with the church’s loss of influence on society. Newbigin argues the reason for such loss is that the church has retreated from the public sphere into the private sector. Newbigin does not wish for the

---

<sup>43</sup> In *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, Newbigin dissects the Enlightenment period addressing various philosophers such as Descartes, Locke, Nietzsche, and Polanyi.

<sup>44</sup> Newbigin, *Unfinished Agenda*, 250.

<sup>45</sup> Lesslie Newbigin, *The Other Side of 1984: Questions to the Churches* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1983).

<sup>46</sup> Goheen, “As the Father Has Sent Me,” 106. See Newbigin, *Unfinished Agenda*, 250-56 for the story of how the “Gospel and Culture” began. Cf. Guder, *Missional Church*, 3. If a beginning point of the missional conversation can be identified, likely it is, in the earliest days of the Gospel and Culture conversations.

church to return to Christendom, but rather to be involved in society, with people of pluralistic views, namely those with an Enlightenment worldview.

Continuing his work, in 1986 Newbigin published his third book, *Foolishness to the Greeks*,<sup>47</sup> perhaps his *magnum opus*. In this book, he analyzes Western culture and asks what would be the result of a genuine missionary encounter between gospel and Western culture, a culture that is divided into facts and values, public and private lives, and particulars and absolutes. Bringing to the surface the tension between biblical truths and science, and politics and the church, Newbigin questions what the church must claim to know, to do, and to be in a post-Christian culture. He challenges the church to reject the modern world's influences on Christianity and launch a new way of thinking and living modeled after the life of Christ. This new, Christ-like life includes influencing political, social, and global economic institutions, speaking for the marginalized, and publically proclaiming the revolutionary message of the gospel.

Newbigin takes on the difficult task of how to contextualize the gospel in today's pluralistic culture. His main concern is how the church can remain faithful to the truth of the gospel in a world that not only rejects truth but also seems to find pleasure in doubt and skepticism.

At first glance, the book appears to be somewhat of a conglomeration of ideas and topics with chapter titles ranging from "Knowing and Believing," to "Christ: the Clue to History," to "Ministerial Leadership for a Missionary Congregation." However, upon

---

<sup>47</sup> Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel in Western Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986). The content for Newbigin's book was taken from a lecture series he gave in 1988 at Glasgow University.

closer examination, it becomes clear that Newbigin has a cohesive objective. Newbigin writes an epistemology for Christians to answer the question, "How can one know the truth of the gospel and thus have 'confidence' in the gospel?" Responding to an atmosphere of intellectual timidity and apathetic evangelistic and social action brought on by the pluralism and relativism of the Enlightenment, Newbigin challenges Christians to a new and hopeful life that is confident of Christ in the gospel.<sup>48</sup> His method is to give intellectual tools that will help affirm what is and is not truth. Newbigin acknowledges that he depended heavily on Michael Polanyi's well-known *Personal Knowledge* for an epistemological framework.<sup>49</sup> To a lesser degree, he uses works by Alasdair MacIntyre, Hendrikus Berkhof, and Walter Wink.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 242-44.

<sup>49</sup> Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958). Newbigin states in the preface of *A Gospel in a Pluralist Society* that the first five chapters are particularly dependent on Polanyi's *Personal Knowledge*. Arguing against the modernist epistemology where all true knowledge is objective knowledge, which is "impersonal," Polanyi, a chemist and philosopher, proposes that there is no such thing as truly "objective" knowledge. Polanyi believes that all knowledge has a "personal" element, thus "personal knowledge" (p. vii). Polanyi's intent is to show that objective, factual, scientific knowledge is influenced by subjective, "personal" factors. All knowledge is based, at some level, on faith.

<sup>50</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (South Bend, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988); Hendrikus Berkhof, *Christ, the Meaning of History* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1966); Walter Wink, *Naming the Powers* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1984) and *Unmasking the Powers* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1986).

Newbigin spends the first five chapters analyzing many of the fallacies he sees within rationalism.<sup>51</sup> Against the view that dogma is the basis of an inferior belief system on which religion is built, he argues, "Dogma is not uniquely peculiar to the church. Every kind of systematic thought has to begin from some starting point. It has to begin by taking some things for granted."<sup>52</sup> Following Peter Berger, Newbigin points out that all cultures hold to certain "plausibility structures," that is, they hold to patterns of belief and practice that determine the beliefs that are accepted by society or are "plausible."<sup>53</sup> Claims of truth must be evaluated within the context of these plausibility structures to determine their validity.

Pointing out that the plausibility structures themselves are unproven dogmatic assumptions, Newbigin claims that Christians hold to a different plausibility structure. The plausibility structure that Christians follow is as valid as the plausibility structure that holds up reason, knowledge, and science. Newbigin believes that the Bible is unique in that it is a "universal history" of humanity. Newbigin writes,

The Bible was a source of information about such of these eternal truths as could not be discovered by direct observation of nature or by reflection on innate human ideas. Any valid defense of the Christian faith, I believe, must take a quite different route. The Christian faith, rooted in the Bible, is—I am convinced—primarily to be understood as an interpretation of the story—the human story set within the story of nature. Our dialogue as Christians, therefore, with the modern world, will be as much a dialogue with the historians as with the natural scientists. Every understanding of the human story, even more obviously than every understanding of the natural world, must rest heavily on a faith commitment—for

---

<sup>51</sup> Newbigin bases his polemic on Polanyi's epistemology.

<sup>52</sup> Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 8.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.



we do not yet see the end of the story. But no human life is possible without some idea, explicit or implicit, about what the story means. The Christian faith is—as often said—a historical faith not just in the sense that it depends on a historical record, but also in the sense that it is essentially an interpretation of universal history. Its defense, therefore, will be as much concerned with how we act as with what we can say.<sup>54</sup>

For Newbigin, the way the church impacts society is in the way Christians live.

Christians who live out their faith are a “hermeneutic of the gospel.”<sup>55</sup>

Although the last words from Lesslie Newbigin’s prolific pen were written fifteen years ago, scholars continue to pore over his works by carefully analyzing them as if they were written yesterday. In fact, when reading his works, much of the content is surprisingly still relevant to current conversation regarding the theology of mission, contextualization of the gospel, and the missional-church movement. His continued popularity is ample testimony to the impact Newbigin has made and is still making on how ecclesiology and missiology are viewed today. Without question, by pointing us back to the theology of mission in the Scripture and by helping Christians see a pagan, pluralistic, modern, and postmodern culture through missional lenses, Newbigin laid the foundation upon which to build the missional-church movement.

---

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 222-233. Newbigin’s epistemology has certainly not gone without question. For a rebuttal, see Dennis McCullum, “Review of Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* and the ‘Emergent Church’ Movement,” by, November 2005, <http://www.xenos.org/essays/newbigin-emergent.htm> (accessed December 6, 2009).

### Evangelical and Mainline Protestant Division

As discussed, the predominant mainline Protestant position regarding *missio Dei*, following Hoekendijk, was that God is not only working through the church to change and reconcile the world, but he is at work in the world independent from the church. Evangelicals did not follow the mainline Protestants regarding this new missional theology and ecclesiology. Mark Young, an evangelical, describes the time from the 1960s to the 1990s as a “thirty year dark period” when evangelicals usually associated *missio Dei* with the Social-Gospel movement. Evangelicals believed that mainline Protestants were only interested in social action and justice issues and not personal salvation.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, as Young notes, the mainline Protestants used the phrase *missio Dei* as a way of showing that God is advancing his work in all the world’s religions, not just through the church. God is at work in history making right all that is wrong and establishing justice where there is none. Contributing to the disagreement of the evangelicals was the division between the mainline Protestants and the evangelicals over

---

<sup>56</sup> Mark S. Young, “Turning Theology Inside Out: Missio Dei (Part I),” Dallas Theological Seminary Chapel Missions Week, *YouTube* (November 7, 2006), <http://mediafiles.dts.edu/chapel/mp4/20061107.mp4> (accessed December 3, 2010). I thank Rodney MacIlvaine for directing me to Young’s presentation. Rodney MacIlvaine, “Selected Case Studies in How Senior Leaders Cultivate Missional Change in Contemporary Churches” (DMin. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 2009), 19, [http://www.okwu.edu/assets/institute/Dissertation\\_--\\_How\\_Missional\\_Leaders\\_Cultivate\\_Change.pdf](http://www.okwu.edu/assets/institute/Dissertation_--_How_Missional_Leaders_Cultivate_Change.pdf) (accessed December 2, 2010).

liberalism and the fundamentalism movement, which lasted from the 1920s through the 1970s.<sup>57</sup>

Evangelicals, as mentioned in chapter 3, held the first World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin, Germany in 1966 and confirmed in the Lausanne Covenant their stance that nonverbal proclamation by social action is not part of the gospel.<sup>58</sup> In section four, evangelism is defined: "... evangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Saviour and Lord, with a view to persuading people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God."<sup>59</sup> However, The Lausanne Covenant is also clear that social action and justice issues should be included in the mission of the church. In section five, the Covenant states, "We affirm that God is both the Creator and the Judge of all people. We therefore should share his concern for justice and reconciliation throughout human society and for the liberation of men and women from every kind of oppression."<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> For more details on the fundamentalism movement, see appendix 3, "The Social Gospel and Fundamentalism Movements." Fundamentalism is still alive today in a few circles.

<sup>58</sup> "Global Congresses," The Lausanne Movement, <http://www.lausanne.org/global-congresses.html> (accessed September 24, 2010).

<sup>59</sup> "The Lausanne Covenant," The Lausanne Movement, <http://www.lausanne.org/covenant> (accessed September 24, 2010).

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. The Berlin conference became the first of many: The International Congress on World Evangelism in Lausanne (Lausanne I) (1974), Congress on World Evangelism in Pattaya (1980), International Congress on World Evangelism in Manila (Lausanne II) (1989), Forum for World Evangelism in Pattaya (2004), Lausanne III in Cape Town (2010), and numerous smaller conferences.

Since the 1966 Berlin conference, evangelicals have been trying to find common ground with mainline Protestants regarding the definition of mission and the definition of evangelism, hoping to reach unity concerning the relationship between evangelism and social action. Van Engen writes, “In their extreme reaction to the WCC emphasis in the 1960s, Evangelicals ended up splitting word and deed, speaking and doing, verbal proclamation and social transformation. Through a series of consultations, they sought to bring the two closer without necessarily giving one priority over the other.”<sup>61</sup>

Care in keeping social action in the conversation among evangelicals is seen on the recent Lausanne III Cape Town conference website. The description of the conference reads,

Cape Town 2010, held in collaboration with the World Evangelical Alliance, will bring together 4,000 leaders from more than 200 countries to confront the critical issues of our time—other world faiths, poverty, HIV/AIDS, persecution, among others—as they relate to the future of the church and world evangelization.<sup>62</sup>

Doug Birdsall, Executive Chair of the Lausanne III conference, states that “evangelism and social justice must go hand in hand.”<sup>63</sup>

The evangelical focus on social ills will no doubt contribute to bridge-building between mainline Protestants and evangelicals.<sup>64</sup> Many evangelicals now use *missio Dei*,

---

<sup>61</sup> Van Engen, “‘Mission’ Defined and Described,” 22.

<sup>62</sup> “Cape Town 2010,” The Lausanne Movement, <http://www.lausanne.org/cape-town-2010> (accessed September 25, 2010).

<sup>63</sup> John W. Kennedy, “The Most Diverse Gathering,” *Christianity Today* (September, 2010): 66.

along with a broader definition of mission that includes social action, as part of gospel, as if it were their own.

Newbigin should receive partial credit for setting the stage for evangelicals to accept the phrase and the concept of *missio Dei* by offering a detailed description of the deep theological nature embedded in the phrase without attaching it to extraneous interpretations. John Stott, having established credibility with his conservative views as one of the founders of the Lausanne movement, also helped bridge the divide in the books *Christian Mission in the Modern World*<sup>65</sup> and *New Issues Facing Christians Today*.<sup>66</sup> Stott is known for his firm stance on evangelism being the primary function of mission and at the same time includes social action as part of mission. Stott writes,

The primal mission is God's, for it is he who sent his prophets, his Son, his Spirit. Of these missions the mission of the Son is central, for it was the culmination of the ministry of the prophets, and it embraced within itself as its climax the sending of the Spirit. And now the Son sends as he himself sends.<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> This assumes that mainline Protestants will either listen to or read the content presented at the evangelicals' Lausanne III.

<sup>65</sup> John Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1975).

<sup>66</sup> John Stott, *New Issues Facing Christians Today* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984).

<sup>67</sup> Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, 22.

### Gospel and Our Culture Network

Newbigin's book *The Other Side of 1984*, as noted above, led to significant discussion regarding Western society's being in cultural crisis due to the influences of the Enlightenment. The book was originally published by the British Council of Churches, which hoped that it would lead to a yearlong discussion program. This extremely successful discussion formalized into the "Gospel and Our Culture (GOC)."

Newbigin had two goals for the GOC. First, he set out to analyze the "religious assumptions of Western culture through the lens of the gospel."<sup>68</sup> Second, Newbigin attempted to establish the authority of the gospel, an important aspect he believed Christians had lost. Regarding these goals, Newbigin wrote,

GOC has never understood itself as primarily a critique of our culture, but as an effort to clarify the issues involved in communicating the gospel to this particular culture .... GOC ... is only in a secondary sense a critique of contemporary culture. It is about the truth of the gospel, about trying to unmask the illusions which obscure that truth, about helping churches to be more articulate and credible witnesses to the gospel.<sup>69</sup>

By the mid-1980s, a North American version of the GOC began to take shape in the United States called the Gospel and Our Culture Network (GOCN).<sup>70</sup> Newbigin's books *Foolishness to the Greeks* and *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* made the

---

<sup>68</sup> Goheen, "As the Father Has Sent Me," 106.

<sup>69</sup> Lesslie Newbigin, "The Gospel and Our Culture: A Response to Elaine Graham and Heather Walton," *Modern Churchman* 34, 2: 6, 9. I am grateful to Michael Goheen for this important and clarifying quotation in his book, "As the Father Has Sent Me," 106.

<sup>70</sup> Guder, *Missional Church*, 3. Guder points out that *The Other Side of 1984* was reissued by the World Council of Churches in Geneva in 1984 and by the National Council of Churches of Christ in New York.

discussion even more popular on both sides of the Atlantic. However, interest in the British GOC began to decline in 1989, even after Dan Beeby and Hugh Montefiore joined Newbigin as administrators. After several years of struggle, the GOC ended in 1996.<sup>71</sup>

Although the British GOC disbanded, the North American GOCN continued. By the early 1990s, the GOCN was publishing a quarterly newsletter and holding an annual conference.<sup>72</sup> In 1996, the GOCN established a relationship with the William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company to publish a series entitled, “The Gospel and Our Culture.” The following books have been published in this series:

George Hunsberger and Craig Van Gelder, eds., *The Church between Gospel and Culture: The Emerging Mission in North America* (1996).

Darrell L. Guder, ed. *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (1998).

George R. Hunsberger, *Bearing the Witness of the Spirit: Lesslie Newbigin's Theology of Cultural Plurality* (1998).

Craig Van Gelder, ed., *Confident Witness—Changing World: Rediscovering the Gospel in North America* (1999).

Darrell L. Guder, *The Continuing Conversion of the Church* (2000).

---

<sup>71</sup> Van Gelder, *The Missional Church and Denominations*, 4. The GOC sent out a few publications in 1989 and sponsored the National Consultation at Swanwick in 1992. Montefiore published a collection of essays entitled *The Gospel and Contemporary Culture*, which provided the conference agenda. Hugh Montefiore, *The Gospel and Contemporary Culture* (Herndon, VA: Cassell Academic, 1992). Due to insufficient funding in the early 1990s, the GOC continued to struggle. The GOC merged with the C.S. Lewis Center in 1994, but this too proved unsuccessful and the GOC was discontinued in 1996.

<sup>72</sup> Van Gelder, *The Missional Church and Denominations*, 4. George Hunsberger led the GOCN during these early years.

James V. Brownson, ed., *StormFront: The Good News of God* (2003).

Lois Y. Barrett, ed., *Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness* (2004).

The first book in the series, *The Church Between Gospel and Culture: The Emerging Mission in North America*, provides a fitting inauguration. In Hunsberger's chapter, "Acquiring the Posture of a Missionary Church," he states that "The GOCN is a collaborative effort that focuses on three things: (1) a cultural and social analysis of our North American setting, (2) theological reflection on the question, What is the gospel that addresses us in our setting? and (3) the renewal of the church and its missional identity in our setting."<sup>73</sup>

The book that has received the greatest amount of attention over the past twelve years and serves as a standard introduction to the missional discussion is Guder's *Missional Church*.<sup>74</sup> Guder brought together five authors—Lois Barrett, Inagrace Dietterich, George Hunsberger, Alan Roxburgh, and Craig Van Gelder—to address the root cause of the crisis in the church. Guder writes, "The basic thesis of this book is that the answer to the crisis of the North American church will not be found at the level of method and problem solving. The real issues in the current crisis of the Christian church are spiritual and theological."<sup>75</sup>

---

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 290. Additional information on the GOCN is at [www.gocn.org](http://www.gocn.org).

<sup>74</sup> Guder, *Missional Church*.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 3.



In Michael Goheen's review of Guder's *Missional Church*, the GOCN movement is described as being divided into two "historical stories:"<sup>76</sup>

First, GOCN can be understood as a movement that is returning to the agenda of the International Missionary Council (IMC) in the late 1950s to work out the structures of a missionary ecclesiology. Second, GOCN can also be understood as a movement that is attempting to articulate a missionary ecclesiology in the context of a crumbling Christendom.<sup>77</sup>

The GOCN does not offer a definition of *missional*, wanting to keep the definition open for discussion. However, Walter Hobbs's chapter, "Method," in *Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness*, presents the following missional-church indicators:

**1. Indicator:** The missional church proclaims the gospel.

**What it looks like:** The story of God's salvation is faithfully repeated in a multitude of different ways.

**2. Indicator:** The missional church is a community where all members are involved in learning to become disciples of Jesus.

**What it looks like:** The disciple identity is held by all; growth in discipleship is expected of all.

**3. Indicator:** The Bible is normative in the church's life.

**What it looks like:** The church is reading the Bible together to learn what it can learn nowhere else, God's good and gracious intent for all creation, the salvation mystery, and the identity and purpose of life together.

**4. Indicator:** The church understands itself as different from the world because of its participation in the life, death, and resurrection of its Lord.

**What it looks like:** In its corporate life and public witness, the church is consciously seeking to conform *to its Lord instead of the multitude of cultures in which it finds itself*.

---

<sup>76</sup> Michael W. Goheen, "The Missional Church: Ecclesiological Discussion in the Gospel and Our Culture Network in North America," *Missiology* 30, 4 (2002): 479-490.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

**5. Indicator:** The church seeks to discern God's specific missional vocation for the entire community and for all of its members.

**What it looks like:** The church has made its "mission" its priority, and in overt and communal ways is seeking to be and do "what God is calling us to know, be, and do."

**6. Indicator:** A missional community is indicated by how Christians behave toward one another.

**What it looks like:** Acts of self-sacrifice on behalf of one another both in the church and in the locale characterize the generosity of the community.

**7. Indicator:** It is a community that practices reconciliation.

**What it looks like:** The church community is moving beyond homogeneity toward a more heterogeneous community in its racial, ethnic, age, gender, and socioeconomic makeup.

**8. Indicator:** Peoples within the community hold themselves accountable to one another in love.

**What it looks like:** Substantial time is spent with one another for the purpose of watching over one another in love.

**9. Indicator:** The church practices hospitality.

**What it looks like:** Welcoming the stranger into the midst of the community plays a central role.

**10. Indicator:** Worship is the central act by which the community celebrates with joy and thanksgiving both God's presence and God's promised future.

**What it looks like:** There is a significant and meaningful engagement in communal worship of God, reflecting appropriately and addressing the culture of those who worship together.

**11. Indicator:** The community has a vital public witness.

**What it looks like:** The church makes an observable impact that contributes to the transformation of life, society, and human relationships.

**12. Indicator:** There is recognition that the church itself is an incomplete expression of the reign of God.

**What it looks like:** There is a widely held perception that this church is going somewhere, and that "somewhere" is a more faithfully lived life in the reign of God.<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> Walter C. Hobbs, "Method," in *Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness*, ed. Lois Y. Barrett (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 160. Emphasis is mine. In an effort to avoid fencing in the definition of a missional church, it seems that

Adding to work done before him, Lesslie Newbigin continued to lay the foundation for the missional-church movement by bringing to the forefront the Enlightenment-led crisis of the church. His works challenged both the theology of mission and the ecclesiology of the church. It is no surprise that since his death, his work continues to stir up discussion and that the GOCN has continued the task of clarifying *missio Dei* for the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. However, even though Newbigin laid the foundation for the missional movement, his work was just that, a foundation. In the book *Missional Church*,<sup>79</sup> numerous inconsistencies, and unsubstantiated conclusions in Newbigin's work are pointed out. The evaluation is not a criticism of Newbigin's work, but an attempt to move the conversation toward a clearer understanding of mission and what it means for churches to be missional churches.

### Other Notable Contributors

In addition to Lesslie Newbigin and those who have contributed to the discussion through conferences and publications sponsored by the GOC and the GOCN, numerous others have joined the missional conversation over the past decade. Two authors who moved the missional conversation forward and deserve attention are Michael Frost and

---

Hobbs's indicators are so generic that what is a missional ecclesiology is hardly identifiable.

<sup>79</sup> Guder, *Missional Church*.

Alan Hirsch. In their book, *The Shaping of Things to Come*,<sup>80</sup> published in 2003, Frost and Hirsch argue that the church should be the means by which the gospel is taken to the Western world. They also recognize that major changes within the church will be necessary. In fact, Frost and Hirsch state that mere evolution is not enough; a revolution is required that will change the DNA of the church.<sup>81</sup> The revolution and DNA change to which Frost and Hirsch refer is that all churches must become missional churches. This radical change is necessary if the gospel is to be contextualized for a twenty-first century audience.

Building on Hobbs's twelve indicators, Frost and Hirsch add three principles:

1. The missional church is *incarnational*, not attractional, in its ecclesiology. By incarnational we mean it does not create sanctified spaces into which unbelievers must come to encounter the gospel. Rather, the missional church disassembles itself and seeps into the cracks and crevices of a society in order to be Christ to those who do not yet know him.
2. The missional church is *messianic*, not dualistic, in its spirituality. That is, it adopts the worldview of Jesus the Messiah, rather than that of the Greco-Roman empire. Instead of seeing the world as divided between the sacred (religious) and profane (nonreligious), like Christ it sees the world and God's place in it as more holistic and integrated.
3. The missional church adopts an *apostolic*, rather than a hierarchical, mode of leadership. By apostolic we mean a mode of leadership that recognizes the fivefold model detailed by Paul in Ephesians 4. It abandons the triangular hierarchies of the traditional church and embraces a biblical, flat-leadership community that unleashes the gifts of evangelism, apostleship, and prophecy, as well as the currently popular pastoral and teaching gifts.<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>80</sup> Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003).

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 3-16.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 12.

### Attractional versus Missional

In Part One, “Incarnational Ecclesiology,” Frost and Hirsch claim that traditional churches are “fundamentally attractional,” which is a “Come-To-Us” rather than a “Go-To-Them” approach to mission and evangelism.<sup>83</sup> The missional approach is incarnational and the opposite of attractional. By incarnational, Frost and Hirsch mean that the church moves into and lives among society, carrying with it the gospel. How does the church live out the incarnational, missional life? It does so through proximity spaces, shared projects, and commercial enterprises. Proximity spaces are places or events where Christians and not-yet-Christians can interact meaningfully with each other, such as workshops, pubs, and cafes where Christians become familiar. Regarding their theological foundation, Frost and Hirsch state, “The missional-incarnational church starts with the basic theological understanding: God constantly comes to those who are the most unlikely.”<sup>84</sup>

### Dualistic versus Messianic

In Part Two, “Messianic Spirituality,” Frost and Hirsch believe that traditional churches are dualistic, that is, secular and sacred are separate and different.<sup>85</sup> They see the separation as the result of two thousand years of Greek influence on the Western world, which created a dualistic worldview that permeates all of society, including the

---

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 111-62, especially 122.

church. Christendom churches divide people into sacred and secular (clergy and laity), places into sacred and secular (church buildings and all other buildings), activities into sacred and secular (church services and every other activity). Dualistic thinking allows one to assign roles such as evangelism to the clergy. Spiritual activities must take place in spiritual places, such as church buildings. Frost and Hirsch encourage the church to abandon this Hellenistic worldview where secular and sacred are distinct and adopt a Hebraic messianic worldview where all people, places, and activities are sacred.<sup>86</sup> Adoption of the Hebraic messianic worldview recovers what they call a “messianic spirituality.”<sup>87</sup>

#### Hierarchical versus Apostolic

Finally, in Part Four, “Apostolic Leadership,” Frost and Hirsch see all traditional churches as having a hierarchical leadership system.<sup>88</sup> They argue that more than all the other changes that must be made by traditional churches, it is this hierarchical leadership system that needs to be changed most.<sup>89</sup> Seeing the hierarchical system as being neither

---

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 112. By “messianic,” Frost and Hirsch mean “Christology.” On page 112 they write, “We have used the term *messianic* in a very deliberate way. What we mean by it is that which has traditionally been called Christology must of necessity define missiology.”

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 166-223.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 166.

biblical nor effective, they propose that the church adopt the “APEPT” system of leadership. The APEPT leadership system is from Ephesians 4:11-13.<sup>90</sup>

So Christ himself gave the *apostles*, the *prophets*, the *evangelists*, the *pastors* and *teachers*,<sup>12</sup> to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up<sup>13</sup> until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Having a variety of spiritual gifts to serve the church is better than the traditional model that leaves important areas without leadership. Confident of their new leadership strategy, Frost and Hirsch write, “This issue of the development of a new kind of leadership is possibly the single most important question of strategy in this decade and whether the church responds correctly or not will determine to some extent its survival as a viable expression of the gospel in the years to come.”<sup>91</sup>

*The Shaping of Things to Come* is both a practical guide to the contextualization of the gospel as well as a theological handbook that supports its practice. Frost and Hirsch’s book led the missional discussion in taking a step forward.<sup>92</sup>

Many churches in America continue to be in crisis, drowning in postmodernism and pluralism. Complicated by a Christendom mentality that is ingrained into the DNA of their churches, they lack clarity of mission and identity. Churches want answers—biblical

---

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 166-81. Italics added.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 165.

<sup>92</sup> Alan Hirsch continues the theological and practical work that he and Frost began in *The Shaping of Things to Come* in his book *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006) and in Alan Hirsch and Darryn Altclass, *The Forgotten Ways Handbook: A Practical Guide for Developing Missional Churches* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2009).

answers—that will guide them to being the people of God and doing the mission of God.

As mentioned, the swelling interest in mission and missional over the last decade has been extraordinary as churches try to find a way to engage people contextually and to turn church decline into kingdom growth. There are far more writers than can be mentioned in this dissertation who have contributed to a greater understanding of mission. This chapter provides a foundational survey of the major historical points of the missional conversation, establishing a context for understanding what should be the nature of evangelism in missional churches today.



## Chapter 5

### Mission and Evangelism in Scripture

The ultimate story of the Bible, the metanarrative that unlocks the whole story, is that God is on a mission, and we are summoned to participate with God on that mission.

Leonard Sweet<sup>1</sup>

The question addressed in this dissertation is, What should be the nature of evangelism in missional churches? Discussion about evangelism in missional churches raises numerous questions that often deal with the definition, theology, and practice of both evangelism and mission. Understandably, as pointed out in chapters 1, 3, and 4, such discussion has sometimes caused heated debate. At the heart of these discussions about evangelism and mission lies the very reason the church exists.

This chapter will examine the biblical rationale for answering the question this dissertation is addressing. Although answers to questions about evangelism and mission are sometimes influenced more by individual presuppositions and agendas than by Scripture, valid answers must begin with Scripture if one is to conclude with a biblical rationale that is based on an accurate biblical theology, and hence, ecclesiology of mission and evangelism. Biblical authority therefore, is discussed first. Four questions are then asked, the answers to which will establish biblical rationale. The following two questions determine if mission and evangelism have places in Scripture: (1) Is there

---

<sup>1</sup> Leonard Sweet, *So Beautiful: Divine Design for Life and the Church* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2009), 58.

mission language in Scripture? and (2) Is there evangelism language in Scripture?<sup>2</sup> If the answers to these questions are “Yes,” a third and fourth question must be asked: (3) What is the meaning of mission as used in Scripture? and (4) What is the meaning of evangelism as used in Scripture? Answers to questions three and four will reveal the biblical basis for what should be the nature of evangelism in missional churches.

The answers to questions one and two may seem an obvious “Yes.” However, the reason these questions must be addressed is that authority for ecclesiology comes from Scripture. The answers to these questions are often assumed without much consideration as to how significant is the place of mission and evangelism in Scripture; do mission and evangelism hold a prominent or insignificant place? Exegesis of mission and evangelism in Scripture, particularly regarding whether mission and evangelism play major or minor roles, also helps reveal what should be their nature in missional churches.

### **Biblical Authority**

Scripture is our primary source for both the content of the gospel message and the mission of the church. Furthermore, Scripture provides a model for evangelistic methodology used by the early evangelists.<sup>3</sup> If the study of evangelism is to be credible, the rationale for the nature of evangelism in missional churches must be based on a solid

---

<sup>2</sup> Critical to my approach in this dissertation is the assumption that my readers hold Scripture as authoritative.

<sup>3</sup> Orlando E. Costas discusses the basis for Scriptural authority in his excellent article, “Evangelism and the Gospel of Salvation,” *International Review of Mission* 63, no. 1 (January 1974): 25.

scriptural foundation. Although scriptural authority varies among people, typically evangelicals hold a high view of Scripture and elevate evangelism by verbal proclamation to a place of importance. Therefore, the authority of Scripture deserves mention, considering the evidence supporting my claim is based on Scripture.

Chapter 4, “History of the Missional-Church Movement,” makes reference to two questions presented by Lesslie Newbigin in *The Open Secret*. First, he asks, “By what authority is mission done?”<sup>4</sup> Newbigin’s readers, likely surprised by the question, may inquire, “Why does such a profound theologian ask this seemingly elementary question?” To answer the question, Newbigin turns to Scripture. His answer is Jesus. Jesus is the authority for mission. Then, Newbigin asks a second simple question: “Who is Jesus?”<sup>5</sup> Once again, he appeals to Scripture for the answer; Jesus is the Son of God who is anointed by the Spirit to announce the reign of God.<sup>6</sup>

Newbigin does not assume all of his Christian audience already has the right answers to his questions, or that they will all agree. He knows that modernism and postmodernism have eroded the authority of Scripture and the authority of Jesus, both in the church and in society. Newbigin’s intent is to establish firmly that the authority for mission is Jesus, the Jesus of Scripture. Jesus, not the church, must be at the center of mission.

---

<sup>4</sup> Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: Sketches for a Missionary Theology* (London: SPCK, 1978), 15.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 21.

Therefore, the answer to the question, What should be the nature of evangelism in missional churches? must be determined in light of Jesus being the authority for mission and Scripture being the source of our understanding about mission. Since Jesus is the authority for mission and evangelism is one of the practices of mission, then the inference is that the authority for evangelism is Jesus. Scripture reveals what should be the nature of evangelism.

### **Sending Language in the Old Testament: שלח**

Is there mission language in Scripture? is the first question to be addressed. A brief look at the Old Testament quickly reveals numerous occurrences of mission language. “Mission” is typically translated into English as “send” or “sent.” The Old Testament is filled with sending language that presents God as the one who sends people into the world so the world may know him and turn toward him.<sup>7</sup> The Hebrew word שלח (*salah* or *shalach*), which means “to send,”<sup>8</sup> is used hundreds of times in the Old

---

<sup>7</sup> See appendix 1, “Sending Language in Scripture,” for more examples of mission language, or sending language in the Old Testament.

<sup>8</sup> Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, trans. and ed. M. E. J. Richardson (Leiden: 1999), 1,511-516. Whenever the English word “send” is used in this chapter, it is the translation of the Hebrew word “שלח” or one of its forms. Italics have been added to the word “send” in Scripture quotations.

Testament.<sup>9</sup> Although most uses of the word “to send” carry no theological significance,  $\pi\lambda\psi$  is used over 200 times in which God is the subject of the verb, as in “God sends.”<sup>10</sup>

$\pi\lambda\psi$  is translated as  $\acute{\alpha}\rho\sigma\tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\lambda\epsilon\iota\nu$  in the Septuagint and is used 700 times.<sup>11</sup>

$\Pi\acute{\epsilon}\mu\pi\omega$ , a synonym for  $\acute{\alpha}\rho\sigma\tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\lambda\omega$ , is used in the Septuagint twenty-six times.<sup>12</sup> Karl Rengstorf says, “In brief, however, we may say that  $\acute{\alpha}\rho\sigma\tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\lambda\epsilon\iota\nu$  in the LXX corresponds to the original [ $\pi\lambda\psi$ ] to the extent that it is predominantly used where it is a matter of commissioning with a message or task.”<sup>13</sup>

### Sending Language in the New Testament: $\acute{\alpha}\rho\sigma\tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\lambda\omega/\acute{\alpha}\rho\sigma\tau\omicron\lambda\omicron\varsigma$ , and $\Pi\acute{\epsilon}\mu\pi\omega$

Similarly, the theme of mission also weaves its way through the New Testament.<sup>14</sup> George Peters writes, “...the New Testament is a missionary book in

---

<sup>9</sup> Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, “ $\acute{\alpha}\rho\sigma\tau\omicron\lambda\omicron\varsigma/\acute{\alpha}\rho\sigma\tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\lambda\omega$ ,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 1:400-403.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. Cf. Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *Mission in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 11; Ferris L. McDaniel, “Mission in the Old Testament,” in *Mission in the New Testament: An Evangelical Approach*, ed. William J. Larkin Jr. and Joel William (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998), 12-15.

<sup>11</sup> Rengstorf, “ $\acute{\alpha}\rho\sigma\tau\omicron\lambda\omicron\varsigma/\acute{\alpha}\rho\sigma\tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\lambda\omega$ ,” in *TDNT*, 1:400-403. Cf. Francis M. DuBose, *God Who Sends: A Fresh Quest for Biblical Mission* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1983), 34.

<sup>12</sup> Rengstorf, “ $\acute{\alpha}\rho\sigma\tau\omicron\lambda\omicron\varsigma/\acute{\alpha}\rho\sigma\tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\lambda\omega$ ,” in *TDNT*, 1:400-403.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 400.

<sup>14</sup> See appendix 1, “Sending Language in Scripture,” for more examples of mission language, or sent language in the New Testament.

address, content, spirit and design.”<sup>15</sup> The word ἀποστέλλω is used 135 times in the Greek New Testament.<sup>16</sup> In its infinitive form, ἀποστέλλειν means “to send” or “to send forth.”<sup>17</sup> Ἀπόστολος, the noun form, is used seventy-nine times and is translated as “sent one,” or “apostle.”<sup>18</sup> When ἀπόστολος is translated as “apostle,” it usually represents one of the twelve apostles.<sup>19</sup> Πέμπω is a synonym for ἀποστέλλω and is used in the New Testament eighty times.<sup>20</sup>

The theme of “God sending,” that is, “the mission of God,” is woven throughout the Old and New Testaments. God is a missionary God, a sending God, which includes sending Jesus. Jesus himself “sends” his followers.

---

<sup>15</sup> George W. Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972), 131.

<sup>16</sup> Rengstorf, “ἀπόστολος/ἀποστέλλω,” in *TDNT*, 1:403. All Greek New Testament texts are from *The Greek New Testament*, 4th rev. ed., eds. Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce Metzger (London: United Bible Societies, 1993).

<sup>17</sup> Rengstorf, “ἀπόστολος/ἀποστέλλω,” in *TDNT*, 1:398-406.

<sup>18</sup> Ἀπόστολος is only used one time, 1 Kings 14:16, in the Septuagint.

<sup>19</sup> In Hebrews 3:1, ἀπόστολος refers to Jesus and in Acts 14:14 it refers to Paul and Barnabas.

<sup>20</sup> Francis M. DuBose, *God Who Sends: A Fresh Quest for Biblical Mission* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1983), 34. Karl Rengstorf says “πέμπω seems to be used when the stress is on the sending, ἀποστέλλω when it is on the commission, and especially (in the Synoptics) when it is God who sends.” Rengstorf, “ἀπόστολος/ἀποστέλλω,” in *TDNT*, 1:404. Cf. Harold E. Dollar, “Apostle, Apostles,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, ed. A. Scott Moreau, Harold Netland, and Charles Van Engen (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 73-74.

**Evangelism Language in the New Testament:  
Εὐαγγελιόν/Εὐαγγελίζω and Κηρύσσω**

Is there “evangelism” language in the New Testament?<sup>21</sup> As with the word mission, the answer is again, “Yes.” The main words used for evangelism in the New Testament are εὐαγγελιόν and εὐαγγελίζω.<sup>22</sup> The noun, εὐαγγελιόν, which is transliterated into English as “evangel,” is also often translated as “gospel” and “good news.” The verb εὐαγγελίζω is transliterated as “I evangelize.”<sup>23</sup> Εὐαγγελίζω means “I communicate good news,” or “I tell good news”—εὖ meaning “good” and ἀγγέλιον meaning “message,” thus, “messenger, or messenger of good news.”<sup>24</sup> In Bauer’s *Greek Lexicon*, every entry regarding εὐαγγελίζω specifies that it means proclaim, announce, preach, or bring as in bringing good news.<sup>25</sup> An ἄγγελος is a messenger or angel, which is a messenger. Therefore, the meaning of evangelize is immediately apparent; to

---

<sup>21</sup> There is also evangelism that takes place in the Old Testament. However, due to the scope of this dissertation, only evangelism in the New Testament is examined. For a look at proselytism by the Jews see the excellent chapter, “Conversion of the Gentiles,” in George Foot Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of the Tannaim*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927, 1955), 323-53.

<sup>22</sup> See appendix 2, “Evangelism Language in the New Testament,” for additional examples of evangelism language in the New Testament.

<sup>23</sup> Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed., rev. and ed. Frederick W. Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 402.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

evangelize is to tell the good news. The noun form is used seventy-six times and the verb is found thirty-three times in the New Testament.<sup>26</sup>

The word “gospel” comes from the Old English word “god-spell” which was taken from “good news.” The term εὐαγγελιόν is the word that the Apostle Paul and the early church used to encompass the message about Jesus’s life and mission. Using an interesting combination of the root word εὐαγγέλ, Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15:1, “Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel (εὐαγγέλιον) I preached (εὐηγγελισάμην) to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand.”<sup>27</sup>

Another word that needs considering regarding the nature of evangelism in the New Testament is the verb κηρύσσω/κηρύσσειν, which also means to proclaim, announce, declare, make known, or herald an event.<sup>28</sup> Κηρύσσω is used sixty-one times in the New Testament. Paul, in Romans 10:14-15, uses both κηρύσσω and εὐαγγελίζομαι as synonyms:

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching (κηρύσσοντος) to them? And how can they preach (κηρύξωσιν) unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring (εὐαγγελιζομένων) good news” (Rom. 10:14-15).

---

<sup>26</sup> For a more thorough discussion of the etymology of the term “evangelism,” see Andreas J. Kostenberger and Peter T. O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 11, ed. D. A. Carson (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001), 271-74.

<sup>27</sup> Paul could have used the single word εὐαγγελίζω to accomplish the same as using the two words. See appendix 2, “Evangelism Language in the New Testament,” for a more complete survey of examples of the use of εὐαγγελιόν and εὐαγγελίζω in the New Testament.

<sup>28</sup> Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 543.



Twelve other times, the expression κηρύσσειν το εὐαγγελίον, “to preach or proclaim the gospel,” is used, which shows the close relationship between the two words.<sup>29</sup>

Is there evangelism language in Scripture? The answer is definitely “Yes.” The evangelism language is vast, an important point in establishing how significant should be the place of evangelism in missional churches.

Having looked at mission and evangelism language in Scripture, clearly mission and evangelism hold prominent places in Scripture. However, it is necessary to evaluate the meaning of mission and evangelism in Scripture to determine the nature of mission and evangelism in Scripture. Understanding the nature of evangelism in Scripture will reveal what should be the nature of evangelism in missional churches.

### **The Meaning of Mission in Scripture**

Mission is commonly known as *missio Dei*.<sup>30</sup> “*Missio*” is Latin for the Hebrew word שלח, the Greek word ἀπόστολος, and the English word “send.” *Missio Dei* translates as “the sending of God” or “the mission of God.”

Two of the most recognized Old Testament pericopae where sending is the central theme are found in Isaiah. Isaiah 6 is typically referred to as “Isaiah’s Commissioning.”

---

<sup>29</sup> Reid, *Evangelism Handbook*, 24. See appendix 2, “Evangelism Language in the New Testament,” for further examples of the use of κηρύσσω/κηρύσσειν in the New Testament.

<sup>30</sup> For a history of the use of the phrase *missio Dei*, see chapter 4.

Isaiah 6:8 says, “Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I *send*? And who will go for us?’ And I said, ‘Here am I. *Send* me!’”<sup>31</sup>

The second pericope is Isaiah 61, where the writer’s central themes are restoration, vindication of God’s people, and a clarification of God’s mission for his people. In Isaiah 61:1-3, *sent* precedes five clauses:

He has *sent* me,  
to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God,  
to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion  
to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead  
of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.<sup>32</sup>

Although there are many sending pericopae in the New Testament, one of the more important ones is Luke 4:14-44, where Jesus quotes from the sending text in Isaiah 61. The setting is Jesus has returned to his home town of Nazareth and, on the Sabbath, is invited to read from the Scripture. He unrolls the scroll to Isaiah 61:1-2 and reads the text that will define his life, his purpose, his identity, and his mission: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has *sent* (ἀπέσταλκέν) me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:18-19).

---

<sup>31</sup> Jesus quotes a portion of Isaiah 6 in Matthew 13:14-15 in the Parable of the Sower. In the Parable of the Sower, Jesus asks his hearers to make the choice of whether they will hear and receive him and his message, as Isaiah had done, or reject him and his message. The Parable of the Sower is also told in Mark 4:1-20 and Luke 8:1-15. All italics within Scripture quotations are added.

<sup>32</sup> John N. Oswalt, “The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66,” in *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*, ed. R.K. Harrison and Robert L. Hubbard Jr. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 565.

In the above commentary regarding Isaiah 61:1-3, each of the purpose clauses is preceded by the verb, “sent.” As Luke ends this section, he does so with Jesus saying, “I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was *sent* (ἀπεστάλην)” (Luke 4:43). Jesus’s choosing of the Isaiah 61 text and his own statement about why he was sent provides valuable insight into the theology, Christology, and places of mission and evangelism.

Then, in typical discipleship-training fashion, Jesus sends out his followers. In Luke 9, Jesus sends out the twelve apostles:

<sup>1</sup>When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, <sup>2</sup>and he *sent* (ἀπέστειλεν) them out to preach (κηρύσσειν) the kingdom of God and to heal the sick (Luke 9:1-2).

In Luke 10, he sends out seventy-two followers:

<sup>2</sup>He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to *send* (ἐκβάλη)<sup>33</sup> out workers into his harvest field. <sup>3</sup>Go! I am *sending* (ἀποστέλλω) you out like lambs among wolves. <sup>4</sup>Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road (Luke 10:2-3).

Once again, in John 20 the meaning of mission is clearly seen when Jesus sends out his followers: “Peace be with you! As the Father has *sent* (ἀπέσταλκέν) me, I am *sending* (πέμπω) you” (John 20:21). Matthew 28:18-20, famously known as the Great

---

<sup>33</sup> Ἐκβάλη means to force out, thrust out, throw out, or push out, usually with some degree of force. Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed., rev. and ed. Frederick W. Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 299.

Commission and the most recognized mission passage, is central to the mission theme and provides another illustration of Jesus sending his followers on mission.<sup>34</sup>

Francis DuBose, in his excellent and thorough treatment of the sending motif in both the Old and New Testaments, points out that a “survey of the term sending in its various forms in Scripture suggests that it is more than a simple descriptive word. It describes the missionary nature of God. When Scripture uses the word ‘send’ in the context of God sending, it reveals God’s heart toward people and his redemptive intentions.”<sup>35</sup>

Georg Vicedom describes the word sending as the “sum and substance of God’s creativity and activity.”<sup>36</sup> Elaborating further, Darrell Guder writes,

We have come to see that mission is not merely an activity of the Church. Rather, mission is the result of God’s initiative, rooted in God’s purposes to restore and heal creation. “Mission” means “sending,” and it is the central biblical theme describing the purpose of God’s action in human history. God’s mission began with the call of Israel to receive God’s blessings in order to be a blessing to the nations. God’s mission unfolded in the history of God’s people across the centuries recorded in Scripture, and it reached its revelatory climax in the incarnation of God’s work of salvation in Jesus ministering, crucified, and resurrected. God’s mission continued then in the sending of the Spirit to call forth and empower the Church as the witness to God’s good news in Jesus Christ.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> Matthew 28:18-20, the Great Commission, is of such importance to the mission theme that it is discussed in more detail below.

<sup>35</sup> Dubose, *The God Who Sends*, 24.

<sup>36</sup> Vicedom, *The Mission of God*, 9.

<sup>37</sup> Darrell L. Guder, ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 4.

From Scripture, the following conclusions can be stated: (1) mission is God's mission, (2) God's mission is Jesus's mission, (3) Jesus's mission is the mission of his followers, (4) the power to carry out God's mission is provided by the Holy Spirit, (5) Jesus is the sender, and (6) the authority behind the mission is Jesus. As Charles Van Engen so eloquently points out,

... the "senders" are not the denomination, not the mission agency, not the mega-church or its senior pastor, not a nongovernmental relief agency. The authority of the mission enterprise is not the denomination, mission agency, self-proclaimed apostle, large relief agency, or a more advanced culture. The Sender is Jesus Christ, whose authority defines, circumscribes, limits, and propels Christian mission.<sup>38</sup>

There is a vast mission language in both the Old and New Testaments.

Christopher Wright says in *The Mission of God* that not only does "the Bible contain a number of texts which happen to provide a rationale for missionary endeavor but that the whole Bible is itself a 'missional' phenomenon."<sup>39</sup> Alvin Reid, reflecting on Wright's statement, declares that "the very hermeneutic by which we interpret the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, from creation to consummation, is mission."<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> Charles Van Engen, "'Mission' Defined and Described," in *MissionShift: Global Mission Issues in the Third Millennium*, eds. David J. Hesselgrave and Ed Stetzer (Nashville: B&H Publishers, 2010), 12.

<sup>39</sup> Christopher J. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006), 22. For an excellent, yet concise, survey of the history of the mission conversation, see Charles Van Engen, "'Mission' Defined and Described," 7-29.

<sup>40</sup> Alvin Reid, *Evangelism Handbook: Biblical, Spiritual, Intentional, Missional* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2009), 49. I am grateful to Reid for pointing out this important point in Wright's work.

To conclude, as Charles Van Engen states, "... the first element of a definition of mission should be based on the concept of 'sending.'"<sup>41</sup> God sends people to proselytize Gentile nations.<sup>42</sup> God sends Jesus into the world to restore the broken relationship and to deal with sin that was set into motion in Genesis 2 and 3. Jesus states, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was *sent*" (Luke 4:43). Jesus sends the twelve apostles to "preach the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:2) and the seventy-two disciples to tell their hearers "the kingdom of God is near" (Luke 10:9). The theme of sending is central to the definition of mission in Scripture. Mission, that is, sending, is not a church agenda; mission is God's agenda.

Often, the question is asked, What is the mission of the church? From Scripture, the first answer is, The mission of the church is to verbally preach, proclaim, share, or tell the gospel message. However, Scripture has more to say about mission. As noted above, not only did Jesus say the reason he was sent was to "preach good news," but he was also sent to "proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18-19). A look at the life of Jesus quickly reveals that Jesus is involved in both verbally proclaiming the kingdom and helping those with needs, whether spiritual, physical, mental, or emotional. When Jesus sends out his disciples, he sends them out both to verbally proclaim the kingdom of God and to relieve people of their suffering, whether that is healing the sick

---

<sup>41</sup> Van Engen, "'Mission' Defined and Described," 12.

<sup>42</sup> The book of Jonah is one of many examples.

or freeing them from demonic captivity.<sup>43</sup> On nearly every page of the Gospels, Jesus lives out the mission and teaches his followers about the mission. Healing the sick is common occurrence. Casting out demons seems like normal daily activity. To an audience that is skeptical about his identity, purpose, and authority, Jesus regularly demonstrates his power to carry out his mission. On several occasions, Jesus raises the dead. He teaches mission principles by telling stories. Jesus's mission is at the heart of his identity and activity.

Luke 10:30-37 is the Parable of the Good Samaritan, a story about a man from Samaria who helps someone who has been robbed and beaten. Jesus tells this great story in response to a biblical scholar who asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus turns the question back on the scholar, asking the scholar what he thinks. The scholar responds, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and love your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27). Jesus affirmed the scholar's answer as correct. Thus, Jesus places the importance of doing good deeds at the highest level when he connects doing good deeds with eternal life. At the end, Jesus challenges his hearers to imitate the Samaritan's actions.

Mission is not church-centered; mission is God-centered. Mission does not receive its purpose from the church; mission receives its purpose from God. As Darrell

---

<sup>43</sup> When the seventy-two return, in shocking amazement, they tell Jesus, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name" (Luke 10:17).

Guder articulates, “Mission means ‘sending,’ and it is the central biblical theme describing the purpose of God’s action in human history.”<sup>44</sup>

### **The Meaning of Evangelism in Scripture**

From the New Testament writers’ use of the terms εὐαγγελιόν/εὐαγγελίζω and κηρύσσω, it is clear that verbal proclamation of good news is intrinsic to the definition of evangelism. In fact, to take verbal proclamation about the gospel of Jesus out of evangelism is to leave evangelism void of its original meaning. In 1 Corinthians 15:1, Paul writes,

<sup>1</sup> Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel (εὐαγγέλιον) I preached (εὐηγγελισάμην) to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. <sup>2</sup> By this gospel (εὐηγγελισάμην) you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you.<sup>45</sup> Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

<sup>3</sup> For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures ....

It is noteworthy that Paul writes a brief description explaining that gospel, which is the negating effect of sin and death because of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. The good news is the gospel message of Jesus that is verbally proclaimed, a point that is critical to understanding the nature of evangelism.

---

<sup>44</sup> Guder, *Missional Church*, 4.

<sup>45</sup> I believe 1 Corinthians 15:2 is clearer and closer to the original text if it is translated as, “By this gospel I preached (or shared) (εὐηγγελισάμην) you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word.” Εὐηγγελισάμην is translated as “gospel I preached (or shared).” Separating “gospel” from “preached” leaves the English reader to assume falsely that there are two words, one for “gospel” and another for “preach.”



In Romans 1:15-16, Paul uses both the noun and the verb forms when he writes, “That is why I am so eager to preach the *gospel* (εὐαγγελίσασθαι) also to you who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the *gospel* (εὐαγγέλιον), because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.”

Paul explains the relationship between gospel and proclamation in Romans 10:14-15. He uses κηρύσσω and εὐαγγελίζομαι as synonyms:

<sup>14</sup>How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone *preaching* (κηρύσσοντος) to them? <sup>15</sup>And how can they *preach* (κηρύξωσιν) unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring (εὐαγγελιζομένων) *good news*!”

Additionally, other phrases describe early Christian emphasis on evangelism.

Jesus called Peter, Andrew, James, and John to follow, telling them they would become “fishers of men” (Matt. 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20). In John 15:8, Jesus said the disciples would be “fruit-bearers.” Paul refers to disciples as ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20).

The book of Acts provides an abbreviated history of the expansion of the earliest church. Luke’s interest in writing Acts is to show the activity of the Holy Spirit working through early Christians in the founding and growth of the church. The summary statements in the following outline of Acts clearly indicate the evangelistic nature of the earliest church to both Jews and the Gentiles.

Table 2 Outline of Acts

<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>1:1-2:41</p>	<p><b>The beginning of the church.</b></p> <p>Summary Statement: "Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day" (2:41).</p>
<p><b>Part I</b> Expansion of the Church to the Jews</p> <p>2:42-12:24</p>	<p><b>Section 1: The earliest days of the church in Jerusalem (2:42-6:7).</b></p> <p>Summary Statement: "So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith" ( 6:7).</p>
	<p><b>Section 2: Events of Stephen, Philip, and Saul (Paul) (6:8-9:31).</b></p> <p>Summary Statement: "Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord" (9:31).</p>
	<p><b>Section 3: Spread of the gospel west to the Judean coast and north into Syria (9:32-12:24).</b></p> <p>Summary Statement: "But the word of God continued to increase and spread" (12:24).</p>
<p><b>Part II</b> Expansion of the Church to the Gentiles</p> <p>12:25-28:31</p>	<p><b>Section 1: 1st Missionary Journey and the Jerusalem Council (12:25-16:5).</b></p> <p>Summary Statement: "So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers" (16:5).</p>
	<p><b>Section 2: 2nd and 3rd Missionary Journeys (16:6-19:20).</b></p> <p>Summary Statement: "In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power." (19:20).</p>
	<p><b>Section 3: Paul to Jerusalem and Rome (19:21-28:31).</b></p> <p>Summary Statement: "Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ" (28:31).</p>

Although there are many stories of evangelism in the book of Acts, the story of Peter and John in Acts 4:1-22 stands out as a clear example of the strong emphasis placed on verbal evangelism in early church history. Peter and John are arrested and brought to trial before the Sanhedrin for “teaching the people and *proclaiming* (καταγγέλλειν) in Jesus the resurrection of the dead” (Acts 4:2). After hearing the Sanhedrin’s accusations and command to stop speaking and teaching in the name of Jesus, Peter responded, “For we cannot help *speaking* (λαλεῖν) about what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

Having examined the etymology of εὐαγγελιόν/εὐαγγελίζω and κηρύσσω, surveyed numerous uses of these words in context, and looked at the expansion theme of the early church in the book of Acts as well as several other various evangelism texts in Scripture, we can summarize the biblical definition of evangelism in one brief statement: Evangelism is verbally sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with unbelievers. According to the way biblical writers use the terms for evangelism, evangelism without verbal proclamation of good news is not evangelism. In Scripture, verbal proclamation of good news *is* evangelism and evangelism *is* the verbal proclamation of good news.<sup>46</sup>

### Exposition of the Great Commission

<sup>16</sup>Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. <sup>17</sup>When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. <sup>18</sup>Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given

---

<sup>46</sup> Interestingly, the definition of evangelism has been the topic of hot debate. David Bosch examines six ways evangelism and mission are viewed as synonyms and four different ways they are viewed as distinct. David J. Bosch, “Evangelism: Theological Currents and Cross-Currents Today,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 11, no. 3 (July 1987): 98-101.

to me. <sup>19</sup>Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt. 28:16-20).

The Scripture that has received the most attention regarding both mission and evangelism is Matthew 28:16-20, the Great Commission. If asked whether there is biblical rationale for both mission and evangelism in the New Testament, the typical response is usually “Yes,” with Matthew 28:16-20 being the primary scriptural basis.<sup>47</sup> A cursory reading of this text understandably leads one to conclude that the Great Commission banner under which these verses fly is quite appropriate for establishing a biblical rationale.<sup>48</sup> The words spoken by Jesus appear to present the *missio Dei*, not only for the apostles but also for the church today. Furthermore, these verses seem to give an evangelistic mandate and general instructions for implementation.

However, a closer look at the history of how these verses have been interpreted does not reveal such agreement. In the earliest years of the church’s history, Matthew 28:16-20 was seen as Jesus’s missionary ordination intended only for the apostles. Each apostle took responsibility for evangelizing a particular region of the known world. At the end of the apostles’ lives, most of the early Christians assumed that the apostolic and

---

<sup>47</sup> The Great Commission parallel verses are in Mark 16:15-18, Luke 24:45-49, John 20:21, and Acts 1:6-8.

<sup>48</sup> Most Bibles print the topic heading, “The Great Commission” between Matthew 28, verses 15 and 16.

commissioned tasks that Jesus gave them were completed.<sup>49</sup> Both Martin Luther and John Calvin held that the commission to evangelize was only for the apostles.<sup>50</sup>

This view was held until 1792, when William Carey dramatically altered the history of how the church would view evangelism and mission with the publication of *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*.<sup>51</sup> Carey rationalized that if the commission to “make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19) was only for the apostles, the command to baptize (Matt. 28:19) must also be only for the apostles. Carey’s argument changed the tide of how these verses were interpreted, which led to a large missionary movement that spread across both Europe and North America. Because of William Carey, the Great Commission has henceforth been, as David Bosch calls it, the “Magna Charta of mission.”<sup>52</sup>

Carey, however, made another contribution of huge proportions. Not only did he convince Christians that the mission of the church in his time was the same as that of the apostles, but by titling his book *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use*

---

<sup>49</sup> David J. Bosch, “The Structure of Mission: An Exposition of Matthew 28:16-20,” in *Exploring Church Growth*, ed. William R. Shenk (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 218. This important article is also located in *The Study of Evangelism: Exploring a Missional Practice of the Church*, eds. Paul W. Chilcote and Lacey C. Warner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 73-92. Bosch points out that this view is seen in both Eusebius and the Acts of Thomas.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 74. Cf. William Carey, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* (Leicester: Ann Ireland, 1792), <http://www.wmcarey.edu/carey/Enquiry/anenquiry.pdf> (accessed April 9, 2010).

<sup>52</sup> Bosch, “The Structure of Mission,” 74.

*Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*, he defined what he thought Christians' motivation for mission should be. Carey's use of the word "obligation" leaves little doubt as to motive. Carey's understanding is that Christians are "obligated" to obey; that they are commanded to carry out Jesus's instructions out of obedience.

Perpetuating this hermeneutic has been the mantra of The Great Commission, implying that God has commissioned Christians to go and that they are obligated to carry out his command. John Stott, in his reflections on Matthew 28:16-20, was clearly influenced by Carey's conclusions. At the 1966 World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin, Stott stated the following: "In the last resort, we engage in evangelism today not because we want to or because we choose to or because we like to, but because we have been told to. The church is under orders. The risen Lord has commanded us to 'go,' to 'preach,' to 'make disciples,' and that is enough for us."<sup>53</sup>

However, Carey's interpretation of Matthew 28:16-20 has not gone unquestioned. Some have suggested that Jesus's words in Matthew 28:16-20 were not intended as command but rather as instruction with less "legalistic" overtones.<sup>54</sup>

Only a few decades ago, America proudly thought of itself as a Christian nation. The church considered its mission was to send missionaries to "foreign fields." Today,

---

<sup>53</sup> John Stott, "The Great Commission," in *One Race, One Gospel, One Task*, vol. 1, ed. C.F.M. Henry and W.S. Mooneyham (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1967), 37. I am appreciative of David Bosch for pointing out the comments from John Stott in Bosch, "The Structure of Mission," 75.

<sup>54</sup> Bosch, "The Structure of Mission," 220. Cf. George R. Hunsberger, "Is There Biblical Warrant for Evangelism?" *Interpretation* 48, no. 2 (April 1994): 132, <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=4&hid=101&sid=472c3996-757f-402c-9a87-cd51ae6eaf8b%40sessionmgr104> (accessed April 10, 2010).

America is a post-Christian and pluralistic culture. As culture change has shaken churches to their foundations, declining attendance, especially by the younger population, has forced church leaders to realize that America is now the fourth largest unchurched country in the world. The irony here is, while many churches have ignored it, America has always been a mission field. The Center for World Revival and Awakening reports the following statistics. “In proportion to the U.S. population, there are less than half as many churches today as there were in 1900. Since 1950, there are 30% fewer churches for today's population. Roughly, 4,000 churches are begun every year, while 7,000 die and close their doors. North America is the only continent in the world where Christianity is not growing. In 1991, 21% of all adults were unchurched. In 2002, 34% fit that description. The United States is the fourth largest unchurched nation in the world. Giving per person in the church is less today than it was during the Great Depression. *The United States is the number two missionary-receiving country in the world, behind Brazil* (italics added). Researchers have discovered that 3,500 people leave the church every day in the United States. Born-again believers are more likely to experience a divorce than are non-born-again adults (27% vs. 24%).”<sup>55</sup> Attempting to reposition itself, the church understandably is being forced to rethink its identity, mission, and evangelistic motives and methods. The Great Commission naturally finds itself at the heart of the rethinking process.

---

<sup>55</sup>“Center for World Revival and Awakening”  
<http://www.revivalandawakening.org/resources.html> (accessed April 4, 2010).

Defending the position that the Great Commission is more instruction than command, George Hunsberger, David Bosch, Lesslie Newbigin, and others suggest that the Enlightenment is the primary reason the Great Commission is seen as command.<sup>56</sup> They draw support for their position from the Matthew 28:16-20 parallel texts of Luke 24:45-49, John 20:21, and Acts 1:6-8, which show no indication of command.<sup>57</sup>

Those who question whether Jesus's words were intended as command are certainly justified in challenging the traditionally held Carey interpretation of Matthew 28:16-20. However, Hunsberger's motive is questionable. Hunsberger states, "But the need for a rationale—and the kind of rationale needed—is always shaped by the church's location in the social and cultural currents of its time and place, and by its character and life within those currents."<sup>58</sup> After describing the currents in North America with a waning church culture, Hunsberger notes, "The preachments and rationales of the past

---

<sup>56</sup> Hunsberger, "Is There Biblical Warrant for Evangelism?" 132-34; Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 340-42; Lesslie Newbigin, *Mission in Christ's Way* (Geneva: WCC, 1987), 16.

<sup>57</sup> The Gospel of Mark parallel contains similar wording: "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" (Mark 16:15). Carey's understanding of Matthew would likely also apply to Mark 16:15. Although delving into Synoptic criticism regarding these two parallels is not appropriate here, it is important to remember that most scholars agree that Mark is *a priori*. Luke 24:45-48 reads: "<sup>45</sup>Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. <sup>46</sup>He told them, 'This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, <sup>47</sup>and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup>You are witnesses of these things.'" Interestingly, Jesus, as recorded by Luke, does not use imperative mood. Instead, he simply states that the apostles are *witnesses*, a less authoritarian motivation. That the apostles will be involved in evangelism certainly is implied here.

<sup>58</sup> Hunsberger, "Is There Biblical Warrant for Evangelism?" 132.



that do not specifically engage these new circumstances can only fail us.” Hunsberger believes a new hermeneutic is needed that interprets Scripture in light of current cultural situations. The result will be a new textual interpretation that is a better fit for the culture to which it is speaking.

Applying his hermeneutic to the Great Commission, Hunsberger believes that our past understanding of the Great Commission no longer provides an acceptable biblical rationale for evangelism in today’s postmodern, pluralistic culture. Therefore, we need to read Matthew 28:16-20 in a different way if we want this text to be relevant in today’s culture, a culture that is less tolerant of “command.” Hunsberger writes the following:

We in the church will need a new sense of missional identity that is more than the achievement of a mandated task. And we need to develop a missional lifestyle that does not aim at conquest and cultural dominance. Any proposed biblical grounding for evangelism must address these concerns if it is to have force and relevance.<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 134. This type of hermeneutic seems dangerous, as it is counter to standard exegetical practices that seek the meaning of the original writer by using historical and literary criticism. A missional-theology hermeneutic is more accurate, in my view, when combined with a historical and literary critical hermeneutic. I agree with Hunsberger’s conclusion, but not his hermeneutic. One is not free to interpret the Great Commission text to fit the culture. If Carey is correct and verbal proclamation is a mandate, that does not mean that forceful proposition is biblically appropriate; it is not. Jesus models the Great Commission throughout his life. Evangelism is in the context of love expressed in compassionately caring for others. Jesus never requires or pressures people follow him. Historically, Christianity has far too often, in the name of Jesus, acted nothing like him.

Harry Boer is correct when he says that the Matthew 28:16-20 text did not “launch the church on its missionary labors.”<sup>60</sup> There are other texts that identify motivation for evangelism in which command is neither stated nor implied. However, one must reconcile how much impact Jesus’s words had on the eleven apostles at the time he spoke them and identify the motivation for the earliest church’s vibrant evangelistic efforts. Likely, instruction would have been a part of the motivation, but obedience certainly cannot be ruled out. Few would question, including Hunsberger, Bosch, and Newbigin, that the apostles’ devotion to God’s mission and to evangelism was extraordinary.

David Bosch believes that the “command” in Matthew 28:19 should not belong to the word “going” (πορευθέντες) but rather to “make disciples” (μαθητεύσατε). Bosch cites Adolf Schlatter who states, “When two actions are connected with a single event, Matthew puts the aorist participle of the preparatory action before the aorist of the main verb.”<sup>61</sup> Therefore, πορευθέντες and μαθητεύσατε refer to a single event with the command emphasis being on “go make disciples,” not just on “going.” Bosch also states that when the verb is in the imperative mood, it “does not necessarily suggest a traveling from one geographical point to another.”<sup>62</sup> Its purpose is to “reinforce the action of the

---

<sup>60</sup> Harry R. Boer, *Pentecost and Missions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961), 16-18. My gratitude is to George Hunsberger who cites Boer in his article “Is There Biblical Warrant for Evangelism?” 136.

<sup>61</sup> Adolf Schlatter, *Der Evangelist Matthäus* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1948), 23 as cited in David Bosch, “The Structure of Mission: An Exposition of Matthew 28:16-20,” 22.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

main verb and adds a note of urgency.”<sup>63</sup> In sum, “make disciples” (μαθητεύσατε) is the main verb and “going” (πορευθέντες) serves to support it.

Bosch believes that, because of this misunderstanding about Matthew 28:16-20, North American churches emphasized going and sent missionaries to foreign lands. He says, “‘Home Missions’ became a technique for maintaining Christian America.”<sup>64</sup> “‘Mission’ now signified exclusively *foreign* mission, and Matthew 28:19, with its ‘Go ye therefore’ was singled out as a proof-text.”<sup>65</sup> Bosch’s redefinition alters the traditional understanding of mission. “It refers to bringing people to Jesus as Lord, wherever they may be. Mission then loses its preoccupation with the geographical component and becomes mission in six continents.”<sup>66</sup>

Whether one sides with those who view evangelism as a command of God or with those who take a softer view where God gently instructs his followers to “go” and to “make disciples,” there is solid biblical rationale for both mission and evangelism holding an important place in Scripture. Furthermore, unless one reverts back to the ancient interpretation, which held that the Matthew 28:16-20 pericope was only for the apostles, Jesus instructs his followers to “go,” to “make disciples,” and to “teach.” Hermeneutical nuances do little to change Jesus’s underlying intent, whether it is a

---

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

command to go, a command to make disciples, or a gentler nudging. Mission and verbal proclamation of the gospel lies at the heart of the Great Commission.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion

I was no longer interested in an individual gospel or a social gospel. An individual gospel without a social gospel is a soul without a body and a social gospel without an individual gospel is a body without a soul. One is a ghost and the other a corpse. You can take your choice. I didn't want either one. I wanted both.

E. Stanley Jones<sup>1</sup>

### **The Nature of Evangelism in Missional Churches**

The problem this dissertation addresses is, What should be the nature of evangelism in missional churches? Should the nature of evangelism in missional churches be almost exclusively nonverbal proclamation in the form of blessing others, as some missional church leaders believe, or should the nature of evangelism in missional churches include verbally sharing the gospel of Jesus alongside blessing others?

In the introduction, I proposed that the answer to this very important question must be found in Scripture. Otherwise, the nature of evangelism in missional churches may not be what Scripture says it *should* be. My claim is that the nature of evangelism in missional churches is verbally telling the gospel message in the context of blessing those in one's community with good deeds carried out with love, compassion, and respect.

Evidence for my claim was presented in chapter 5, "Mission and Evangelism in Scripture," with additional evidence in appendix 1, "Sending Language in Scripture," and

---

<sup>1</sup> E. Stanley Jones, *The Unshakable Kingdom* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), 29, <http://www.delandsystems.com/Unshakable.pdf> (accessed August 30, 2010). I thank Laura Simmons for referring me to E. Stanley Jones and particularly these defining words.

appendix 2, “Evangelism Language in the New Testament.”<sup>2</sup> Four questions guide the study of mission and evangelism in Scripture: (1) Is there mission language in Scripture? (2) Is there evangelism language in Scripture? (3) What is the meaning of mission as used in Scripture? and (4) What is the meaning of evangelism as used in Scripture?

The findings from the evidence presented in chapter 5 lead to the conclusion that both mission and evangelism hold prominent places in Scripture. The volume of material in Scripture related to mission and to evangelism is immense.<sup>3</sup> In fact, God’s mission is the central theme of the entire Bible and evangelism is a main component of God’s mission.

Charles Van Engen clearly defines the biblical nature of mission and evangelism:

God’s mission works primarily through Jesus Christ’s sending the people of God to intentionally cross barriers from church to nonchurch, faith to nonfaith, to proclaim by word and deed the coming of the kingdom of God in Jesus Christ through the Church’s participation in God’s mission of reconciling people to God, to themselves, to one another, and to the world and gathering them into the church, through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, by the work of the Holy Spirit, with a view to the transformation of the world, as a sign of the coming of the kingdom in Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup>

Evidence indicates that performing good deeds is part of Jesus’s mission. Good deeds, according to Scripture, however, are not evangelism. Understanding the terms εὐαγγελιόν/εὐαγγελίζω and κηρύσσω, as presented in chapter 5, reveals the nature of

---

<sup>2</sup> Additional evidence is presented in appendix 1, “Sending Language in Scripture,” and appendix 2, “Evangelism Language in Scripture.”

<sup>3</sup> It has not been the intent of this discussion to touch on every verse or section of Scripture dealing with mission and evangelism.

<sup>4</sup> Van Engen, “‘Mission’ Defined and Described,” 27.

evangelism; evangelism is verbally telling God's message of good news. Verbal proclamation of the gospel was part of Jesus's mission and it is part of God's mission for the church today.

Jesus's words were heard as credible because he was caring, compassionate, respectful, and loving in his treatment of people. The early Christians' words earned the same credibility as Jesus's words and for the same reasons.<sup>5</sup> God's mission for the church today is the same as his mission for Jesus and the early church, to care for people and to speak words of good news to those who are not yet awake to the God within them.<sup>6</sup>

The relationship between good news and good deeds is clearly seen in the well-known rhetorical dialogue by Lesslie Newbigin:

How is it possible that the gospel should be credible, that people should come to believe that the power which has the last word in human affairs is represented by a man hanging on a cross? I am suggesting that the only answer, *the only hermeneutic of the gospel, is a congregation of men and women who believe it and live by it.*

I believe Newbigin is intentional with his wording when he writes, "the *only* hermeneutic of the gospel ...." Newbigin is careful not to equate hermeneutic with gospel, but clearly separates the hermeneutic from gospel. One's life is the hermeneutic. Newbigin does not say that one's life is the gospel. People will interpret the verbally spoken gospel story in

---

<sup>5</sup> For examples, see Gerald L. Sittser, *Water from a Deep Well: Christian Spirituality from Early Martyrs to Modern Missionaries* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007).

<sup>6</sup> Leonard Sweet, *Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who's Already There* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 227. Italics added.

light of one's life. Today, if people outside Christ are to give credibility to the words of the church, the words of the church must be spoken in the context of Christians who are caring and respectful.

Missional Christians are called to tell the gospel message, but never in a dehumanizing way, as has been done in the past. Jesus came to bring life. He states, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:30). Jesus did not come to lay heavy burdens on people, but to relieve them of their burdens. The church has too often burdened people by the abuses of propositionalism and colonialism. As previously discussed, Jesus proclaims in Luke 4:18-19 that he has been anointed to release the prisoners, to free those who are oppressed, and to give sight to the blind. Each challenge is presumed to be a metaphor about life. Christians have a responsibility not to cause burdens, but to relieve them.

Certainly, word and deed share a close relationship. In fact, one is empty without the other. Jesus's mission is not word or deed; neither is our mission. It is both. To be a church that practices a missional ecclesiology is to be a church that understands that it (1) is a sent church, (2) is sent to verbally share the gospel of Jesus with those both locally and globally, and (3) is to be involved in lovingly and respectfully helping others both locally and globally. Therefore, churches are only missional churches if they carry out God's mission by verbally sharing the message of Jesus with those in their communities.

Once leaders of missional churches understand the biblical view of what should be the nature of evangelism in missional churches, they should include verbally telling the gospel in the church's vision. Only then will telling the gospel of Jesus be integrated



into the identity of the church. Moreover, only when telling others about Jesus becomes part of one's identity will it be put into practice.

The Crowded House church in Sheffield, UK, led by Tim Chester and Steve Timmis, is an excellent example of a missional church that is both lovingly serving those in its community and is proactive in telling the gospel. Chester and Timmis's recent book, *Total Church*, begins with two principles the Crowded House is built around: gospel and community.<sup>8</sup> Understanding the importance of the verbally spoken gospel message, they write, "The gospel is *good* news. It is a word to be proclaimed. You cannot be committed to the gospel without being committed to proclaiming that gospel."<sup>9</sup> "The most loving thing we can do for the poor is to proclaim the good news of eternal salvation through Christ," they argue.<sup>10</sup> Regarding the relationship between evangelism and social action, Chester and Timmis say, "*Proclamation is central*. Social action without proclamation is like a signpost pointing nowhere. Worse still, it is likely to imply either that salvation is synonymous with socioeconomic betterment or that salvation is through good works like those I am doing."<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Tim Chester and Steve Timmis, *Total Church: A Radical Reshaping Around Gospel and Community* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2008).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

Explaining the theology behind their praxis, Chester and Timmis state,

Is this 'gospel plus' (requiring something—in this case Christian community—in addition to the gospel, which thereby robs the gospel of its saving power)? The answer is it depends how you tell the gospel story. It depends whether you see the gospel simply as the story of God saving individuals, or as the story of God creating a new humanity.<sup>12</sup>

Chester and Timmis are putting missional evangelism into practice. At the heart of missional evangelism is love for people. Myron Augsberger accurately describes the perspective of missional-church leaders when he writes,

I believe in justice, but I am not a preacher of the gospel of justice, but the Gospel of Christ who calls us to justice. I believe in love, but I am not a preacher of the gospel of love, but the Gospel of Christ who calls us to love. I am committed to peace, but I am not a preacher of the gospel of peace, but the Gospel of Christ who calls us to peace. I believe in the value of the simple life, but I am not the preacher of the simple life, but of the Gospel of Christ that calls us to the simple life. Let us beware of the ultimate plagiarism of borrowing some great concepts from Jesus then running off proclaiming these concepts and not sharing the Christ that empowers these concepts.<sup>13</sup>

I believe missional churches are God's answer to a broken, lost world and to a declining church in America. History will determine whether McNeal is correct regarding the missional church being "the single biggest development since the Reformation."<sup>14</sup> I pray he is correct. I also pray that this dissertation informs missional churches of what

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>13</sup> Leonard Sweet referenced this quotation in Frank Viola's blog, "The Ultimate Plagiarism," Reimaging Church, entry posted July 5, 2010, <http://frankviola.wordpress.com/2010/07/05/francis-chan-mark-driscoll-andy-stanley-and-the-church/> (accessed December 23, 2010).

<sup>14</sup> Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the Church* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), xiii.

Scripture says should be the nature of evangelism and inspires them to tell others about the good news of Jesus. To do otherwise will leave communities of people unsaved and the church will continue to decline. Doing good deeds alone is inadequate. Waiting for nonverbal proclamation by good deeds to cause enough intrigue to raise questions about Jesus is not the nature of biblical evangelism. We must pray for open opportunities to talk about Jesus and about what he has done.

What should be the nature of evangelism in missional churches? The nature of evangelism in missional churches is verbally telling the gospel message in the context of blessing those in one's community with good deeds carried out with compassion, respect, and love.

### **Suggested Areas for Further Study**

Further study of the biblical nature of evangelism would be beneficial. Although this dissertation is presented as a contribution toward clarifying the definition of missional and what should be the nature of evangelism in missional churches, there is certainly more work that would be advantageous.

In an effort to leave the missional conversation open, missional church is defined today in a variety of ways, usually based on whether a church is externally focused or not. Concrete definitions are avoided in favor of less defining indicators, principles, and guidelines. Definition is important if there is to be unity within the missional-church movement. If there continue to be no borders around what it means to be "missional," I question the future of its usage. The term could easily become extinct.

Additionally, more study is needed regarding contextualization and praxis of evangelism. Much has been said about missional theology and its subsequent missional hermeneutic. However, the practice of contextualization is dangerous. In fact, it can be a missionary's most deadly trap. Too often, in an effort to be culturally relevant, textual interpretation is influenced by culture, which leads to unbiblical praxis. Contextualization of the gospel must be biblically driven and culturally sensitive.

There is sometimes a fine line between what is biblical and what is cultural. The contextualization of evangelism, as has been presented, is a prime example of culture being given more authority than Scripture. Therefore, as I have suggested, missional-church leaders should take another look at the biblical definition of evangelism and other missional principles.

There is an assumption that everyone understands *missio Dei* and agrees on its meaning. However, like the words mission, missional, and evangelism, *missio Dei* carries with it a history of varied interpretation. Does the mission of God emphasize word over deed, or are they equal? Contributions to clarifying the use of *missio Dei* in missional churches would be beneficial.

A topic that needs closer review is how much of Hoekendijk's theology of *missio Dei* continues to influence the missional-church movement today. Furthermore, Todd Mangum raises another question, "How is 'missional Christianity' any different from the Social Gospel?" Hoekendijk and Mangum's questions should send warning signals of past mistakes. As the missional-church trend currently moves toward societal transformation, what can be done to avoid mistakes of the past?

Data needs to be collected and analyzed regarding the following hypothesis: More people will come to Christ through compassionate deeds combined with passionate verbal proclamation than through either alone. This research could include three control groups: (1) verbal proclamation only, (2) random acts of blessing, and (3) both one and two.<sup>15</sup>

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, significant attention needs to be given to addressing the question, How do we teach the church today to practice evangelism in their communities in a way that leaves people feeling loved, respected, trusted, and hope-filled, as well as communicates the gospel story of Jesus? The future of the missional-church movement depends on churches grasping God's mission and being inspired to be active in both social action and verbal proclamation of the gospel in their communities.

---

<sup>15</sup> I thank Eric Swanson for the opportunity to discuss my dissertation topic. The research question came from that meeting. Eric Swanson, interview by author, Kansas City, Kansas, November 10, 2009.

## Appendix 1

### Sending Language in Scripture

Appendix 1 supplements chapter 5 by providing additional examples of sending language used in both the Old and New Testaments. The volume of examples clearly illustrates the importance and the broad scope of mission in Scripture.

#### Sending Language in the Old Testament: שלח

The Hebrew word שלח (salah or shalach), “to send,”<sup>1</sup> is used hundreds of times in the Old Testament, though most uses are not theologically important. However, there are over 200 uses of שלח where God is the subject of the verb and the context is God sending.<sup>2</sup> שלח is translated as ἀποστέλλω in the Septuagint and is used 700 times.<sup>3</sup> Πέμπω, used twenty-six times in the Septuagint, is a synonym for ἀποστέλλω.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, trans. and ed. M. E. J. Richardson (Leiden: 1999), 1,511-1,516. Whenever the English word “send” is used in this appendix, it is the translation of the Hebrew word “שלח” or one of its forms. Italics have been added to the word “send” in Scripture quotations.

<sup>2</sup> Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *Mission in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 11. Cf. Ferris L. McDaniel, “Mission in the Old Testament,” in *Mission in the New Testament: An Evangelical Approach*, ed. William J. Larkin Jr. and Joel William (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998), 12-15.

<sup>3</sup> Francis M. DuBose, *God Who Sends: A Fresh Quest for Biblical Mission* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1983), 34. Cf. Karl Heinrich Rengstorff, “ἀποστέλλω/ἀπόστολος,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 1:400.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. These examples are only a portion of the uses in the Old Testament.

In Genesis 2:23, because of the sin of disobedience, God sends Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden. God sends angels to destroy Sodom in Genesis 19:13 and sends Lot from Sodom in Genesis 24:7. In Genesis 45:5, Joseph declares to his brothers, “And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God *sent* me ahead of you.”

There are seventeen sending references in the book of Exodus, all within the context of the exodus story. In the dialogue between God and Moses at the burning bush in Exodus 3:10-15, there are five references to sending:

<sup>10</sup>“So now, go. I am *sending* you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.” <sup>11</sup>But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” <sup>12</sup>And God said, “I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have *sent* you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain.” <sup>13</sup>Moses said to God, “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has *sent* me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?” <sup>14</sup>God said to Moses, “I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has *sent* me to you.’” <sup>15</sup>God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has *sent* me to you.’ This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.”

References to sending continue in the book of Exodus. As Moses takes God’s message to Pharaoh, the language is clear; it is God who sends the plagues: “If you do not let my people go, I will *send* swarms of flies on you and your officials” (Exod. 8:21). “Let my people go, so that they may worship me, or this time I will *send* the full force of my plagues against you and against your officials and your people, so you may know that there is no one like me in all the earth” (Exod. 9:13b-14). In Exodus 23:20, God sends an angel to guard the Israelites as they travel to their new desert home. Exodus 33:12 is the

final sending verse in Exodus as Moses expresses concern over whom God will send to take his place: "Moses said to the Lord, 'You have been telling me, "Lead these people," but you have not let me know whom you will *send* with me. You have said, "I know you by name and you have found favor with me."'"

In the last three books of the Pentateuch, the sending language continues. God sends plagues and snakes in Leviticus 26:25 and Numbers 21:6. In Deuteronomy, the Israelites are reminded of the time when they were sent from Kadesh Barnea: "And when the Lord *sent* you out from Kadesh Barnea, he said, 'Go up and take possession of the land I have given you'" (Deut. 9:23).

As the exodus story is told in Joshua 24:2-6, Judges 6:8, and 1 Samuel 12:8, there is more sending language. In 1 Samuel 12:11, God sends Jerub-Baal, Barak, Jephthah, and Samuel to deliver his people from their enemies. God sends Samuel to anoint Saul as king in 1 Samuel 15:1. God sends Saul to conquer the Amalekites in 1 Samuel 15:18 and is followed by verse 20: "'But I did obey the Lord,' Saul said. 'I went on the mission the Lord assigned me.'" God sends Samuel to Jesse to anoint David as king (1 Sam. 16:1). In 2 Samuel 12:1, God sends Nathan to David. In 2 Samuel 24:13, God sends his prophet Gad to David with three options. After presenting David with the options, David states, "... think it over and decide how I should answer the one who *sent* me."

The sending language continues in the books of history. The prophet Elijah, while talking with Elisha in 2 Kings 2, refers to three different times the Lord sends him to various places: "Elijah said to Elisha, 'Stay here; the Lord has *sent* me to Bethel'" (2 Kings 2:2). "Then Elijah said to him, 'Stay here, Elisha; the Lord has *sent* me to Jericho'"



(2 Kings 2:4). “Then Elijah said to him, ‘Stay here; the Lord has *sent* me to the Jordan’”  
(2 Kings 2:6).

In 1 Chronicles 21:14-15, God sends a plague on Israel and seventy thousand men die. God then sends an angel to destroy Jerusalem, but calls the angel back before carrying out the order. The reason was that “the Lord saw it and was grieved because of the calamity.” In 2 Chronicles 32:21, the Lord sends an angel who “annihilated all the fighting men and the leaders and officers in the camp of the Assyrian king.” As 2 Chronicles closes, the writer states sadly, “The Lord, the God of their fathers, *sent* word to them again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place” (2 Chron. 3:15).

Sending language is also present in the books of poetry. In Psalm 105, three times God is the sender: “He *sent* a man before them—Joseph, sold as a slave” (Ps. 105:17). “He *sent* Moses his servant, and Aaron, whom he had chosen” (Ps. 105:26). And, “He *sent* darkness and made the land dark” (Ps. 105:28). As is typical of the Psalms, God is the giver, or sender of blessings. In Psalm 20:2, the Psalmist writes, “May he *send* you help from the sanctuary and grant you support from Zion.” In Psalm 43:3, David says, “*Send* forth your light and your truth, let them guide me.” Psalm 57:3 states, “He *sends* from heaven and saves me, rebuking those who hotly pursue me; God *sends* his love and his faithfulness.” Psalm 78:25 says, “Men ate the bread of angels; he *sent* them all the food they could eat.” Finally, God is the ruler of nature by the sending of his word: “He *sends* his command to the earth, his word runs swiftly. He spreads the snow like wool and scatters the frost like ashes. He hurls down his hail like pebbles. Who can stand his icy

blast? He *sends* his word and melts them; he stirs up his breezes, and the waters flow” (Ps. 147:15-18).

The books of Prophecy are more replete with sending language than any other part of the Old Testament. As Ferris McDaniel points out, there is a distinct “association between God’s sending and the office of prophet.”<sup>5</sup>

In Jeremiah 1:7, God sends Jeremiah proclaiming, “You must go to everyone I *send* you to and say whatever I command you.” The words of Haggai were obeyed “because the Lord their God had *sent* him” (Hag. 1:12). Zechariah 2:8-9 describes how God sends those who honor him:

<sup>8</sup>For this is what the LORD Almighty says: “After he has honored me and has *sent* me against the nations that have plundered you—for whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye. <sup>9</sup>I will surely raise my hand against them so that their slaves will plunder them. Then you will know that the LORD Almighty has *sent* me.”

Zechariah continues with the sending theme in Zechariah 4:9: “The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands will also complete it. Then you will know that the LORD Almighty has *sent* me to you.”

A major theme of the Prophets is that God sent the Prophets to pronounce judgment on those who rejected him, whether that is Israel or another nation. In Isaiah 9:8, Isaiah says, “The Lord has *sent* a message against Jacob; it will fall on Israel.” Then, against Assyria, he declares, “Woe to the Assyrians, the rod of my anger, in whose hand is the club of my wrath! I *send* him against a godless nation, I dispatch him against a

---

<sup>5</sup> McDaniel, “Mission in the Old Testament,” 19. See the discussion of Isaiah, chapters 6 and 61 in chapter 3.

people who anger me ..." (Isa. 10:5-6). "Therefore, the Lord, the Lord Almighty, will *send* a wasting disease upon his sturdy warriors; ..." (Isa. 10:16). Against Israel, God speaks throughout the book of Jeremiah, "'See, I will *send* venomous snakes among you, vipers that cannot be charmed, and they will bite you,' declares the Lord" (Jer. 8:17). In Jeremiah 16:16 God says, "'But now I will *send* for many fishermen,' declares the Lord, 'and they will catch them. After that I will *send* for many hunters, and they will hunt them down on every mountain and hill and from the crevices of the rocks.'" Then, in Jeremiah 24:5, Jeremiah speaks of those whom God "*sent* away from this place (Israel) to the land of the Babylonians." However, to those not sent to captivity, God says he will "*send* the sword, famine and plague against them until they are destroyed from the land I gave to them and their father" (Jer. 24:10).<sup>6</sup>

Ezekiel continues the theme of God sending judgment. In Ezekiel 5:17 God claims, "I will *send* famine and wild beasts against you" [Israel] and in Ezekiel 14:19 he will "*send* a plague into that land." Summing up his rant in Ezekiel 14:21, God declares, "How much worse will it be when I *send* against Jerusalem my four dreadful judgments—sword and famine and wild beasts and plague—to kill its men and their animals!"

Still other prophets speak of God sending judgment. Hosea writes, "But I will *send* fire upon their cities that will consume their fortresses" (Hos. 8:14). Amos says that

---

<sup>6</sup> Other passages where God sends judgment in Jeremiah are the following: 25:16-17, 27; 26:12, 15; 29:17, 20; 43:10; 48:12; 51:2. DuBose, *God Who Sends*, 47.

God will send fire upon the cities (Amos 1:4, 7, 10, 12; 2:2, 5) as well as plagues (Amos 4:10) and famine (Amos 8:11).

Although God often sent the prophets to proclaim a message of judgment, they also were sent with a message of hope. Isaiah writes in Isaiah 19:20, “It will be a sign and witness to the LORD Almighty in the land of Egypt. When they cry out to the LORD because of their oppressors, he will *send* them a savior and defender, and he will rescue them.” In Isaiah 43:14, God states he will “*send* to Babylon” and “bring down ... the Babylonians.” In the famous fiery-furnace story in Daniel, God sends the angel to rescue Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: “Then Nebuchadnezzar said, ‘Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has *sent* his angel and rescued his servants!’” (Dan. 3:28) and it is God who “*sent* his angel and shut the mouths of the lions” (Dan. 6:22). In Joel 2:19 God sends grain, wine, and oil to fill his people. In Micah 6:4, God, reminding the Israelites of their past, says, “I brought you up out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery. I *sent* Moses to lead you, also Aaron and Miriam” (Mic. 6:4). Finally, Malachi says, “See, I will *send* my messenger, who will prepare the way before me” (Mal. 3:1).

#### **Sending Language in the New Testament: Ἀποστέλλω/Ἀπόστολος and Πέμπω**

The sending language in the Old Testament that points to God as a missionary God is immense. Though the New Testament is briefer than the Old Testament, the frequency of use of sending language is equally prevalent. George Peters writes, “... the

New Testament is a missionary book in address, content, spirit, and design.”<sup>7</sup> The word ἀποστέλλω is used 135 times in the Greek New Testament. In its infinitive form, ἀποστέλλειν means “to send” or “to send forth.”<sup>8</sup> A synonym for ἀποστέλλω is πέμπω, which is used in the New Testament eighty times.<sup>9</sup> The noun form, ἀπόστολος, is used seventy-nine times and is translated as “sent one” or “apostle.”<sup>10</sup> When ἀπόστολος is translated “apostle,” it usually represents one of the twelve (or eleven after Judas) apostles.<sup>11</sup>

The Gospel of Mark opens the New Testament with the simple Christological statement: “The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (Mark 1:1). Immediately, Mark has a quotation from Isaiah 40:2-3: “It is written in Isaiah the prophet: ‘I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way’—‘a voice of one calling in the desert, “Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him (Mark 1:2-3).”’”<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> George W. Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972), 131.

<sup>8</sup> Rengstorf, “ἀποστέλλω/ἀπόστολος,” in *TDNT*, 1:398-406.

<sup>9</sup> Dubose, *God Who Sends*, 34. The Greek words are included in the text to indicate whether the original writer used ἀποστέλλω or πέμπω in their various forms.

<sup>10</sup> Ἀπόστολος is only used one time in the Septuagint in 1 Kings 14:16.

<sup>11</sup> In Hebrews 3:1, ἀπόστολος refers to Jesus and in Acts 14:14 it refers to Paul and Barnabas.

<sup>12</sup> The reason I use Mark’s account as the beginning of the Gospel story is that, as most scholars conclude, Mark is the earliest of the four accounts.

Isaiah prophesied of a special messenger: “A voice of one calling: ‘In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God’” (Isa. 40:3). Then, as the Old Testament closes, the prophet Malachi forecasts, “See, I will *send* my messenger, who will prepare the way before me” (Mal. 3:1). Thus, it should be no surprise when the second sentence into the Gospel of Mark is a quotation from Isaiah 40:3. The messenger whom God sends is identified in Mark 1:4 as John, or John the Baptizer as he is often called. If there is any doubt as to who the sender is, the writer of the Gospel of John makes it clear that John the Baptizer was sent by God: “There was a man who was *sent* (ἀπεσταλμένος) from God; his name was John” (John 1:6).

The one whom John the Baptizer was preparing the way was of course Jesus, the central character of the gospel story. Mark quickly moves the spotlight from John the Baptizer to Jesus. Once again the Christology of Jesus is brought to the forefront: “And a voice came from heaven: ‘You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased’” (Mark 1:11). Not only is the Christology of Jesus an important theological thread in the Gospels, but also the missionary nature of God, in particular the sending of his Son, Jesus stands out as part of his Christology. Jesus says of himself, “He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who *sent* (ἀποστείλαντά) me” (Matt. 10:40, Mark 9:37, Luke 9:48).

Jesus tells the Canaanite woman that he “was *sent* (ἀπεστάλην) only to the lost sheep of Israel” (Matt. 15:24). Jesus tells the disciples, “Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who *sent* (ἀποστείλαντά) me” (Mark. 9:37).

Luke presents Jesus as both the sent one and the sender.<sup>13</sup> In Luke 9:1-6, Jesus sends out the Twelve: “When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he *sent* (ἀπέστειλεν) them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick” (Luke 9:1-2).<sup>14</sup> Jesus was sent to carry out the Isaiah 61 mission, and now the twelve disciples are sent to do the same.<sup>15</sup> John Harvey points out that mission involves two people, a sender and the one sent. He explains that not only did Jesus identify with the sender, but he was also clear that he was the sent one.<sup>16</sup>

A second passage where Jesus sends out disciples occurs in Luke 10:1-24. This time he sends out seventy-two:

<sup>1</sup>After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and *sent* (ἀπέστειλεν) them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. <sup>2</sup>He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to *send* (ἐκβάλη) <sup>17</sup> out workers into his harvest field. <sup>3</sup>Go! I am *sending* (ἀποστέλλω) you out like lambs among wolves (Luke 10:1-3).

---

<sup>13</sup> The important sending text in Luke 4 is discussed in chapter 5.

<sup>14</sup> Kostenberger and O’Brien see the foundation of Jesus’s mission is that he is sent by God. Sending the seventy-two “is intimately connected with his mission.” Andreas J. Kostenberger and Peter O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001), 120.

<sup>15</sup> Matthew 10:1-42, especially verse 5, and Mark 6:7-13, especially verse 7, parallel the Luke 9:1-6 texts, both emphasizing that they are being sent out.

<sup>16</sup> John D. Harvey, “Mission in Jesus’ Teaching,” in *Mission in the New Testament: An Evangelical Approach*, ed. William J. Larkin Jr. and Joel William (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998), 31.

<sup>17</sup> Here the English translation often is “send.” However, the Greek word is ἐκβάλη, which means “to throw out” or “thrust out.”

John weaves several themes through his gospel, yet without question the theme of mission is one of the most prominent themes.<sup>18</sup> John uses two verbs, πέμπω and ἀποστέλλω. Πέμπω is used thirty-two times and ἀποστέλλω is used thirty-two times.<sup>19</sup> Although there has been significant discussion about the differences in meaning of the two verbs, most scholars have concluded that the differences are so subtle that one can hardly distinguish between John's choices of one over the other.<sup>20</sup>

The sending motif in John is divided into three categories: (1) the Father sends Jesus to carry out a mission, (2) the Holy Spirit is sent to the disciples to assist them in

---

<sup>18</sup> Some even go so far as to say that mission is the central theme in John. Kostenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth*, 203. All references to "John" refer to the Gospel of John unless otherwise noted.

<sup>19</sup> For a list of John's uses of πέμπω and ἀποστέλλω, see W. F. Moulton and A. S. Geden, eds., *A Concordance to the Greek New Testament*, 4th ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963), 99-101.

<sup>20</sup> For a closer look at the use of the two verbs πέμπω and ἀποστέλλω, see Andreas J. Kostenberger, "The Two Johannine Verbs for Sending: A Study of John's Use of Words with Reference to General Linguistic Theory," in *Studies on John and Gender: A Decade of Scholarship* (New York: P. Lang, 2001), 129-47. Johan Ferreira states that ἀποστέλλω most often carries the meaning "I send forth" as in, "I commission you." Johan Ferreira, *Johannie Ecclesiology* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 167. I appreciate Brad Brisco for referring me to the excellent resources on the sending motif by Ferreira, Kostenberger, and Nissen in his blog post "The Missional Language of Sending," <http://missionalChurchnetwork.com/> (accessed March 18, 2010). Cf. Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed., rev. and ed. Frederick W. Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 120, 794. A careful reading of Bauer's entries for both terms reveals no indication of differences in use of either term. After reading John's use of both terms, I, like many others, am unable to distinguish why he chose one term over another. For this reason, I have chosen not to insert the Greek word into the text for each usage of the word "send" or "sent." For uses of these terms in antiquity outside the New Testament, see James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1930; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 69, 502.



carrying out the mission Jesus gives them, and (3) Jesus's disciples carrying out their mission (which is the same as Jesus's mission). When one focuses on the sending verses, the emphasis on God sending Jesus and Jesus's desire to carry out obediently and carefully his Father's mission becomes an important element not only in one's theology but also in one's understanding of gospel, particularly in the area of mission.

Early in John's Gospel, Jesus recognizes that God is the sender and he is the one sent. The most recognized Bible verses in the world, and perhaps the verses most packed with theology, Christology, and missiology, are John 3:16-17: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not *send* (ἀπέστειλεν) his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." God sends Jesus.<sup>21</sup> Jesus's mission is his Father's mission.

John writes in 7:28-29, "Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, 'Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own, but he who *sent* (πέμψας) me is true. You do not know him, but I know him because I am from him and he *sent* (ἀπέστειλεν) me.'"<sup>22</sup> In John 8:16 Jesus states, "But if I do judge, my decisions are right, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who *sent* (πέμψας) me." Two more times in this same dialogue, Jesus repeats his point: "I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who *sent* (πέμψας) me," (John 8:18)

---

<sup>21</sup> One begins to wonder if John is not trying to make a point that his readers cannot miss by the repetition.

<sup>22</sup> It is noteworthy that John uses both words, πέμψας and ἀπέστειλεν, in the same sentence. Again, it is difficult to conclude why he chose one or the other.

and “The one who *sent* (πέμψας) me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him” (John 8:29).

In three places, Jesus says that he did not come to do his own will but rather, to do the will of the one who sent him: “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who *sent* (πέμψαντός) me and to finish his work” (John 4:34). Second, “By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who *sent* (πέμψαντός) me” (John 5:30). Third, “For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who *sent* (πέμψαντός) me. And this is the will of him who *sent* (πέμψαντός) me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day” (John 6:38-39).

In similar fashion, Jesus says not only did he come to do the will of his Father but also to speak the word his Father sent him to speak: “Jesus answered, ‘My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who *sent* (πέμψαντός) me’” (John 7:16). In John 8:26, Jesus proclaims, “I have much to say in judgment of you. But he who *sent* (πέμψας) me is reliable, and what I have heard from him I tell the world” (John 8:26). Continuing, he says, “The one who *sent* (πέμψας) me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him” (John 8:29). In John 12:49 Jesus declares, “For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who *sent* (πέμψας) me commanded me what to say and how to say it.” Again, in John 14:24 Jesus states, “He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who *sent* (πέμψαντός) me.”

In John 15:21 Jesus says, “They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who *sent* (πέμψαντά) me.” Then, in Jesus’s well known prayer for unity in John 17:25, he prays, “Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have *sent* (ἀπέστειλας) me.”

In the second category, John speaks of God sending the Holy Spirit in John 14:26: “But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will *send* (πέμψει) in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” Then, in John 15:26, Jesus declares that he will send the Holy Spirit “from the Father.” “When the Counselor comes, whom I will *send* (πέμψω) to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.”

In category three, Jesus’s disciples are given a mission and are sent to carry it out. The disciples’ mission is the same as Jesus’s mission, that is, to continue Jesus’s mission. In John 4:38, the disciples have just returned from a brief mission trip, “I *sent* (ἀπέστειλα) you to reap what you have not worked for.” In John 17:17-20, Jesus is praying for his disciples’ mission: “Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you *sent* (ἀπέστειλας) me into the world, I have *sent* (ἀπέστειλα) them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.” Finally, after his death and resurrection, Jesus once again commissions his disciples: “Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has *sent* (ἀπέσταλκέν) me, I am *sending* (πέμπω) you.’ And with that he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven’” (John 20:21-23). In addition to Jesus sending the disciples out, Jesus also gives them the Holy Spirit.

Furthermore, they are also assigned the mission of forgiving sins, the same mission that Jesus himself was sent by his Father to carry out. Here, all three categories of the sending motif are in three verses. Jesus has acknowledged that he is dependent on his Father to carry out the mission he was sent to do. Likewise, the disciples are able to carry out the mission Jesus sends them to do only by the power of the Holy Spirit.

A fitting summation of the mission theme in John comes from the words of Jesus in two verses: “As you *sent* (ἀπέστειλας) me into the world, I have *sent* (ἀπέστειλα) them into the world” (John 17:18); “As the Father has sent me, even so I *send* you” (John 20:21).

Of all the books in the New Testament, the theme of Christians being sent out is perhaps stronger in the Book of Acts than any other. However, given the central theme of mission in the Book of Acts, one might conclude that sending language is relatively minimal.

Peter, in Acts 3, is standing in the Temple at Solomon’s Colonnade and addresses the crowd. After explaining that they had killed Jesus, “the author of life” and that God raised him from the dead, Peter instructs them to repent so that God “may *send* (ἀποστείλῃ) the Christ, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus” (Acts 3:20). Peter concludes his sermon telling them, “When God raised up his servant, he *sent* (ἀπέστειλεν) him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways” (Acts 3:26).

In Stephen’s speech in Acts 7, Stephen gives a synopsis of Jewish history. Looking back at Moses and the burning-bush scene, Stephen recites God’s words to

Moses: “Then the Lord said to him, ‘Take off your sandals; the place where you are standing is holy ground. I have indeed seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their groaning and have come down to set them free. Now come, I will *send* (ἀποστείλω) you back to Egypt’” (Acts 7:33-34).

Acts 13 begins the adventures of the greatest mission story ever told, Paul’s three missionary journeys. From a small group of leaders in the church in Antioch, Syria, the Holy Spirit sends Barnabas and Saul (Paul) out as missionaries to southern Turkey:

<sup>2</sup>While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” <sup>3</sup>So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and *sent* them off.

<sup>4</sup>The two of them, *sent* (ἐκπεμφθέντες) on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus” (Acts 13:2-4).

In Acts 9:17, the well-known story of Paul’s conversion, Luke writes, “Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has *sent* (ἀπέσταλκέν) me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.’” Then, two times, Luke uses sending language regarding Paul being sent to the Gentiles. After having become a follower of Jesus and spending years as a missionary to the Gentiles, Paul returns to Jerusalem. With the protection of Roman soldiers, Paul stands on the Temple steps and addresses the crowd. His final words, which incite the crowd to nearly a riot, were, “Then the Lord said to me, ‘Go; I will *send* (ἐξαποστελῶ) you far away to the Gentiles’” (Acts 22:21). Again, Paul tells his own conversion story to King Agrippa, Festus, and others present. Quoting the words of Jesus that were spoken to him at his conversion, Paul states, “I will rescue you from your own people and from the

Gentiles. I am *sending* (ἀποστέλλω) you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me” (Acts 26:17-18). Finally, in Rome Paul addresses the Jewish leaders. Paul ends his speech by telling them, “Therefore I want you to know that God's salvation has been *sent* (ἀπεστάλη) to the Gentiles, and they will listen!” (Acts 28:28).

As one would expect, sending language continues in the Pauline letters. In the great theological treatise of Romans, Paul writes,

<sup>1</sup>Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,  
<sup>2</sup>because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. <sup>3</sup>For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by *sending* (πέμψας) his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering (Rom. 8:1-3).

Reflecting on missionary methodology, Paul asks,

<sup>14</sup>How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? <sup>15</sup>And how can they preach unless they are *sent* (ἀποσταλῶσιν)? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” (Rom. 10:14-15).

Opening his letter to the troubled and divided church in Corinth, Paul writes, “For Christ did not *send* (ἀπέστειλέν) me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power” (1 Cor. 1:17). In Galatians 4, Paul combines both God sending Jesus and God sending the Holy Spirit: “But when the time had fully come, God *sent* (ἐξαπέστειλεν) his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God *sent* (ἐξαπέστειλεν) the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the

Spirit who calls out, ‘Abba, Father’” (Gal. 4:4-6). In his letter to the young church in Thessalonica regarding eschatological expectations, Paul talks about the return of Jesus and the coming of a “lawless one.” Concerning the lawless one, he writes, “For this reason God *sends* (πέμπει) them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness” (2 Thess. 2:11).

The writer of Hebrews 3:1 states, “Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the *apostle* (ἀπόστολον) and high priest whom we confess.” This is the only time this title, “apostle,” meaning “sent one,” is in reference to Jesus. Peter, in 1 Peter 1:12, writes, “It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit *sent* (ἀποσταλέντι) from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.”

Continuing this idea, in 1 John 4:10-11 John states, “This is how God showed his love among us: He *sent* (ἀπέστειλεν) his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and *sent* his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.” Then in verse fourteen, he repeats his thought: “And we have seen and testify that the Father has *sent* (ἀπέσταλκεν) his Son to be the Savior of the world.”

Finally, in John’s final letter of Revelation, the sending theme reaches its end. John opens his letter with the revelation being sent by an angel: “The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it

known by *sending* (ἀποστείλας) his angel to his servant John, who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 1:1-2). A few verses later, John hears a voice with instructions to send a message to seven churches:

“On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, which said, ‘Write on a scroll what you see and *send* (πέμψον) it to the seven churches, to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea” (Rev. 1:10-11). The following verses reveal that the voice was that of Jesus. In Revelation 5:6, John writes, “Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God *sent* (ἀπεσταλμένοι) out into all the earth.”

As John concludes his letter, once again, John uses sent language:

There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever. The angel said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, *sent* (ἀπέστειλεν) his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place” (Rev. 22:5-6).

“I, Jesus, have *sent* (ἐπεμψα) my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star” (Rev. 22:16).

Although the sending theme is well attested in both Old and New Testaments, Matthew 28:16-20 has had greater impact on how the mission of God, the mission of Jesus, and the mission of the Church has been interpreted than any other text. This passage is without question the centerpiece for the more church’s mission statements than any other passage:

<sup>18</sup>Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing



them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt. 20:18-20).

The verb "send" or "sent" is obviously not used in this pericope, yet the word "go" in verse eighteen carries the same implication as "send." As Jesus ends his ministry on this earth, Jesus's closing commission is to send the apostles on mission; they are to "go." As seen from this survey of the sending passages in the Synoptic Gospels, and in an even greater way in the Gospel of John, God sent Jesus on a mission and Jesus in turn sends his disciples to carry out the same mission.

When one looks at the abundant use of sending language in both the Old and New Testaments, there is clearly a sending, or mission, theme that is woven throughout all of Scripture.

## Appendix 2

### Evangelism Language in the New Testament

Appendix 2 supplements chapter 5 by providing additional examples of evangelism language used in the New Testament. The volume of instances clearly illustrates the importance of evangelism in Scripture. The nature of evangelism in the New Testament becomes more apparent with the reading of these examples, thus bringing to light the nature of evangelism as understood by the original writers of the New Testament.

As presented in chapter 5, the main words used in the New Testament for evangelism are εὐαγγελιόν and εὐαγγελίζω. The noun, εὐαγγελιόν, which is transliterated into English as “evangel,” is also often translated as “gospel” and “good news.” The verb, εὐαγγελίζω, is transliterated as “I evangelize.”<sup>1</sup> The verb, εὐαγγελίζω, means “I communicate good news” or “I tell good news”—εὖ meaning “good” and ἄγγελιον meaning “message,” thus, “messenger of good news.”<sup>2</sup> In Bauer’s *Greek Lexicon*, every entry for the verb form εὐαγγελίζω is specific that it means “proclaim,” “announce,” “preach,” or “bring,” as in “bringing good news.”<sup>3</sup> An ἄγγελος is a messenger or angel.

---

<sup>1</sup> Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed., rev. and ed. Frederick W. Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 402.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Therefore, to evangelize is to tell the good news. The noun form is used seventy-six times and the verb is found thirty-three times.<sup>4</sup>

### Εὐαγγέλιον

Below are examples using the noun, εὐαγγέλιον, and are translated as “good news” or “gospel.”<sup>5</sup>

1. And this *gospel* (εὐαγγέλιον) of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come (Matt. 24:14).
2. The beginning of the *gospel* (εὐαγγελίου) about Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Mark 1:1).
3. So they set out and went from village to village, preaching the *gospel* (εὐαγγελιζόμενοι) and healing people everywhere (Luke 9:6).
4. When they had testified and proclaimed the word of the Lord, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, preaching the *gospel* (εὐηγγελίζοντο) in many Samaritan villages (Acts 8:25).
5. Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the *gospel* (εὐαγγέλιον) of God (Rom. 1:1).
6. For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the *gospel* (εὐαγγελιῆσθαι)—not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power (1 Cor. 1:17).

---

<sup>4</sup> For a more thorough discussion of the etymology of the term “evangelism,” see Andreas J. Kostenberger and Peter T. O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 11, ed. D. A. Carson (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001), 271-74.

<sup>5</sup> I have listed only the first use of the word “gospel” in each of the New Testament books where the word occurs. Although there are numerous more references, my intent here is to show that the use of the term is comprehensive. For other examples, see W. F. Moulton and A. S. Geden, eds., *A Concordance to the Greek New Testament*, 4th ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963), 397-98.

7. I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different *gospel* (εὐαγγέλιον) (Gal. 1:6).
8. And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the *gospel* (εὐαγγέλιον) of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13).
9. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the *gospel* (εὐαγγέλιον) from the first day until now ... (Phil. 1:5).
10. ... if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the *gospel* (εὐαγγελίου). This is the *gospel* that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant (Col. 1:23).
11. ... because our *gospel* (εὐαγγέλιον) came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake (1 Thess. 1:5).
12. ... that conforms to the glorious *gospel* (εὐαγγέλιον) of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me (1 Tim. 1:11).
13. So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the *gospel* (εὐαγγελίῳ), by the power of God (2 Tim. 1:8).
14. For we also have had the *gospel* (εὐηγγελισμένοι) preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith (Heb. 4:2).
15. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the *gospel* (εὐαγγελισαμένων) to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things (1 Pet. 1:12).
16. Then I saw another *angel* (ἄγγελον) flying in midair, and he had the eternal *gospel* (εὐαγγέλιον) to *proclaim* (εὐαγγελίσαι) to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people (Rev. 14:6).

### Εὐαγγελίζω/Εὐαγγελίζομαι

The following examples use the verb form εὐαγγελίζω/εὐαγγελίζομαι:

1. The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and *the good news is preached* (εὐαγγελίζονται) to the poor (Matt. 11:5).<sup>6</sup>
2. The *angel* (ἄγγελος) answered, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and *to tell you this good news*" (εὐαγγελίσασθαι) (Luke 1:19).<sup>7</sup>
3. Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and *proclaiming the good news* (εὐαγγελιζόμενοι) that Jesus is the Christ (Acts 5:42).<sup>8</sup>
4. That is why I am so eager to *preach the gospel* (εὐαγγελίσασθαι) also to you who are at Rome (Rom. 1:15).<sup>9</sup>
5. Yet when *I preach the gospel* (εὐαγγελίζωμαι), I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do *not preach the gospel* (εὐαγγελίσωμαι)! (1 Cor. 9:16).

---

<sup>6</sup> Perhaps a more accurate translation of καὶ πτωχοὶ εὐαγγελίζονται should be, "and poor men are evangelized" or "and poor men have the gospel preached to them."

<sup>7</sup> It is important to notice that the verb "to announce" is interconnected with "good news," which is implied in the definition of εὐαγγελίσασθαι. The complete Greek phrase is: καὶ ἀπεστάλην λαλῆσαι πρὸς σὲ καὶ εὐαγγελίσασθαι σοι ταῦτα, which is translated literally "and I was sent to speak to you and to announce (εὐαγγελίσασθαι) to you these things."

<sup>8</sup> Luke uses one of the various forms of the verb, εὐαγγελίζω/εὐαγγελίζομαι, more than any other New Testament writer, ten times in Luke and fifteen times in Acts. *A Concordance to the Greek New Testament*, 396-97.

<sup>9</sup> In the clause "preach the gospel," both proclamation and good news, or gospel, are implied in the single term εὐαγγελίσασθαι.

6. ... so that we can *preach the gospel* (εὐαγγελίσασθαι) in the regions beyond you. For we do not want to boast about work already done in another man's territory (2 Cor. 10:16).

7. But even if we or an angel from heaven should *preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you* (εὐαγγελίζεται [ὑμῖν] παρ' ὃ εὐηγγελισάμεθα ὑμῖν), let him be eternally condemned! (Gal. 1:8).

8. He came and *preached* (εὐηγγελίσατο) peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near (Eph. 2:17).

9. But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has *brought good news* (εὐαγγελισαμένου) about your faith and love. He has told us that you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us, just as we also long to see you (1 Thess. 3:6).

10. For we also have had *the gospel preached to us* (εὐηγγελισμένοι), just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith (Heb. 4:2).

11. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have *preached the gospel* (εὐαγγελισαμένων) to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things (1 Pet. 1:12).

12. But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as *he announced* (εὐηγγέλισεν) to his servants the prophets" (Rev. 10:7).

One peculiar alteration to the root εὐαγγελ occurs three times in the New Testament and is translated as "evangelist." In Acts 21:8, Philip is called an *evangelist* (εὐαγγελιστοῦ). Again, in Ephesians 4:11, the *evangelist* (εὐαγγελιστάς) is one who possesses the special gift of telling the good news. A third instance is in 2 Timothy 4:5, when Paul encourages Timothy to do the work of an *evangelist* (εὐαγγελιστοῦ), that is, to tell the good news.

### Κηρύσσω/Κηρύσσειν

It is also important to consider the place and nature of evangelism in the New Testament as seen in the use of the verb κηρύσσω/κηρύσσειν, which means to proclaim, announce, declare, make known, or herald an event.<sup>10</sup> Κηρύσσω is used sixty-one times in the New Testament.

In Romans 10:14-15, Paul uses κηρύσσω and εὐαγγελίζομαι as synonyms:

<sup>14</sup>How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching (κηρύσσοντος) to them? <sup>15</sup>And how can they preach (κηρυξωσιν) unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring (εὐαγγελιζομένων) good news!" (Rom. 10:14-15)

Twelve other times, the expression κηρύσσειν το εὐαγγελίον, "to preach or proclaim the gospel" is used, which shows the close relationship between the two words.<sup>11</sup>

Below are several examples of the use of κηρύσσω in the New Testament.

1. In those days John the Baptist came, *preaching* (κηρύσσων) in the Desert of Judea (Matt. 3:1).
2. He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to *preach* (κηρύσσειν) (Mark 3:14).
3. He went into all the country around the Jordan, *preaching* (κηρύσσων) a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Luke 3:3).
4. Philip went down to a city in Samaria and *proclaimed* (ἐκήρυσσε) the Christ there (Acts 8:5).

---

<sup>10</sup> Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 543.

<sup>11</sup> Alvin Reid, *Evangelism Handbook: Biblical, Spiritual, Intentional, Missional* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2009), 24.

5. ... you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who *preach* (κηρύσσω) against stealing, do you steal? (Rom. 2:21).

6. ... but we *preach* (κηρύσσομεν) Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles (1 Cor. 1:23).

7. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was *preached* (κηρυχθείς) among you by me and Silas and Timothy, was not "Yes" and "No," but in him it has always been "Yes" (2 Cor. 1:19).

8. I went in response to a revelation and set before them *the gospel that I preach* (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ κηρύσσω) among the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain (Gal. 2:2).

9. It is true that some *preach* (κηρύσσουσιν) Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill (Phil. 1:15).

10. ... if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the *gospel* (εὐαγγελίου) that you heard and that has been proclaimed (κηρυχθέντος) to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant (Col. 1:23).

11. Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached (ἐκηρύξαμεν) the *gospel* (εὐαγγέλιον) of God to you (1 Thess. 2:9).

12. Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached (ἐκηρύχθη) among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory (1 Tim. 3:16).

13. Preach (κήρυξον) the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage, with great patience and careful instruction (2 Tim. 4:2).

14. ... through whom also he went and preached (ἐκήρυξεν) to the spirits in prison (1 Pet. 3:19).

15. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming (κηρύσσοντα) in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" (Rev. 5:2).



In this appendix, numerous occurrences in the New Testament are illustrated where the gospel was instructed to be proclaimed or was proclaimed. It is also clear that the writers of the New Testament documents intended for the gospel message, the good news, to be orally proclaimed as is demonstrated in the etymology and in the use of the various noun and verb forms of the words εὐαγγελιόν/εὐαγγελίζομαι and κηρύσσων/κηρύσσειν.

## Appendix 3

### The Social-Gospel and Fundamentalism Movements

#### The Social-Gospel Movement

In 1907, Walter Rauschenbusch, a well-educated theologian, professor, and Baptist preacher, ignited a floundering social movement in America when he published *Christianity and the Social Crisis*.<sup>1</sup> At a time when many churches were experiencing increasing movement toward liberalism due to German higher criticism and Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*,<sup>2</sup> the stage was well set for both an altered theology and its resultant ecclesiology.<sup>3</sup> The Bible's authority and errancy were being questioned in the context of modern socio-historical exegetical methodologies. Protestantism was eroding as secularism grew. As George Marsden writes,

Many people brought up to accept unquestioningly the complete authority of the Bible and the sure truths of evangelical teaching found themselves living in a world where such beliefs no longer were considered intellectually acceptable. They could hang on to evangelicalism at the cost of sacrificing the current

---

<sup>1</sup> Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (New York: Macmillan, 1907). For a brief, but excellent survey of the social situation prior to 1907, see Bradley W. Bateman, "The Social Gospel and the Progressive Era," Divining America, TeacherServe, National Humanities Center, <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/twenty/tkeyinfo/socGospel.htm> (accessed September 20, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species By Means of Natural Selection*, vol. 49 of *The Great Books of the Western World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952).

<sup>3</sup> Bateman, "The Social Gospel and the Progressive Era," 1. Having studied theology at the University of Berlin, Rauschenbusch was well educated in higher criticism, which led to liberal theology.

standards for intellectual respectability. If they were going to retain such intellectual respectability, it seemed they must either abandon Christianity or modify it to meet the standards of the day. For many the latter choice seemed the only live option. Probably more than half of Protestant publications leaned toward modernism, and liberals occupied perhaps one-third of the nation's pulpits.<sup>4</sup>

Rauschenbusch had ministered for eleven years, from 1886 to 1897, among the working class in Hell's Kitchen, one of New York City's most impoverished areas, before becoming a professor at Rochester Seminary. *Christianity and the Social Gospel*,<sup>5</sup> along with several other popular works of Rauschenbusch,<sup>6</sup> was written to awaken Christians to the plight of the working class. Patterning his theology after Jesus's compassionate ministry to needy people and the cooperative giving and sharing seen in the early church, Rauschenbusch believed God was interested in Kingdom building, which included social salvation as well as individual salvation.<sup>7</sup> He thus sought to improve inhumane working conditions, stop the exploitation of children, eliminate poverty, and decrease the economic gap between the rich and the poor. His intentions

---

<sup>4</sup> George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 33. See also George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 2d edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) for another excellent resource on liberalism and fundamentalism.

<sup>5</sup> Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*.

<sup>6</sup> Two other popular books by Walter Rauschenbusch are *Christianizing the Social Order* (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1912) and *A Theology of the Social Gospel* (New York: Macmillan, 1917).

<sup>7</sup> Janet R. Nelson, "Walter Rauschenbusch and the Social Gospel: A Hopeful Theology for the Twenty-first Century Economy," *CrossCurrents* 59, issue 4 (December 2009): 446. Nelson credits Rauschenbusch and the Social Gospel with creating the modern ecumenical movement. Kingdom is a major theme in Rauschenbusch's *Christianity and the Social Crisis*.

were successful. The Methodist Episcopal church published their Social Creed in 1908.<sup>8</sup> Soon, almost every mainline protestant denomination adopted the Social Creed and rallied behind Rauschenbusch's cry. That same year, the National Council of Churches was created to take the Social Gospel to Protestant churches.<sup>9</sup> Publicizing the cause, journalists such as Jacob Riis wrote articles about the Social Gospel and printed pictures showing workers and children in horrid working conditions.<sup>10</sup>

Although Rauschenbusch's book sent shockwaves across the Christian community and harnessed their forces behind an effective century-long movement to improve working conditions and reshape the justice system in America, he has not gone without critics.<sup>11</sup> Still today, Rauschenbusch's theology comes under scrutiny. Rauschenbusch is often labeled as liberal by theological conservatives for introducing an expanded definition of gospel to include social salvation, as well as individual salvation.<sup>12</sup> Observant of Rauschenbusch's politicization of the gospel, Gary Dornen

---

<sup>8</sup> "The 1908 Social Creed," The United Methodist Church, <http://archives.umc.org/interior.asp?ptid=16&mid=5430> (accessed September 20, 2010). Although the Social Creed has undergone many revisions, it is still used by Methodists.

<sup>9</sup> Bateman, "The Social Gospel and the Progressive Era," 1.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Perhaps Rauschenbusch's most popular critic has been Reinhold Niebuhr. In his article, "Walter Rauschenbusch in Historical Perspective," in Ronald H. Stone, ed., *Faith and Politics* (New York: George Braziller, 1968), 33, he criticizes Rauschenbusch as "obviously dated."

<sup>12</sup> Grant Wacker, "Religious Liberalism and the Modern Crisis of Faith," *National Humanities Center*, <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/twenty/tkeyinfo/liberal.htm> (accessed

insightfully states, “the notion that Christianity has a transformative social mission is distinctly modern, and Walter Rauschenbusch was its most radical proponent.”<sup>13</sup> The effects of both Christendom and modernism on the church led the Social-Gospel movement to make social change the primary mission of many mainline Protestant churches.<sup>14</sup>

### The Fundamentalism Movement

The Social-Gospel movement, with its liberal tendencies, did not go unnoticed by conservatives. Reacting to growing liberalism and the Social-Gospel movement, many evangelicals took a defensive posture. One such group turned into a powerful movement called “fundamentalism.” George Marsden describes fundamentalists as evangelical

---

September 9, 2010). *Christianity Today* published a series of articles in 2008 called the Christian Vision Project. The question asked was “Is our gospel too small?” Scot McKnight wrote a response entitled “The 8 Marks of a Robust Gospel” in which he defines “robust” as including social involvement as part of the gospel. Scot McKnight, “The 8 Marks of a Robust Gospel,” *Christianity Today*, The Christian Vision Project (March 8, 2008): 1 [http://www.christianvisionproject.com/2008/03/the\\_8\\_marks\\_of\\_a\\_robust\\_Gospel.html](http://www.christianvisionproject.com/2008/03/the_8_marks_of_a_robust_Gospel.html) (accessed September 20, 2010). Kevin Bauder, in a rebuttal of McKnight’s article, writes, “The gospel is all about personal redemption and forgiveness of sins. The true gospel is not both personal and social. It is explicitly personal, ....” Kevin T. Bauder, “Directions in Evangelicalism, Part 5: The Gospel According to Walt,” *In the Nick of Time* (January 23, 2009): 1 <http://www.centalseminary.edu/publications/Nick/Nick201.html> (accessed September 20, 2010).

<sup>13</sup> Gary Dornen, *Soul in the Society: The Making and Renewal of Social Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 1.

<sup>14</sup> Although the Social-Gospel movement began a century ago, it is still alive today. See Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty, “The Future Social Gospel.” Cf. Nelson, “Walter Rauschenbusch and the Social Gospel.”

Christians who “militantly opposed both modernism in theology and the cultural changes that modernism endorsed. Militant opposition to modernism was what most clearly set off fundamentalism.”<sup>15</sup>

As with the Social Gospel, the context for fundamentalism began in the nineteenth century. In August 1909, fundamentalism was finally born. A.C. Dixon was preaching at a tent revival in Los Angeles, California. In the audience were many well-known evangelicals, one being a wealthy millionaire named Lyman Stewart. As Dixon was speaking, Stewart became convicted that he was to protect the church from liberalism, also called modernism at the time, by providing true Bible teaching to believers. Lyman Stewart, Milton Stewart (Lyman’s brother), and Dixon joined forces to publish paperback pamphlets called *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth*.<sup>16</sup> The pamphlets presented what they considered sound biblical teaching from the best Bible teachers. Edited by Dixon, and later by Reuben Torrey, twelve volumes were published containing ninety articles. Financed by the Stewart brothers, three million volumes were sent to every pastor, missionary, Bible professor, Bible student, Sunday-school

---

<sup>15</sup> Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 4. See also Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970) 188-207.

<sup>16</sup> Lienesch, *In the Beginning*, 8. The articles can be seen at “The Fundamentals: A Testimony of Truth,” <http://www.xmission.com/~fidelis/volume1/volume1.php> (September 20, 2010).

superintendent, Y.M.C.A., and religious editor across America.<sup>17</sup> The first five volumes were intended to counter liberalism. The articles emphasized topics such as personal salvation, substitutionary atonement, evangelism, inerrancy of Scripture, the virgin birth, and prayer. Political issues were avoided and, in opposition to the Social-Gospel movement, excessive “social service” was discouraged.<sup>18</sup> To maintain unity, talk about topics such as millennialism was limited. Teachings that promoted evolution were opposed.

In the 1920s, fundamentalists carried their fight to the courts, presenting anti-evolution bills to prevent teaching about evolution in the schools. The most popular case was the State of Tennessee versus John Scopes, commonly known as the Scopes Monkey Trial.<sup>19</sup> In a deliberate attempt to test the recently passed Butler Act, which banned teaching evolution in public schools, Scopes, who was backed by the American Civil Liberties Union and defended by agnostic lawyer Clarence Darrow, taught a lesson from a textbook with ideas from Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species*. Scopes was arrested, charged, and put on trial. William Bell Riley, founder and leader of the World’s Christian Fundamentals Association, sponsored the prosecution and hired politician and fundamentalist Williams Jennings Bryant to be their lawyer.

---

<sup>17</sup> Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 118-19. The term “fundamentalist” first appeared in 1920.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>19</sup> Michael Lienesch’s, *In the Beginning*, provides an excellent and thorough history of the Scopes trial.

The fundamentalism movement has played an important role in preserving a Christendom mentality throughout the last century. Even today, many popular conservative movements, like the Christian Right, can trace their roots back to early fundamentalism, a movement that originated as a reaction to Christendom and modernism.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Little was known about postmodernism in the early twentieth century.



## Appendix 4

### History of the Emerging-Church Movement

The emerging-church movement is a radical movement that is attempting to be indigenous to postmodern culture. Taking lessons from philosophers and responding to their modern predecessors, some followers of the emerging-church movement are intent on rethinking theology and all want to realign the practice of Christians, both in the church and the marketplace, with Jesus's mission as portrayed in the Gospels. Although combining ancient and contemporary practices into their worship settings defines them externally, the essence of the emerging-church movement lies at a deeper worldview level. Raising no little ire among some conservative Christians, followers of the emerging church have been categorized as post-evangelical, post-conservative, and post-liberal. Conflicting definitions of words such as "emerging" and "emergent" have left most people confused about, beliefs, values, characteristics, practices, and views.

Most, if not all, emerging churches claim to be missional churches. The purpose of this appendix is to explore the history of the emerging-church movement with the goal of bringing clarity to questions about beliefs, values, characteristics, practices, and views. Particular attention is given to clarifying terminological differences between "emerging," "emergent," and "Emergent Village." Finally, "Origins," a loosely organized remnant of the emerging-church movement, is introduced.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> I refer to Origins as an emerging-church organization because their target audience is primarily of a postmodern mindset. However, because of the confusion about the terms "emerging" and "emergent," they are choosing no longer to use the term

## Appendix 4

### History of the Emerging-Church Movement

The emerging-church movement is a radical movement that is attempting to be indigenous to postmodern culture. Taking lessons from philosophers and responding to their modern predecessors, some followers of the emerging-church movement are intent on rethinking theology and all want to realign the practice of Christians, both in the church and the marketplace, with Jesus's mission as portrayed in the Gospels. Although combining ancient and contemporary practices into their worship settings defines them externally, the essence of the emerging-church movement lies at a deeper worldview level. Raising no little ire among some conservative Christians, followers of the emerging church have been categorized as post-evangelical, post-conservative, and post-liberal. Conflicting definitions of words such as "emerging" and "emergent" have left most people confused about, beliefs, values, characteristics, practices, and views.

Most, if not all, emerging churches claim to be missional churches. The purpose of this appendix is to explore the history of the emerging-church movement with the goal of bringing clarity to questions about beliefs, values, characteristics, practices, and views. Particular attention is given to clarifying terminological differences between "emerging," "emergent," and "Emergent Village." Finally, "Origins," a loosely organized remnant of the emerging-church movement, is introduced.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> I refer to Origins as an emerging-church organization because their target audience is primarily of a postmodern mindset. However, because of the confusion about the terms "emerging" and "emergent," they are choosing no longer to use the term

An exact date when the emerging-church movement began cannot be pinpointed.<sup>2</sup>

The emerging-church movement had its infancy as a response from Christians with postmodern tendencies to their modern counterparts. The movement has taken place in numerous geographical locations and has been expressed in various ways long before most people recognized what was occurring within a broader cultural context. Early traits appeared in the Jesus Movement, the Christian component of the hippie counter-culture of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Growing out of the Jesus Movement were the “New Paradigm” churches such as Willow Creek Community Church, Calvary Chapel, Vineyard Christian Fellowship, and Saddleback Community Church. These and many other churches were attempts at being culturally relevant to a new generation of young people, the Baby-Boomers. Because Baby-Boomers were abandoning their parents’ mainline Protestant churches and the population of unchurched youth was steadily increasing, these churches tried to be “seeker friendly.”<sup>3</sup> Joshua Moritz writes,

---

“emerging.” For the purpose of this dissertation, I am using the term to provide consistency in the development of the emerging-church story.

<sup>2</sup> Some followers of the emerging church prefer to use the word “conversation” rather than “movement.”

<sup>3</sup> Donald E. Miller, *Reinventing American Protestantism: Christianity in the New Millennium* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 1997, en toto. Miller labeled the New Paradigm as the “Second Reformation,” 11. See also Stephen R. Warner, “‘New Paradigm’ Churches: Lessons from California,” *Christian Century*, 114, no. 33 (November, 2007): 1,085, <http://0-web.ebscohost.com.catalog.georgefox.edu/ehost/detail?vid=10&hid=116&sid=7f75f276-18ef-4d16-9928-1ddbdd714b18%40sessionmgr104&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWZWhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#db=aph&AN=9712124014> (accessed March 17, 2009).

Focusing on 'consumer demand by tuning their worship and organizational style' to a new generation's culture, New Paradigm churches stripped the service of anything that might be perceived as a barrier to the uninitiated: traditional Christian symbols like robes, crosses, and altars; images and rituals; and formal theological language. Instead they aimed for a casual, relaxed, and experience-focused atmosphere that features emotionally charged contemporary musical worship, Bible-centered teaching and preaching, and extensive lay-led home-based small group ministries where personal style and individual opinion is prized.<sup>4</sup>

Placed in their cultural context, the Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) are the last generation to be raised in the modern culture.

Typically, preceding most cultural changes is a feeling of discontent with the way things were in prior generations. For the Gen-Xers, a term used interchangeably with Baby Busters (born between 1965 and 1980) and Millennials, also called Gen-Yers (born between 1977 and 1994), feelings of discontent would be no exception. They too sought new alternatives that would be more stylistically relevant. What the Boomers, Gen-Xers, and Millennials did not know was that many of the cultural conflicts experienced in the late 1960s and early 1970s were more than mere generation-gap issues. The late Boomers were experiencing a cataclysmic shift of cultures as many who were discontent ripped themselves from the arms of modernity and willingly leaped into the more comfortable

---

<sup>4</sup> Joshua M. Moritz, "Beyond Strategy, Toward the Kingdom of God: The Post-critical Reconstructionist Mission of the Emerging-Church," *The Journal of Theology Dialog* 47, no. 1 (February 24, 2008): 29, <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/119389701/abstract> (accessed March 17, 2009). In addition to Moritz's description of New Paradigm Churches, Eddie Gibbs and Ryan Bolger add, "They built churches for one cultural subtype of Boomer, the suburban consumer of religion who is also a corporate achiever in his or her vocational life." Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger, *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 21.

arms of postmodernity. Gen-Xers and Millennials would awaken to find themselves in a new world and felt homeless in the churches that once nurtured them.<sup>5</sup> Many modern churches tried to fill the gap by creating “youth worship” and “youth church” with contemporary worship styles, thinking this would satisfy their needs and lure back the prodigals. Their efforts did not work. The church exit doors were open and youth poured out through them. Not surprisingly, church leaders did not realize that something bigger was taking place, something no one in 500 years had experienced. The western world was undergoing a cultural shift. Those affected by postmodernism would require a new paradigm if they were again to connect with Jesus, Christianity, and the church.

### **Begininings of the Emerging-Church Movement**

In 1986, Dieter Zander began a new church called NewSong in Pomona, California. His target audience was Gen-Xers, whom he called “betweeners,” those between high school and being married.<sup>6</sup> Over the next few years, other leaders (Chris Seay, University Baptist church in Waco, Texas; Mark Driscoll, Mars Hill church in

---

<sup>5</sup> Joshua Moritz holds that Boomers and their New Paradigm Churches were “‘generational’ and had nothing to do with marked changes in philosophy or theology” (Moritz, “Beyond Strategy, Toward the Kingdom of God”), 29. He later states on page 30 that “In contrast to the New Paradigm Churches, the Emerging-Church movement has come into being expressly in relation to the paradigm shift from modernity to post-modernity, and in response to the question of how the Church is to bridge the hermeneutical gap by taking postmodernism seriously.” I would posit that the hippie movement and the Jesus Movement were more than generational-gap issues, but rather the results of societal forces resulting from cultural shifting from modernity to postmodernity.

<sup>6</sup> NewSong Church, “NewSong History,” <http://newsongsd.org/253217.ihtml> (accessed March 17, 2009).

Seattle, Washington; Dan Kimball, Vintage Faith church in Santa Cruz, California; and Erwin McManus, Mosaic in Los Angeles, California) started churches with similar target audiences.<sup>7</sup> Also popular were “church-within-a-church” scenarios where a mother church supported a branch church whose worship style was more contemporary with the Gen-X audience. Some of the more successful church-within-a-church formats were Tuesday Night Live, later called Next Level, in Denver, Colorado; Axis in South Barrington, Illinois; Graceland in Santa Cruz, California; and Warehouse 242 in Charlotte, South Carolina.<sup>8</sup>

InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and Leighton Ford Ministries cosponsored a conference in 1993 on ministering to Gen-Xers, having been inspired by books by George Barna,<sup>9</sup> Kevin Ford,<sup>10</sup> Tim Celek, Dieter Zander,<sup>11</sup> and others who focused on

---

<sup>7</sup> There is a vibrant branch of Emergent in Europe. The most prominent leader in the U.K. is Andrew Jones, one of the original Emergent leaders. The movement has expanded to Australia and New Zealand as well. The scope of this paper is limited to the emerging movement in the United States. Gibbs and Bolger, in their book, *Emerging Churches*, do a very thorough job covering the emerging churches in the U.K.

<sup>8</sup> Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 30. In addition to surveying American emerging churches, Gibbs and Bolger also include those in the United Kingdom. See p. 31 for early emerging churches in the United Kingdom. Dan Kimball started as a “Church-within-a-Church” youth minister at Graceland but later left to start Vintage Faith Church.

<sup>9</sup> George Barna, *Baby Busters: The Disillusioned Generation* (Chicago: Northfield Publishing, 1994).

<sup>10</sup> Kevin Graham Ford, *Jesus for a New Generation: Putting the Gospel in the Language of Gen-Xers* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1995).

<sup>11</sup> Tim Celek and Dieter Zander, *Inside the Soul of a New Generation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996).

reaching the Gen-X audience. Young Leaders Network, led by Bob Buford, held a conference called “Gen-X 1.0” in 1996 in Colorado Springs, Colorado and another called “Gen-X 2.0” in 1997 in Mt. Hermon, California.<sup>12</sup> If there is a beginning point for the emerging-church movement, it is the Gen-X 2.0 conference. During this conference, a glimmer of light began to reveal that what was happening was more than a generation gap. Rather than continuing the discussion of ways to reach Gen-Xers, the primary conversation turned to postmodernity.<sup>13</sup> At this conference, Mark Driscoll, planter and lead pastor of Mars Hill church in Seattle, Washington, introduced and described the emerging postmodern culture.<sup>14</sup> For the next year, the leaders discussed, read the writings of missiologists such as Roland Allen, David Bosch, and Lesslie Newbigin,<sup>15</sup> and promoted this new agenda of postmodernism across America. Leadership Network hired

---

<sup>12</sup> Dan Kimball, “Origin of the Terms ‘Emerging’ and ‘Emergent’ Church, Part 1,” Kimball Blog, entry posted April 20, 2006, [http://www.dankimball.com/vintage\\_faith/2006/04/origin\\_of\\_the\\_t.html](http://www.dankimball.com/vintage_faith/2006/04/origin_of_the_t.html) (accessed March 18, 2009). Dan Kimball, “Origin of the Terms ‘Emerging’ and ‘Emergent’ Church, Part 2,” Kimball Blog, entry posted April 21, 2006 [http://www.dankimball.com/vintage\\_faith/2006/04/origins\\_of\\_the\\_.html](http://www.dankimball.com/vintage_faith/2006/04/origins_of_the_.html) (accessed March 18, 2009).

<sup>13</sup> Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 32.

<sup>14</sup> In his book, *The Radical Reformation*, Driscoll takes credit for launching the emerging church movement. Mark Driscoll, *The Radical Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 15-16.

<sup>15</sup> Mark Driscoll, “A Pastoral Perspective on the Emergent Church,” *Criswell Theological Review* 3, no. 2 (Spring 2006): 88, <http://criswell.files.wordpress.com/2006/03/3,2%20APastoralPerspectiveontheEmergentChurch%5BDriscoll%5D.PDF> (accessed March 19, 2009).

Doug Pagitt to lead the way.<sup>16</sup> At the following year's Re-evaluation Conference, led by Pagitt, the topic once again was postmodernism. The conclusion was that feelings of internal dissatisfaction with churches were not indications of a generation gap as previously thought, but rather philosophical differences resulting from postmodern influences.<sup>17</sup> During this time, Young Leaders Network changed its name, becoming the Terra Nova Theological Project.<sup>18</sup> Later, the name changed again to "Emergent," or as it is sometimes called, "Emergent Village." Leaders such as Brian McLaren, Chris Seay, Tony Jones, Mark Driscoll, and Dan Kimball became part of the leadership group.<sup>19</sup>

During these formative years, descriptive terminology that labeled and described what was happening was in flux. Dan Kimball says he first heard the term "emerging church" around 1997 when he noticed the subtitle for the Leadership Network

---

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>17</sup> Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 32.

<sup>18</sup> Brian McLaren, the president of the Terra Nova Project at the time, describes the Terra Nova Project (spelled "Terranova," in McLaren's book) as "an initiative to explore how Christian faith will reconfigure in the postmodern matrix." The Terra Nova Project was a division of Leadership Network whose mission was to equip young Christian leaders. Brian D. McLaren, *A New Kind of Christian: a Tale of Two Friends on a Spiritual Journey* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001), x. Leadership Network is still active. See their website at [www.leadnet.org](http://www.leadnet.org).

<sup>19</sup> Mark Driscoll was part of the emerging-church movement, Leadership Network, and Emergent from 1995 to 2001. He dropped out because of theological differences. "Driscoll began to suspect that Emergent leaders wanted to revise Christian orthodoxy. Since then, Emergent Village has advocated an experimental, open approach to theology." Collin Hansen, "Pastor Provocateur," *Christianity Today* 51, 9 (September 21, 2007): 2, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/september/30.44.html?start=1> (accessed March 19, 2009).



organization being referred to as “Advanced Scouts for the Emerging church.”<sup>20</sup> Adding to the list of synonyms for Gen-Xers, Baby Busters, and postmoderns came the name “emerging-church.” Kimball writes,

... the word “emerging-church” seemed safer and more non-age specific and began being used more and more, not only for churches and ministries focused on younger generation, but for churches focusing on the fact the culture was really changing and shifting. So the term moved past a generational focus to more of a cultural focus.

The term was mainly being used at that time around 1997-2001 (for the most part among the average church leader who began adopting the term), to describe churches focusing on ministry methodology for emerging generations and what was different than the Boomer church, the seeker church and traditional churches.<sup>21</sup>

In 1999, Karen Ward, pastor of Church of the Apostles in Seattle, Washington, was working at the headquarters for the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America in Chicago, Illinois. To help her think through her feelings of frustration with church, she created a website called “www.emergingchurch.org.”<sup>22</sup>

Four books that helped move the conversation forward in a significant way were Richard Middleton and Brian Walsh’s *Truth is Stranger Than It Used to Be* (1995),<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Kimball, “Origin of the Terms ‘Emerging’ and ‘Emergent’ Church, Part 1.”

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. The term “emerging-church” was commonly used in Leadership Network circles in 2001 when Kimball was writing his book, *The Emerging-Church*. Published in 2003, his book helped propel the term “emerging-church” into popularity. Dan Kimball, *The Emerging-Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003).

<sup>22</sup> Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 30. Gibbs and Bolger seem to suggest that Ward independently came up with the term “emerging church.”

<sup>23</sup> J. Richard Middleton and Brian J. Walsh, *Truth Is Stranger Than It Used to Be: Biblical Faith in a Postmodern Age* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1995).

Brian McLaren's *Reinventing Your Church* (1998),<sup>24</sup> Brian McLaren's *A New Kind of Christian: a Tale of Two Friends on a Spiritual Journey* (2001),<sup>25</sup> and Dan Kimball's *The Emerging-Church, Vintage Christianity for New Generations* (2003).<sup>26</sup> Middleton and Walsh's book and McLaren's first book, *Reinventing Your Church*, primarily helped those affiliated with Leadership Network and Emergent Village to think about postmodern culture and its impact on churches. It was McLaren's second book, *A New Kind of Christian*, a tale of a schoolteacher named Neo and a pastor struggling to find meaning and success in ministry, which provided an introduction for those standing on the outside yet wanting to learn about postmodernism and the emerging-church. *A New Kind of Christian* also catapulted Brian McLaren to center-stage as a theologian for postmoderns and a writer for the emerging-church movement. Two years later, Kimball's book found the same popularity as McLaren's book.

The definition of "emerging" can be summarized as a broad, general term used to describe the church's "coming forth" or rising up from or out of "concealment" or "obscurity."<sup>27</sup> Kimball states how he defined "emerging-church" in its early days of use:

For me, the term "the emerging-church" simply meant churches who were focusing on the mission of Jesus and thinking about the Kingdom in our emerging culture. It meant churches who were rethinking what it means to be the church in

---

<sup>24</sup> Brian D. McLaren, *Reinventing Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998).

<sup>25</sup> McLaren, *A New Kind of Christian*.

<sup>26</sup> Kimball, *The Emerging-Church*.

<sup>27</sup> Dictionary.com, s.v. "emerging," <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/emerging> (accessed March 18, 2009).

our emerging culture. It meant churches who were “being the church” instead of “going to church” in our emerging culture.<sup>28</sup>

Scot McKnight, Professor of Religious Studies at North Park University in Chicago, Illinois, and an avid student of the emerging-church movement, writes, “Emerging is the wider, informal, global, ecclesial (church-centered) focus of the movement.”<sup>29</sup>

### **The Emergent Organization**

The term “Emergent” is an official organization that began on June 21, 2001. Until December 2008, Tony Jones directed Emergent. Leadership Network had formed a theology think-tank as part of Young Leaders Network, of which Tony Jones, Brian McLaren, Doug Pagitt, Mark Driscoll, Chris Seay, and others were a part.<sup>30</sup> When this theology group disbanded, Jones, McLaren, and Pagitt met in Minneapolis, Minnesota on June 21, 2001 to reform and start a new group. These men and several others who joined them via a telephone conference call, settled on the new name, “Emergent,” and

---

<sup>28</sup> Kimball, “Origin of the Terms ‘Emerging’ and ‘Emergent’ Church, Part 1,” 3.

<sup>29</sup> Scot McKnight, “Five Streams of the Emerging-Church,” *Christianity Today* 51, no. 2 (February 2007): 1-2, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/february/11.35.html> (accessed March 18, 2009).

<sup>30</sup> Other names associated with Emergent are Tim Keel, Karen Ward, Phyllis Tickle, Peter Rollins, and Sally Morgenthaler. In the United Kingdom, Jason Clark leads Emergent. Andrew Jones, also known as “Tall Skinny Kiwi,” was also a popular Emergent leader of the New Zealand movement until recently.

purchased the domain name “emergentvillage.org” on the same day.<sup>31</sup> “Emergent” is most often referred to as “Emergent Village.”

Closely associated with Emergent is Youth Specialties. On June 22, 2001, Dan Kimball and Mark Oestreicher from Youth Specialties flew to Minneapolis to meet with McLaren, Jones, and Pagitt. It was decided that Youth Specialties would collaborate with Emergent to publish books and develop events that educate and promote the emerging-church agenda. The “emergentYS” line was created and the “Emergent Convention” was attached to the National Pastors’ Convention that was already hosted by Youth Specialties.<sup>32</sup>

The term “emerging” continued to be a broad and general term used to talk about what it means to be an emerging, postmodern culture and how churches should live out the mission of Jesus within that culture. At the same time, the “Emergent” organization took on the task of rethinking theology through postmodern lenses. Because of the similarity of terms, the meanings of “emerging” and “emergent” have caused confusion for almost everyone who looks at the “emerging–emergent” phenomenon.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> Kimball, “Origin of the Terms ‘Emerging’ and ‘Emergent’ Church, Part 2,” 1.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Kimball writes, “Tony [Jones] told me that when he, Brian [McLaren] and Doug [Pagitt] were thinking of names for the theology group that was formally the Leadership Network—they were not trying to play off the ‘emerging-Church’ term. Tony said that naming it ‘emergent’ was because the word is defined as the ‘coming to the surface’ of new organic life beginning and reproducing and that was why they chose the word.” Kimball, “Origin of the Terms ‘Emerging’ and ‘Emergent’ Church, Part 2,” 2.

## Defining the Emerging-Church Movement

Defining the emerging church is difficult and vague at best. Eddie Gibbs and Ryan Bolger provide a frequently used definition:

Emerging-churches are communities that practice the way of Jesus within postmodern cultures. This definition encompasses nine practices. Emerging-churches (1) identify with the life of Jesus (2) transform the secular realm, and (3) live highly communal lives. Because of these three activities, they (4) welcome the stranger, (5) serve with generosity (6) participate as producers (7) create as created beings (8) lead as a body, and (9) take part in spiritual activities.<sup>34</sup>

Aaron Flores says, "There is currently no clear, distinct definition or descriptive label for the emerging-church."<sup>35</sup> In a public response to D. A. Carson's critical review of the emerging-church, several key leaders of Emergent write, "... there is no single theologian or spokesperson for the emergent conversation." Rather than being a "movement," they say, "We have repeatedly defined emergent as a conversation and friendship, and neither implies unanimity—nor even necessarily consensus—of opinion."<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 44-5.

<sup>35</sup> Aaron Flores, "An Exploration of the Emerging-Church in the United States: The Missiological Intent and Potential Implications of the Future" (master's thesis, Vanguard University, 2005), 7.

<sup>36</sup> Tony Jones, Doug Pagitt, Spencer Burke, Brian McLaren, Dan Kimball, Andrew Jones, and Chris Seay, "Our Response to Critics of Emergent," Emergent-us blog, entry posted June 2, 2005, [http://emergent-us.typepad.com/emergentus/2005/06/official\\_respon.html](http://emergent-us.typepad.com/emergentus/2005/06/official_respon.html) (accessed March 20, 2009). See also D. A. Carson, *Becoming Conversant With the Emerging-Church: Understanding a Movement and Its Implications* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005).

The emerging-church is a subcultural mix of Christians influenced by postmodernism coming together from a wide range of denominations, traditions, backgrounds, practices, and theological positions. The driving force seems to be frustration with modern theology, methodology, and expressions of Christianity. Joshua Moritz states,

Rooted in a common disillusionment with modernist dualisms of spirit/matter, mind/body, and sacred/secular, dissatisfied with the Enlightenment's absolutist distinctions between fact and value and faith and science, and frustrated with a quick, easy, par, and ready-made doctrinal answers to life's most difficult questions, the Emerging-church seeks another way forward through the postmodern wilderness of doubt, despair, deconstruction, and disintegration.<sup>37</sup>

In the following sections, three approaches to defining the emerging-church movement will be reviewed: Scot McKnight's "five streams," Eddie Gibbs and Ryan Bolger's "three core practices," and Ed Stetzer's "three categories." From a combination of these three approaches, it is possible at least to determine the mission, values, prominent characteristics, and underlying mindset of the emerging-church movement.

### Five Streams of the Emerging-Church Movement

Scot McKnight, in his article, "Five Streams of the Emerging-Church,"<sup>38</sup> makes an important contribution to understanding and defining the emerging-church movement. Each of the "five streams" or characteristics deserves a closer examination.

---

<sup>37</sup> Moritz, "Beyond Strategy," 28.

<sup>38</sup> McKnight, "Five Streams." McKnight makes a distinction between "emerging movement" and "Emergent Village" and points out that the five streams are characteristics of the "emerging movement" and are not specific to those who are within or outside the "Emergent Village" group.

**(1) Prophetic (or at least provocative):** Emerging Christians, responding to their frustrations with the modern church, feel that the church needs to change. By prophetic, McKnight means that emerging Christians project themselves into the future in the way they live, "living as if that change has already occurred."<sup>39</sup> His subtitle "provocative" refers to the emerging Christians' use of exaggeration. Taking their lead from the prophets who at times spoke in exaggeration, they too feel free to use exaggeration in their rhetoric. An example is found in Hosea: "For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings" (Hos. 6:6). The exaggeration is that God does not forbid temple worship, nor does he forbid sacrifice. Hosea engages here in deliberate overstatement. In like manner, Brian McLaren writes, "Often I don't think Jesus would be caught dead as a Christian, were he physically here today .... Generally, I don't think Christians would like Jesus if he showed up today as he did 2,000 years ago. In fact, I think we'd call him a heretic and plot to kill him, too."<sup>40</sup> McLaren admits that his statement is an exaggeration.<sup>41</sup>

**(2) Postmodernism:** The most common characteristic of postmodernity is the denial of or relativity of truth. However, McKnight points out that postmodernity cannot

---

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>40</sup> Brian McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy: Why I Am a Missional, Evangelical, Post/Protestant, Liberal/Conservative, Mystical/Poetic, Biblical, Charismatic/Contemplative, Fundamentalist/Calvinist, Anabaptist/Anglican, Methodist, Catholic, Green, Incarnational, Depressed-Yet-Hopeful, Emergent, Unfinished Christian* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004):79-80.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 80.

be reduced to such a simple description. Rather, he says that postmodernity is “the collapse of inherited metanarratives (overarching explanations of life) like those of science or Marxism.”<sup>42</sup>

McKnight points out that there are some elements of postmodernity that “evangelical Christians” can embrace, such as Augustinian epistemology.<sup>43</sup> Just because one is postmodern does not mean that objective understanding, in this case of “gospel truths,” must be abandoned. There has been a tendency for some postmoderns to reject all of what is modern, but this, says McKnight, would be a mistake. Most postmoderns do not tend to reject everything modern: “they don’t deny that Jesus Christ is truth, and they don’t deny the Bible is truth.”<sup>44</sup> Yet, it is that group which does deny absolute truth that is most often heard. McKnight quotes Doug Pagitt as saying, “Some will minister *to* postmoderns, others *with* postmoderns, and still others *as* postmoderns.”<sup>45</sup> Those who minister *to* postmoderns are moderns who sense a duty to save the postmoderns from their dilemma of relativism and epistemological confusion. Moderns who minister *with*

---

<sup>42</sup> McKnight, “Five Streams,” 2. The first to propose the abandonment of metanarrative by postmoderns was Lyotard. Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984) xxiii-iv. For a thorough study of Lyotard, see James K. Smith, *Who’s Afraid of Postmodernism? Taking Derrida, Lyotard, and Foucault to Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006) especially his chapter entitled, “Where Have all the Metanarratives Gone,” pages 59-79.

<sup>43</sup> McKnight, “Five Streams,” 2. I assume McKnight means that “Protestant evangelical Christians” are modern.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.



postmoderns accept postmodernity and go work alongside postmoderns. Most people in the emerging-church movement fit into one of the first two categories. Few minister as true postmoderns to postmoderns.

**(3) Praxis-oriented:** Praxis, the way faith is practiced, is the characteristic of the emerging-church movement that is most visible and, at times, receives the most criticism. At the heart of the emerging-church movement are efforts to form a new ecclesiology. These efforts are primarily focused on three areas: worship, orthopraxy (lifestyle), and missional living.

**Worship:** Emerging Christians prefer many ancient styles of worship and create ancient settings that accommodate their preferences. Dan Kimball, in *The Emerging Church*, calls this ancient setting and style “vintage faith,” creating environments with candles, dim lights, incense, stained glass, etc., all in an attempt to create a more experiential worship setting.<sup>46</sup>

**Orthopraxy:** By orthopraxy, McKnight means emerging Christians emphasize living a Christ-like lifestyle. Perhaps different from most modern Christians, emerging Christians believe that “*how a person lives* is more important than *what he or she believes*.”<sup>47</sup> Reacting to the moral failures of many modern Christians, emerging Christians conclude that what one “believes” does not necessarily carry over to the “way”

---

<sup>46</sup> Kimball, *The Emerging Church*, 134. See also Dan Kimball, *Emerging Worship: Creating Worship Gatherings for New Generations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004). Kimball includes an excellent list of resources on pp. 232-38.

<sup>47</sup> McKnight, “Five Streams,” 4.

one lives. Emerging Christians still believe that what one believes about Jesus matters, but as McKnight points out, “the focus has shifted.”<sup>48</sup>

Missional: Of the three areas of praxis, missional is most important. As McKnight states, “the emerging movement becomes missional by participating with God, in the redemptive work of God in this world.”<sup>49</sup> To participate with God in his redemptive work, one must be a part of the community of faith, the church, where God’s redemptive work is done. Just as Jesus was interested in those who were poor, sick, marginalized, and excluded from religion and society, so should Christians. Jesus said that he will judge us according to how we treat the least of these and that the wise man is the one who practices the words of Jesus.<sup>50</sup> The emerging church is not trying to alter the message of Jesus; rather it is trying to live out the intentions of Jesus.

---

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. McKnight points out examples such as “faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead” James 2:17 and “by their fruit you will recognize them,” Matt. 7:20. Noteworthy is Gibbs and Bolger’s first of nine practices, “identify with the life of Jesus.” Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 44.

<sup>49</sup> McKnight, “Five Streams,” 4. For a biblical “missional” reference, see 2 Cor. 5:18-20. All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.”

<sup>50</sup> “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. <sup>26</sup> But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. <sup>27</sup> The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash” (Matt. 7:24-7). See also Matt. 25:31-46.

**(4) Post-evangelical:** The emerging movement is often described as being post-evangelical or postmodern evangelical. Because the term “evangelical” carries with it diverse meaning, it is difficult to know all the ways emerging Christians view their position regarding evangelicalism. McKnight provides two characteristics that seem to be broad enough generalizations to include most emerging Christians.

The first characteristic is *post-systematic theology*. The emerging movement is often distrustful of systematic theology, saying that God did not reveal himself in a systematic theology but rather in a narrative. Following their postmodern tendencies, narrative cannot completely reveal “Absolute Truth,” that is, God.<sup>51</sup> Emerging Christians like to talk and think about theology but do not accept any one theology as right. In his book, *A Generous Orthodoxy*,<sup>52</sup> Brian McLaren writes,

We see modernity with its absolutisms and colonialisms and totalitarianisms as a kind of static dream, a desire to abide in timeless abstractions and extract humanity from the ongoing flow of history and emergence ....

In Christian theology, this anti-emergent thinking is expressed in systematic theologies that claim (overtly, covertly, or unconsciously) to have final orthodoxy nailed down, freeze-dried, and shrink wrapped forever.<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> McKnight, “Five Streams,” 4.

<sup>52</sup> McLaren, *Generous Orthodoxy*, 286.

<sup>53</sup> McKnight, “Five Streams,” 5. I observed reflections of McKnight’s post-evangelical, post-systematic theology stream at *The Great Emergence Conference* I attended in December 2008. One of the main points of discussion was the deconstruction of theologies of the past two millennia. Numerous times, I heard the line, “We need a new theology.”

Therefore, for those who are part of the emergent movement, theology is open for discussion as well as for change. Postmodern epistemology is therefore free from systematic boundaries.

One of the reasons proponents of the emerging movement have such a fluid theology is because that is how they want it. Moderns have an established theology; postmoderns do not want one.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, influenced by postmodern philosophers such as Derrida,<sup>55</sup> they have no theological methodology. For modernists who hold to a foundationalist epistemology, the deconstruction and rejection of their established systematic theology by postmoderns is difficult to accept.<sup>56</sup>

The second characteristic of being post-evangelical is what McKnight refers to as “In versus Out.”<sup>57</sup> Most evangelicals are evangelistic, at least in principle and some even in practice. However, many in the emerging movement are skeptical about evangelism, because for them, the distinction between who is a Christian and who is not is nebulous. Orthopraxy, how one lives, is what counts most and what one believes, in this case, regarding who is a Christian and who is not, is secondary.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> Moritz, *Beyond Strategy*, 32.

<sup>55</sup> Jean Derrida, *Afterward: Toward an Ethic of Discussion* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 111-54.

<sup>56</sup> Carson, *Becoming Conversant With the Emerging-Church*, is the most popular Protestant evangelical opposition.

<sup>57</sup> McKnight, “Five Streams,” 4.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. McKnight is critical of the emerging movement regarding evangelism. He writes, “This emerging ambivalence about who is in and who is out creates a serious

**(5) Political:** The fifth stream in the emerging movement is its emphasis on politics. McKnight believe most emerging Christians lean politically to the left and are Democrats. The reason lies primarily with the Democratic Party's positions on social justice and caring for those who are poor.<sup>59</sup>

### Three Practices of the Emerging-Church Movement

Eddie Gibbs and Ryan Bolger identify three core practices and six derivative practices of emerging churches.<sup>60</sup> The three core practices of emerging churches are: (1) identify with the life of Jesus, (2) transform the secular realm, and (3) live highly communal lives. The six derivatives are, they (1) welcome the stranger, (2) serve with

---

problem for evangelism. The emerging movement is not known for it, but I wish it were. Unless you proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ, there is no good news at all—and if there is no Good News, then there is no Christianity, emerging or evangelical.”

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 3. Here again, McKnight casts another caution. “Sometimes, however, when I look at emerging politics, I see Walter Rauschenbusch, the architect of the Social Gospel. Without trying to deny the spiritual gospel, he led his followers into the Social Gospel. The results were devastating for mainline Christianity’s ability to summon sinners to personal conversion. The results were also devastating for evangelical Christianity, which has itself struggled to maintain a proper balance.”

<sup>60</sup> Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 43-5. Extremely valuable are their interviews which are reported on in appendix A, pp. 239-338 and their research methodology in appendix B, pp. 329-35. Gibbs and Bolger do not consider Mark Driscoll, Chris Seay, and Erwin McManus’s churches as emerging churches because they only change “surface techniques” rather than actually adapting to postmodern culture (p. 30). Gibbs and Bolger provide a thorough picture of emerging churches in the United Kingdom, a focus beyond that of this paper.

generosity, (3) participate as producers, (4) create as created beings, (5) lead as a body, and (6) take part in spiritual activities.<sup>61</sup>

Beginning in 2000, Gibbs and Bolger, both faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary, set out in search of “anyone and everything associated with innovative churches.”<sup>62</sup> Eventually, they narrowed their sample to forty to fifty churches in the United States and forty to fifty churches in the United Kingdom.<sup>63</sup> Criteria for identifying churches considered emerging include the following:

- They are located in the Western world, those countries that fully experienced modernity and are now embroiled in a cultural transition.
- They consider themselves Christians or Christ followers.
- They consider themselves a congregation or a mission.
- They meet at least monthly.
- Their group or movement is less than twenty years old.
- They maintain a strong corporate expression outside the church walls through the forms of popular culture, such as club culture with DJs, dance, imagery, pub culture, artistic communities, or youth culture ... groups that are strongly committed to engaging the outside culture rather than confining themselves to evangelical, contemporary Christian subcultures.

---

<sup>61</sup> I have examined the three core practices presented by Gibbs and Bolger in their book *Emerging Churches*. For a thorough discussion of the six derivatives, refer to pp. 117-215 of their book.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 331.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 234.

- Their gatherings employ a multisensory communication approach, utilizing visual arts, movement, symbols, incense, icons, candles, DJ music, etc.<sup>64</sup>

**(1) Identify with the Life of Jesus:** Central to the emerging church and

emerging-church leaders is Jesus and the kingdom of God that he announced, began, and calls his followers to be a part.<sup>65</sup> Emergent-church followers identify the heart of Jesus's message as his proclamation that the kingdom is present and his invitation is for everyone to be a part in his redemption of the world. John Hammett points out that emerging-church leaders "give less emphasis to the death of Christ, forgiveness of sins, and eternal life, and focus instead on inviting people to follow Jesus and be on mission with him in the world."<sup>66</sup>

Following Jesus means to carry out the *missio Dei*. For the emerging church, that means living as a follower of Jesus contextually within postmodern culture as opposed to living separately. Emerging-church leaders characterize modern churches as wrongly focusing on the epistles rather than the Gospels and Jesus. They also recognize that there are different views of Jesus. They prefer to emphasize the parts of Jesus's life where Jesus focuses on the marginalized and oppressed. Karen Ward states, "The cultural view

---

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 330.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>66</sup> John S. Hammett, review of *Emerging-Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures*, by Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 49, no. 4 (December 2006):3. [http://www.aacconsulting.com/cpmts/uploaded\\_files/EcclesiasticalGuidelinesFAQ.pdf](http://www.aacconsulting.com/cpmts/uploaded_files/EcclesiasticalGuidelinesFAQ.pdf) (accessed March 20, 2009). This article is also located in *The Study of Evangelism: Exploring a Missional Practice of the Church*, eds. Paul W. Chilcote and Lacey C. Warner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 59-72.

'gets' that Jesus was for the marginalized and the oppressed. It is only the church that needs to be trained to look at Jesus again."<sup>67</sup>

A survey done in Seattle validates the emerging-church leaders' views with results that revealed ninety-five percent of the unchurched community have a positive view of Jesus; it is the church that is distasteful due to its not living out the teachings of Jesus.<sup>68</sup> Following Jesus's model, Gibbs and Bolger describe the direction of emerging churches as having "changed from a centripetal (flowing in) [referring to the modern church model] to a centrifugal (flowing out) dynamic. This in turn led to a shift in emphasis from attracting crowds to equipping, dispersing, and multiplying Christ followers as a central function of the church." Thus, emerging churches see being missional, that is, going out to serve those outside the church environment, to be crucial to carrying out God's kingdom mission.

Going a step further in their theology of the kingdom, emerging churches see the kingdom of God taking place "outside existing religious structures."<sup>69</sup> Summarizing Dieter Zander's views on identifying with the life of Jesus, Gibbs and Bolger write,

---

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 48. "As Barry Taylor of Sanctuary (Santa Monica, CA) confided, 'I needed to stop reading Paul for awhile and instead focus on Jesus.'"

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 48. Cf. Dan Kimball, *They Like Jesus but Not the Church: Insights from Emerging Generations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007).

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 51. Gibbs and Bolger quote Dave Sutton, of New Duffryn Community Church in Newport, U.K. "I don't take God into somewhere but find God where he is and join him." This terminology is almost word for word from Henry Blackaby and Claude King's *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God* (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 1990), 15.



Zander finds that, for most Christians, to live like Jesus is foreign to their ears. Instead, most have a church club checklist:

- give a little
- do a little
- pay membership dues
- get a “going to heaven” ticket (through accepting the gospel)

In this scenario, the gospel is informing how we die. Instead, the gospel ought to be about how we live! A lot of church people don’t know the relationship between the gospel of Jesus and how we are to live. They are threatened by reevaluating that. Their belief is that they try to believe in Jesus so that when they die they get to go to heaven. Populating heaven is the main part of the gospel. Instead, the gospel is about being increasingly alive to God in the world. It is concerned with bringing heaven to earth.<sup>70</sup>

**(2) Transforming Secular Places:** Unlike church-within-a-church situations

where changes are made to make worship services more relevant to youth, emerging-church changes are rooted in epistemology.<sup>71</sup> Modernism relegated anything sacred to the church, thus creating a secular/sacred dualism, especially regarding secular space, places without God. However, as stated in the above discussion about “identifying with the life of Jesus,” for the emerging church, there are no places where God’s kingdom does not

---

<sup>70</sup> Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 55. I should note here that, typical of postmodernism’s rejection of modernism, emerging church leaders follow suit with the regular practice of explaining why they do things the way they do by comparing the failures they see in modern churches. It is interesting how they paint all modern churches with such a broad brush. One might easily conclude that emerging-church leaders think they are the first in at least 200 years to give Jesus the supreme place, to see the kingdom of God as a “going outside the camp” calling, and to live missionally as a way of life is for every Christian.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 66f. They also point out that with modernism other dualisms were brought into the church that had not been an issue before, such as body versus mind and spirit, faith versus reason, and power versus love. With postmodernism’s deconstruction of modernism, the emerging church is attempting to return to a premodern era when there were no dualisms.

exist. Therefore, all places are sacred. Emerging churches look back to a time before modernism when there was no separation between sacred and secular, when everything had a spiritual dimension. Psalm 24:1 weaves its way through the emerging church: “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it.” Again, all spaces are sacred.

In addition to the deconstruction of secular/sacred spaces is the deconstruction of linear, systematized reality. With modernism came worship services that flow from beginning to end in a logical and linear fashion. However, emerging churches prefer a non-linear, non-logical form of worship where there is no need for a planned end because worship continues into the next moment of time and place. Furthermore, because linearity is only one of many narratives, truth is always open to question and interpretation. The best way to determine truth is in the context of community.<sup>72</sup>

Putting this postmodern epistemology into practical outcomes in worship settings, emerging churches feel comfortable bringing “secular” music as well as “secular” art, video, etc. into worship services. Because of the nonlinearity, Gibbs and Bolger describe a worship event in the following way:

In a service, there may be music or a video playing in the background, artwork to observe, or active participation in an activity even while the “teaching” is going on. The multiple events themselves may function as the teaching or as the experience of Scripture. Sometimes these many activities are internally consistent, sometimes not.<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 68-9. Regarding secular music in a worship service, they write, “For alternative worshipers ..., music is Christian when they glorify God with it, *not* because of the lyrics or because a Christian wrote it or played it. All things can be made holy as they are given to God, whether “secular” or not. Postmodern people construct their world

Those in emerging churches see the discussions about traditional versus contemporary worship styles as a separate discussion from those regarding worship styles within their own circles. They see both traditional and contemporary as modern.<sup>74</sup> Emerging churches contend they are closely tied to local culture and their worship styles are based on people's lives.

Desiring to create experiential worship, emerging worshipers create ancient, "vintage" environments. These environments often involve candles, incense, dance, cross symbols, etc. In some emerging worship services, the music band and vocalists are not up front, but rather, "as in the club-culture, the music surrounds the worshipers."<sup>75</sup>

**(3) Living as Community:** Gibbs and Bolger's third practice that characterizes emerging churches is living as community.<sup>76</sup> Whereas modern churches often see community, or church, as a place where people gather to encourage one another for a short period on Sunday morning, emerging churches see community as people who are in close relationship with one another at all times. Emerging churches' ecclesiology comes from their understanding of the gospel and the mission Jesus calls them to live out. Gibbs and Bolger point out the key question asked by emerging churches: "... what kind of

---

in nontextual and nonlinear ways, and the gospel must be embodied and therefore communicated in that same manner to be faithful in mission" p. 71.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 77. Gibbs and Bolger also label contemporary and traditional worship styles as "secular," a confusing label considering the following discussion, which labels everything as being sacred and nothing as secular.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 89.

community life must exist so that the church has the ability to practice the way of Jesus in every sphere of society?”<sup>77</sup> To live the way of Jesus requires placing the kingdom before the church; a “radical dismantling of the church is understandable given the nature of the kingdom.”<sup>78</sup>

### Three Categories of the Emerging-Church Movement

Although the Emergent Village was the first recognized category of the emerging-church movement, it was not long before other categories (groups) were either identified or developed. Due either to differences in theology or differences in the form and structure of the church, at least three new categories of the emerging-church movement developed. Ed Stetzer has identified and labeled these three categories of emerging churches and emerging-church leaders as Relevantants, Reconstructionists, and Revisionists.<sup>79</sup>

**(1) Relevantants:** Relevantants are theologically conservative Christians who are trying to update their worship, music, preaching styles, church structures, and outreach to be more relevant to the emerging postmodern culture. Relevantants often bring in new styles of music, introduce candles, stained glass, various art and other décor that create an ancient worship atmosphere, yet hold tightly to orthodox evangelical theology. Their primary

---

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ed Stetzer, “First Person: Understanding the Emerging-Church,” *Baptist Press* (January 6, 2006), <http://www.sbc Baptist Press.org/bpnews.asp?ID=22406> (accessed March 20, 2009): 1.

interest is communicating and experiencing their beliefs in a way that relates to their generation. Relevants can be found in alternative worship services (church-within-a-church settings), evangelical churches, and some church plants. There is no interest in reevaluating theology, ecclesiology, and epistemology.<sup>80</sup>

**(2) Reconstructionists:** The Reconstructionists<sup>81</sup> see the current structure and form of church as irrelevant and ineffective. Their preferences are “house churches,” “incarnational churches,” “Life Transformation” groups,<sup>82</sup> and monastic-like communities. Frustrated by decades of seeker-friendly, seeker-sensitive, purpose-driven churches being ineffective at bringing about life transformation in their attendees, they are challenging modern church forms and structures and opting for church forms and

---

<sup>80</sup> Mark Driscoll places Dan Kimball and Rob Bell into the Relevant category. He states, “The common critique of Relevants is that they are doing little more than conducting ‘cool Church’ for hip young Christians and are not seeing significant conversion growth.” It is likely that Kimball and Bell would not agree with Driscoll. Kimball says his journey from seeker-sensitive to post-seeker-sensitive was driven by lack of success reaching non-Christian youth and young adults with seeker-sensitive services. Kimball, *The Emerging-Church*, 36.

Among the Relevants there is also a growing group of outreach-minded Reformed Relevants, who look to men like John Piper, Tim Keller, and D. A. Carson for theological direction (Mark Driscoll, “The Pastoral Perspective,” 90). Kimball’s books *The Emerging-Church*, and *Emerging Worship* describe worship settings that are commonly used in emerging churches in varying degrees including Relevant churches. See also Sally Morgenthauer, *Worship Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999) and Doug Pagitt, *Reimagining Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003).

<sup>81</sup> Mark Driscoll modifies Stetzer’s categories by eliminating “reconstructionists” and replacing it with “Relevant-reformists” in “Four Lanes of the Emerging-Church,” *YouTube* (September 26, 2006), <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=58fgkfS6E-0> (accessed March 20, 2009).

<sup>82</sup> Stetzer, “First Person,” 1.

structures modeled after biblical forms and structures. Buildings, budgets, programs, centralized leadership, and paid preachers may not be necessary. Communal living and conservative theology are necessary. Rather than waiting for the unchurched to come to them, they either go into the community or live in the community. Reconstructionist leaders include Neil Cole,<sup>83</sup> Michael Frost,<sup>84</sup> Alan Hirsch,<sup>85</sup> and Shane Claiborne.<sup>86</sup>

**(3) Revisionists:** The third category of the emerging-church movement is the Revisionists. Revisionists agree with Relevantists or Reformers. However, the questions they are asking indicate that they are theologically liberal. Revisionists question the validity of long-established Christian doctrines such as Scripture, Trinity, Substitutionary Atonement, Hell, and others.<sup>87</sup> Revisionists often are leaders of the Emergent Village such as Tony Jones, Doug Pagitt, and Brian McLaren, though it would be a mistake to

---

<sup>83</sup> Life Transformation Groups are small groups that study the Bible and hold one another accountable to live out the Christian life on a daily basis. Neil Cole, *Cultivating a Life for God* (Grand Rapids: Churchsmart Resources, 1999).

<sup>84</sup> Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st Century Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003).

<sup>85</sup> Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006). Hirsch says that small house churches are the future of the church, looking much like the church of the twentieth century in China.

<sup>86</sup> The most well known monastic community is "The Simple Way" in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, led by Shane Claiborne. Shane and his church live in a rundown inner-city community. Shane Claiborne, *The Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006).

<sup>87</sup> Stetzer, "First Person," 2. See also Driscoll's thorough critique of eight doctrines that Revisionists are questioning. Driscoll, *The Pastoral Perspective*, 90-3.

categorize everyone in Emergent Village as revisionists.<sup>88</sup> D. A. Carson, in his *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging-Church: Understanding a Movement and Its Implications*, provides the most recognized critique of the emerging-church movement, particularly focusing on the works of Brian McLaren and Steve Chalke.<sup>89</sup>

### Origins

Discontent with the direction the emerging-church movement is going—particularly regarding the liberal theology of Emergent—Dan Kimball, Erwin McManus, Eric Bryant, and David Gibbons met in the early fall of 2008 to discuss ways to bring other like-minded, theologically conservative, emerging church adherents together. By January 2009, they had a website.<sup>90</sup> Their official kickoff was held April 22, 2009, the day before the Catalyst West Conference started in Irvine, California.<sup>91</sup> Since that time,

---

<sup>88</sup> Driscoll, “Four Lanes of the Emerging-Church.”

<sup>89</sup> D. A. Carson, *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging-Church*. No doubt the primary weakness of Carson’s work is that he critiques two works by Emergent Village leaders and projects their views onto the entire Emergent Village. The two works he evaluates are McLaren, *A New Kind of Christian*, and Steve Chalke and Alan Mann, *The Lost Message of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003). See also John MacArthur, *The Truth War* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007) and the excellent discussion by John Hammett of the theology of the emerging-church movement in his paper “An Ecclesiological Assessment of the Emerging-Church,” [http://www.aacconsulting.com/cpmts/uploaded\\_files/EcclesiasticalGuidelinesFAQ.pdf](http://www.aacconsulting.com/cpmts/uploaded_files/EcclesiasticalGuidelinesFAQ.pdf) (accessed March 20, 2009).

<sup>90</sup> “The Origin Project,” [www.originproject.org](http://www.originproject.org) (accessed January 10, 2009).

<sup>91</sup> A new name was to be chosen from suggestions made at the website and announced at the Origins conference April 22, 2009. However, it was determined by the Origins leadership team that “Origins” was a better name than any of those suggested. Thus, the name “Origins” was chosen to be the official name for the organization. Erwin

Origins continues to meet annually prior to the Catalyst West conference; however, there seem to be little connectivity among attenders other than a common missional approach to their theology and ecclesiology.

From the early days of the emerging-church movement, the journey into postmodernity has not been an easy one, nor has it been without controversy. Perhaps one of the emerging-church leaders' greatest strengths was to leave the conversation completely open, even to questions regarding the truth and authority of both God and Scripture. At the same time, perhaps leaving the conversation so open was also its greatest mistake and thus its greatest weakness. While there was freedom to ask questions of all that was held sacred by modern Christians, just asking the questions brought on waves of criticism and attacks and even some accusations of heresy. The confusion in terminology of "emergent" and "emerging" and the division of followers of the emerging movement into categories of positions and beliefs has led many emerging-church movement leaders to discontinue using the terms "emerging" and "emergent."<sup>92</sup>

---

McManus and Eric Bryant from Mosaic, Dave Gibbons and John Park from Newsong Church, and Dan Kimball and Josh Fox from Vintage Faith Church are the Core Developers. The Creative Team is Mark Batterson, Amena Brown, Adam Edgerly, Naeem Fazal, Margaret Feinberg, Skye Jethani, Bryan Loritts, Rick McKinley, Scot McKnight, and Jeanne Stevens. [www.originproject.org](http://www.originproject.org).

<sup>92</sup> Uri Scaramanga, "R.I.P. Emerging-Church," Scaramanga entry posted September 19, 2008, [http://blog.christianitytoday.com/outofur/archives/2008/09/rip\\_emerging\\_ch.html](http://blog.christianitytoday.com/outofur/archives/2008/09/rip_emerging_ch.html) (accessed March 20, 2009). Scaramanga forecasts an end of the emerging-Church as leaders such as Kimball and Andrew Jones drop the term "emerging" from their vocabularies.



What is the future of the emerging-church movement? Uri Scaramanga, in his blog “R.I.P. Emerging-Church,”<sup>93</sup> says that the movement is dead because the terms “emerging” and “emergent” are being put to rest. Andrew Jones, one of the emergent church’s most prominent leaders, has written extensively in his blog over the past year and a half voicing the same sentiments as Scaramanga.<sup>94</sup> With Tony Jones having resigned as the leader of Emergent Village, and no indication that someone else is picking up the baton, their future is definitely in question. Interestingly, little is being written about Emergent Village or the emerging-church movement. What was once a hotly discussed and debated movement is now quiet.

Wisely, the leaders of Origins chose to build on the orthodox theological cornerstones of the Nicene Creed, the Apostles Creed, and the Lausanne Covenant.<sup>95</sup> They also plan to emphasize evangelism and living missionally. As Scaramanga states, “They appear to have learned from the emerging-church’s mistake—define purpose and

---

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Andrew Jones, “Emerging Church Movement (1989-2009),” Tall Skinny Kiwi, entry posted December 29, 2009, <http://tallskinnykiwi.typepad.com/tallskinnykiwi/2009/12/emerging-church-movement-1989---2009.html> (accessed December 15, 2010).

<sup>95</sup> The Origins website has the following statement regarding their theological basis: “We share a commitment to the gospel of Jesus’ life, death, resurrection and the power of the Holy Spirit, to the Scriptures as God’s inspired Word, to the truths of the historical, orthodox creeds (e.g., The Nicene Creed, The Apostles’ Creed), to the missional vision of the Lausanne Covenant and as we serve on this mission to see others understand God’s dream for them as they follow Jesus” [http://originsproject.org/?page\\_id=67](http://originsproject.org/?page_id=67) (accessed February 24, 2009).

doctrine early so your identity doesn't get hijacked."<sup>96</sup> However, like its predecessor, Emergent Village, Origins seems to be fading as well. Occasional blogs on the Origins website and a small annual conference are the only activity.

---

<sup>96</sup> Uri Scaramanga, "R.I.P. Emerging-Church," 2.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- "1966 World Congress on Evangelism." The Lausanne Movement.  
<http://www.lausanne.org/berlin-1966/overview.html> (accessed September 24, 2010).
- The American Church Research Project, <http://www.theamericanChurch.org> (accessed June 24, 2010).
- Anderson, Ray S. *An Emergent Theology for Emerging Churches*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006.
- "Archives: 1966 World Congress on Evangelism." Billy Graham Center.  
<http://www.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/berlin66.htm> (accessed September 24, 2010)
- Awad, Najeeb G. "Should We Dispense With Sola Scriptura? Scripture, Tradition and Postmodern Theology." *Dialog* 47, no 1 (Spring 2008): 46-49.
- Aylesworth, Gary. "Postmodernism." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2008 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.).  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2008/entries/postmodernism/> (accessed November 18, 2008).
- Bainton, Roland. *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1950.
- Barna, George. *Baby Busters: The Disillusioned Generation*. Chicago: Northfield Publishing, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Revolution: Finding Vibrant Faith beyond the Walls of the Sanctuary*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2005.
- The Barna Group. "Spirituality May Be Hot in America, But 76 Million Adults Never Attend Church." March 20, 2006. <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/158-spirituality-may-be-hot-in-america-but-76-million-adults-never-attend-Church> (accessed June 24, 2010).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "UnChurched Population Nears 100 Million in the U.S." March 19, 2007.  
<http://www.barna.org/faith-spirituality/107-unChurched-population-nears-100-million-in-the-us> (accessed June 24, 2010).
- Barrett, Lois Y. *Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.

- Barrett, Lois, Inagrace T. Dietterich, George R. Hunsberger, Alan J. Roxburgh, and Craig Van Gelder. *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*. Edited by Darrell L. Guder. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Bateman, Bradley W. "The Social Gospel and the Progressive Era." Divining America, TeacherServe, National Humanities Center.  
<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/twenty/tkeyinfo/socGospel.htm>  
 (accessed September 20, 2010).
- Bauder, Kevin T. "Directions in Evangelicalism, Part 5: The Gospel According to Walt." *In the Nick of Time*. January 23, 2009.  
<http://www.centraleseminary.edu/publications/Nick/Nick201.html> (accessed September 20, 2010).
- Bauer, Walter. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3rd ed. Revised and edited by Frederick W. Danker. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- Belcher, Jim. *Deep Church: A Third Way Beyond Emerging and Traditional*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2009.
- Bennett, John. *Northern Plainsmen: Adaptive Strategy and Agrarian Life*. Chicago: Aldine, 1969.
- Berger, Peter and Thomas Luckmann. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise In the Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Anchor Books, 1966.
- Berkhof, Herdrikus. *Christ, the Meaning of History*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1966.
- Blackaby, Henry T. and Claude V. King. *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God*. Nashville: LifeWay Press, 1990.
- Boer, Harry R. *Pentecost and Missions*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961.
- Bosch, David J. "The Structure of Mission: An Exposition of Matthew 28:16-20." In *Exploring Church Growth*, edited by William R. Shenk, 218-48. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Evangelism: Theological Currents and Cross-Currents Today." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 11, no. 2 (July 1987): 98-103.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in the Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991.
- Brisco, Brad. "History of Missional Church – Part I." The Missional Church Network. Entry posted October 26, 2009. <http://missionalChurchnetwork.com/history-of-the-missional-Church-part-i/> (accessed October 14, 2010).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Missional: More Than a Buzz Word." The Missional Church Network. Entry posted June 23, 2008. <http://missionalChurchnetwork.com/history-of-the-missional-Church-part-i/> (accessed October 2, 2010).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Missional Sending Language." The Missional Church Network. <http://missionalChurchnetwork.com/missional-sending-language/> (accessed March 18, 2010).
- Brown, Peter. *The Rise of Christendom*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003.
- Brownson, James V. *Speaking the Truth in Love: New Testament Resources for a Missional Hermeneutic*. Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 1998.
- Brownson, James V., Inagrace T. Dietterich, Barry A. Harvey, and Charles C. West. *StormFront: The Good News of God*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.
- Cahoone, Lawrence E. ed. *From Modernism to Postmodernism: An Anthology*. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1996.
- "Cape Town 2010." The Lausanne Movement. <http://www.lausanne.org/cape-town-2010> (accessed September 25, 2010).
- Carey, William. *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*. Leicester: Ann Ireland, 1792, <http://www.wmcarey.edu/carey/Enquiry/anenquiry.pdf> (accessed April 9, 2010).
- Carson, D. A. *Becoming Conversant With the Emerging-Church: Understanding a Movement and Its Implications*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005.
- Celek, Tim and Dieter Zander. *Inside the Soul of a New Generation*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.
- Chester, Tim and Steve Timmis. *Total Church: A Radical Reshaping Around Gospel and Community*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2008.

- Chilcote, Paul W. and Lacey C. Warner, eds. *The Study of Evangelism: Exploring a Missional Practice of the Church*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008.
- Claiborne, Shane. *The Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.
- Clapp, Rodney. *A Peculiar People*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996.
- Claydon, David. "Aims of Mission: Missio Dei." In *Dictionary of Mission Theology: Evangelical Foundations*, ed. John Corrie, Samuel Escobar, and Wilbert Shenk, 16-17. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007.
- Cole, Neil. *Cultivating a Life for God*. Grand Rapids: Churchsmart Resources, 1999.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005.
- Congdon David W. "Why I think Missional Theology is the Future of Theology, or, Why I think Theology Must Become Missional or Perish." *Theology and Praxis*. August 2008. <http://theologyandpraxis.wordpress.com/papers-and-discussion/august-2008-why-i-think-series-missional-theology-is-the-future-of-theology-by-dw-congdon/> (accessed August 21, 2010).
- Costas, Orlando E. "Evangelism and the Gospel of Salvation." *International Review of Mission* 63, no. 1 (January 1974): 24-37.
- Cranes W. H. "Editorial." *International Review of Mission* 58 (April 1969): 141-44.
- Darwin, Charles. *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, vol. 49 of *The Great Books of the Western World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952.
- Derrida, Jean. *Afterward: Toward an Ethic of Discussion*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988.
- Derrida, Jacques. *On Grammatology*. G. Spivak, trans. Baltimore: John's Hopkins University Press, 1976.
- Descartes, René. *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641), trans. Elizabeth Haldane and G.R.T. Ross, in *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, vi. I. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.
- DeYoung, Kevin and Ted Kluck. *Why We're Not Emergent: By Two Guys Who Should Be*. Chicago: Moody Press, 2008.

- Dodson, Jonathan. "How Not to be a Missional Church: Evangelistic-Driven." *Resurgence*. Entry posted November 18, 2009.  
<http://theresurgence.com/2009/11/18/how-not-to-be-a-missionalChurch-evangelism-driven> (accessed September 18, 2010).
- Dollar, Harold E. "Apostle, Apostles." In *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*. Edited by A. Scott Moreau, Harold Netland, and Charles Van Engen. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000.
- Dornen, Gary. *Soul in Society: The Making and Renewal of Social Christianity*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.
- Driscoll, Mark. *The Radical Reformation*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "A Pastoral Perspective on the Emergent Church." *Criswell Theological Review* 3, no. 2 (Spring 2006): 88  
<http://criswell.files.wordpress.com/2006/03/3,2%20APastoralPerspectiveontheEmergentChurch%5BDriscoll%5D.PDF> (accessed March 19, 2009).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Four Lanes of the Emerging-Church." *YouTube*. September 26, 2006,  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=58fgkfS6E-0> (accessed March 20, 2009).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Radical Reformism: Reaching Out without Selling Out*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004.
- DuBose, Francis M. *God Who Sends: A Fresh Quest for Biblical Mission*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1983.
- Engelsviken, Tormod. "Missio Dei: The Understanding and Misunderstanding of a Theological Concept in European Churches and Missiology." *International Review of Mission* 92, issue 367 (October 2003): 481-97.  
<http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?hid=113&sid=74088a2e-9522-466b-9b34-d15f46a0fb90%40sessionmgr104&vid=4> (accessed November 12, 2010).
- "*Evangelii Nuntiandi*: Apostolic Exhortation of His Holiness Pope Paul VI to the Episcopate, to the Clergy and to All the Faithful of the Entire World." *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*. Letter to Roman Catholics, Rome, Italy, December 8, 1975).  
[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/paul\\_vi/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_exh\\_19751208\\_evangelii-nuntiandi\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi_en.html) (accessed September 25, 2010).
- Ferreira, Johan. *Johannine Ecclesiology*. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic, 1998.

- Fitch, David and Gary Nelson. "Missional: Does the Word Still Have Value?" Church Leadership for the Twenty-first Century. *Vimeo*. August 2010.  
<http://vimeo.com/15676775> (accessed December 12, 2010).
- Flores, Aaron. "An Exploration of the Emerging-Church in the United States: The Missiological Intent and Potential Implications of the Future." Master's thesis, Vanguard University, 2005.
- Ford, Kevin Graham. *Jesus for a New Generation: Putting the Gospel in the Language of Gen-Xers*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1995.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage, 1977.
- Frost, Michael and Alan Hirsch. *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003.
- "The Fundamentals: A Testimony of Truth."  
<http://www.xmission.com/~fidelis/volume1/volume1.php> (accessed September 20, 2010).
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*, Garret Barden and John Cumming, trans. And ed. New York: Crossroad, 1984.
- Galli, Mark. "Speak the Gospel; Use Deeds When Necessary." *Christianity Today* 53 (May 2009) 2, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2009/mayweb-only/120-42.0.html> (accessed January 3, 2011):1-2.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Francis of Assisi and His World*. Grand Rapids: InterVarsity Press, 2002.
- Gibbs, Eddie and Ryan K. Bolger. *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005.
- "Global Congresses." The Lausanne Movement. "<http://www.lausanne.org/global-congresses.html>" (accessed September 24, 2010).
- Goheen, Michael W. "'As the Father Has Sent Me, I Am Sending You': J. E. Lesslie Newbigin's Missionary Ecclesiology." PhD diss., Utrecht University, 2000, <http://igitur-archive.library.uu.nl/dissertations/1947080/full.pdf> (accessed November 12, 2009).



- \_\_\_\_\_. "As the Father Has Sent Me, I Am Sending You: J. E. Lesslie Newbigin's Missionary Ecclesiology." *International Review of Mission* 91, no. 362 (July 2002): 354-69.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Missional Calling of Believers in the World: Lesslie Newbigin's Contribution." In *A Scandalous Prophet: The Way of Mission after Newbigin*. Edited by Thomas F. Foust. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Missional Church: Ecclesiological Discussion in the Gospel and Our Culture Network in North America." *Missiology* 30, no. 4 (October 2002): 479-90.
- Gonzalez, Justo L. *A History of Christian Thought: From the Protestant Reformation to the Twentieth Century*. Vol. 3. Nashville: Abingdon, 1975.
- "The Gospel in a Culture of False Gods." John Mark Ministries.  
<http://jmm.aaa.net.au/articles/4.htm> (accessed December 5, 2009).
- The Greek New Testament*. 4th rev. ed. Edited by Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce Metzger. London: United Bible Societies, 1993.
- Grenz, Stanley J. *A Primer on Postmodernism*. San Francisco: Eerdmans, 1996.
- Guder, Darrell L., ed. *The Continuing Conversion of the Church*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed. *The Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1998.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Missional Hermeneutics: The Missional Authority of Scripture." *Mission Focus: Annual Review* 15 (2007): 106-21.  
[http://www.ambs.edu/files/documents/news-and-publications/publications/mf/Mission\\_Focus\\_Vol\\_15.pdf](http://www.ambs.edu/files/documents/news-and-publications/publications/mf/Mission_Focus_Vol_15.pdf) (accessed December 28, 2010).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Missional Hermeneutics: The Missional Vocation of the Congregation and How Scripture Shapes the Calling." *Mission Focus: Annual Review* 15 (2007): 125-42. [http://www.ambs.edu/files/documents/news-and-publications/publications/mf/Mission\\_Focus\\_Vol\\_15.pdf](http://www.ambs.edu/files/documents/news-and-publications/publications/mf/Mission_Focus_Vol_15.pdf) (accessed December 28, 2010).

- Hadaway, Kirk and Penny L. Marler. "How Many Americans Attend Worship Each Week? An Alternative Approach to Measurement." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 44, no. 3 (September 2005): 307-22.
- Hall, Douglas John. *The End of Christendom and the Future of Christianity*. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity, 1996.
- Hammett, John S. "An Ecclesiastical Assessment of the Emerging Church Movement." (June 2, 2005): 1-11.  
<http://ateam.blogware.com/AnEcclesiologicalAssessment.Hammett.pdf> (accessed March 19, 2009).
- \_\_\_\_\_. Review of *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures*, by Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger. *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 49, no. 4 (December 2006): 867-72.
- Hansen, Collin. "Pastor Provocateur." *Christianity Today* 51, 9 (September 21, 2007): 2.  
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/september/30.44.html?start=1>  
 (accessed March 19, 2009).
- Harvey, John D. "Mission in Jesus' Teaching." In *Mission in the New Testament: An Evangelical Approach*. Edited by William J. Larkin Jr. and Joel William. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998.
- Hinson-Hasty, Elizabeth. "The Future of the Social Gospel." *Theology Today* 66 (2009): 60-73
- Hirsch, Alan. *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006.
- Hirsch, Alan and Darryn Altclass. *The Forgotten Ways Handbook: A Practical Guide for Developing Missional Churches*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2009.
- "History of World Mission and Evangelism." World Council of Churches.  
<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/who-are-we/organization-structure/consultative-bodies/world-mission-and-evangelism/history.html> (accessed February 22, 2010).
- Hobbs, Walter C. "Method." In *Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness*. Edited by Lois Y. Barrett. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.
- Hoedemaker, L. A. "The People of God and the Ends of the Earth." In *Missiology: An Ecumenical Introduction*, ed. A. Camps, L.A. Hoedemaker, and M.R. Spindler. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.

Hoekendijk, Johannes Christian. *The Church Inside Out*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966.

The Holy Bible: New International Version. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984.

Hunsberger, George R. *Bearing the Witness of the Spirit: Lesslie Newbigin's Theology of Cultural Plurality*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Is There Biblical Warrant for Evangelism?" *Interpretation* 48, no. 2. April 1994: 131-44.  
<http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=4&hid=101&sid=472c3996-757f-402c-9a87-cd51ae6eaf8b%40sessionmgr104> (accessed March 3, 2010). Also published in

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Newbigin Gauntlet: Developing a Domestic Missiology for North America." In *The Missional Church and Denominations: Helping Congregations Develop a Missional Identity*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Proposals for a Missional Hermeneutic: Mapping the Conversation." The Gospel and Our Culture Network.  
<http://www.gocn.org/resources/articles/proposals-missional-hermeneutic-mapping-conversation> (accessed December 28, 2010).

Hunsberger, George R., and Craig Van Gelder, eds. *The Church between Gospel and Culture: The Emerging Mission in North America*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.

"International Missionary Archives, 1910-1961." IDC Publishers.  
<http://www.idc.nl/?id=138> (accessed February 27, 2010).

Jones, E. Stanley. *The Unshakable Kingdom and the Unchanging Person*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972.

Jones, Tony, Doug Pagitt, Spencer Burke, Brian McLaren, Dan Kimball, Andrew Jones, and Chris Seay. "Our Response to Critics of Emergent." Emergent-us blog, entry posted June 2, 2005. [http://emergent-us.typepad.com/emergentus/2005/06/official\\_respon.html](http://emergent-us.typepad.com/emergentus/2005/06/official_respon.html) (accessed March 20, 2009).

Jongeneel, Jan. A. B. ed. *Philosophy, Science and Theology of Mission in the 19th and 20th Centuries: A Missiological Encyclopedia (Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity)*. Part 1. New York: Peter Lang, 1997.

- Kaiser, Walter C., Jr. *Mission in the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. J.M.D. Meiklejohn. New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1900.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, trans. James W. Ellington. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1977.
- Kennedy, John W. "The Most Diverse Gathering." *Christianity Today* (September, 2010): 66-7.
- Kimball, Dan. *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Emerging Worship: Creating Worship Gatherings for New Generations*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Origin of the Terms 'Emerging' and 'Emergent' Church, Part 1." Kimball Blog, entry posted April 20, 2006.  
[http://www.dankimball.com/vintage\\_faith/2006/04/origin\\_of\\_the\\_t.html](http://www.dankimball.com/vintage_faith/2006/04/origin_of_the_t.html)  
 (accessed March 18, 2009).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Origin of the Terms 'Emerging' and 'Emergent' Church, Part 2." Kimball Blog, entry posted April 21, 2006.  
[http://www.dankimball.com/vintage\\_faith/2006/04/origin\\_of\\_the\\_t.html](http://www.dankimball.com/vintage_faith/2006/04/origin_of_the_t.html)  
 (accessed March 18, 2009).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *They Like Jesus But Not the Church: Insights from Emerging Generations*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007.
- Kinnaman, David and Gabe Lyons. *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity ... And Why it Matters*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007.
- Kirby, Alan. "The Death of Postmodernism and Beyond," *Philosophy Now* (September/October 2008). <http://www.philosophynow.org/issue58/58kirby.htm>  
 (accessed November 27, 2008).
- Kirk, J. Andrew. *Mission Under Scrutiny: Confronting Contemporary Challenges*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006.
- Kittel, G., and G. Friedrich, eds. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Translated by G. W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–1976.

- Knox, Alan. "An Emergent Theology for Emerging Churches." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 49, 4 (December 2006): 883.
- Koehler, Ludwig and Walter Baumgartner. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Translated and edited by M. E. J. Richardson (Leiden: 1999).
- Kosmin, Barry A. and Egon Mayer. "American Religious Identification Survey 2001," The Graduate Center of the City University of New York (December, 2001), [http://www.gc.cuny.edu/faculty/research\\_briefs/aris.pdf](http://www.gc.cuny.edu/faculty/research_briefs/aris.pdf) (accessed June 24, 2010).
- Kostenberger, Andreas J.. "The Two Johannine Verbs for Sending: A Study of John's Use of Words with Reference to General Linguistic Theory." In *Studies on John and Gender: A Decade of Scholarship*. New York: P. Lang, 2001.
- Kostenberger, Andreas J., and Peter T. O'Brien. *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*. New Studies in Biblical Theology 11. Edited by D. A. Carson. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001.
- Kottak, Conrad Phillip. *Cultural Anthropology*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994.
- Krell, David Farrell. ed. *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, trans. Frank A Capuzzi, with J. Glenn Gray and David Farrell Krell. New York: Harper and Row, 1977.
- Lane, William Craig. "God Is Not Dead Yet: How Current Philosophers Argue for His Existence." *Christianity Today* (July 2008): 22-27, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2008/july/13.22.html> (accessed August 25, 2008).
- Latourette, K.S. "Pre-Nineteenth Century Evangelism: Its Outstanding Characteristics," and "Distinctive Features of the Protestant Missionary Methods of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries." *Evangelism*. International Missionary Council. London: Oxford University Press, 1939): 1-31.
- "Lausanne I: The International Congress on Evangelization." The Lausanne Movement. <http://www.lausanne.org/lausanne-1974/lausanne-1974.html> (accessed September 25, 2010).
- "The Lausanne Covenant." The Lausanne Movement. <http://www.lausanne.org/covenant> (accessed September 24, 2010).

- Leicester, Mal. "Postmodernism and Continuing Education," *International Journal of Lifelong Learning* 19, no. 1 (January 2000): 80.  
<http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=1&hid=13&sid=22fc9402-7105-408b-b3f9-78cdfe70521f%40sessionmgr9&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#d b=tfh&AN=3818449> (accessed November 27, 2008).
- Lienesch, Michael. *In the Beginning: Fundamentalism, The Scopes Trial, and the Making of the Antievolution Movement*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007.
- Little, Christopher R. "In Response to 'The Future of Evangelicals in Mission.'" In *MissionShift: Global Mission Issues in the Third Millennium*, edited by David J. Hesselgrave and Ed Stetzer, 203-22. Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2010.
- Livingston, James C. *Modern Christian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Vatican II*. New York: Macmillan, 1971.
- Locke, John. *The Reasonableness of Christianity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958.
- Lyotard, Jean-Francois. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Translated by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.
- MacIlvaine, Rodney. "Selected Case Studies in How Senior Leaders Cultivate Missional Change in Contemporary Churches." DMin. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 2009, [http://www.okwu.edu/assets/institute/Dissertation -- How Missional Leaders Cultivate Change.pdf](http://www.okwu.edu/assets/institute/Dissertation_-_How_Missional_Leaders_Cultivate_Change.pdf) (accessed December 2, 2010).
- MacIntyre, Alasdair. *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* South Bend, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988.
- Mangum, Todd R. "How is 'Missional Christianity' Any Different from 'the Social Gospel.'" Lecture, Eastern Regional Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Capital Bible Seminary, Lanham, MD, March 27, 2009.  
[http://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:AnjWlOZvj6kJ:www.shapevine.com/action/file/download%3Ffile\\_guid%3D9638+missional+social+Gospel&hl=en&gl=us&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEESgNjwQtT-1Ig4jLvlgQRgTdH57wEcKrY-D73D7bdTnxCDVwCpQuY5rZxyhvlS5O57w-bGj49fNNTq0yIeljYUqnQ-OXbfzmD3M6tHndSBfBbLLG6MBGFoLDOSyANjF-5X2qWoJv&sig=AHIEtbRm9WINEwn6xHebTGwMi\\_5VKEwY1g](http://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:AnjWlOZvj6kJ:www.shapevine.com/action/file/download%3Ffile_guid%3D9638+missional+social+Gospel&hl=en&gl=us&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEESgNjwQtT-1Ig4jLvlgQRgTdH57wEcKrY-D73D7bdTnxCDVwCpQuY5rZxyhvlS5O57w-bGj49fNNTq0yIeljYUqnQ-OXbfzmD3M6tHndSBfBbLLG6MBGFoLDOSyANjF-5X2qWoJv&sig=AHIEtbRm9WINEwn6xHebTGwMi_5VKEwY1g) (accessed August 21, 2010).

Marsden, George M. *Fundamentalism and American Culture*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991.

McCallum, Dennis. *The Death of Truth: What's Wrong with Multiculturalism, the Rejection of Reason and the New Postmodern Diversity*. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1996.

\_\_\_\_\_. Review of "The Gospel in a Pluralist Society and the 'Emergent Church' Movement," by Lesslie Newbigin, November, 2005, <http://www.xenos.org/essays/newbigin-emergent.htm#sdendnoe21sym> (accessed December 6, 2009).

McDaniel, Ferris L. "Mission in the Old Testament." In *Mission in the New Testament: An Evangelical Approach*. Edited by William J. Larkin Jr. and Joel William. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998.

McIntosh, John A. "Missio Dei." In *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*. Edited by A. Scott Moreau, Harold Netland, and Charles Van Engen. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000.

McKnight, Scot. "The 8 Marks of a Robust Gospel." *Christianity Today*. The Christian Vision Project (March 8, 2008) [http://www.christianvisionproject.com/2008/03/the\\_8\\_marks\\_of\\_a\\_robust\\_Gospel.html](http://www.christianvisionproject.com/2008/03/the_8_marks_of_a_robust_Gospel.html) (accessed September 20, 2010).

\_\_\_\_\_. "Five Streams of the Emerging-Church." *Christianity Today* (February 2007) <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/February/11:35.html> (accessed September 7, 2008).

McLaren, Brian D. *Reinventing Your Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998.

\_\_\_\_\_. *A New Kind of Christian: a Tale of Two Friends on a Spiritual Journey*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001.

\_\_\_\_\_. *A Generous Orthodoxy: Why I Am a Missional, Evangelical, Post/Protestant, Liberal/Conservative, Mystical/Poetic, Biblical, Charismatic/Contemplative, Fundamentalist/Calvinist, Anabaptist/Anglican, Methodist, Catholic, Green, Incarnational, Depressed-yet-Hopeful, Emergent, Unfinished Christian*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004.

- McNeal, Reggie. *Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the Church*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009.
- Meacham, Jon. "The End of Christian America." *Newsweek*, April 4, 2009.  
<http://www.newsweek.com/2009/04/03/the-end-of-christian-america.html>  
 (accessed September 23, 2010).
- Meeks, Wayne A. *The Origins of Christian Morality: The First Two Centuries*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1993.
- Middleton, J. Richard and Brian J. Walsh. *Truth Is Stranger Than It Used to Be: Biblical Faith in a Postmodern Age*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1995.
- Miller, Donald E. *Reinventing American Protestantism: Christianity in the New Millennium*. Berkley: University of California Press, 1997.
- "Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation." Conference on World Mission and Evangelism.  
<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/other-meetings/mission-and-evangelism/athens-2005-documents/preparatory-paper-n-10-mission-as-ministry-of-reconciliation.html> (accessed February 27, 2010).
- Montefiore, Hugh. *The Gospel and Contemporary Culture*. Herndon, VA: Cassell Academic, 1992.
- Moore, George Foot. *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of the Tannaim*. Vol. 1. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927, 1955.
- Morganthaler, Sally. *Worship Evangelism*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999.
- Moritz, Joshua M. "Beyond Strategy, Toward the Kingdom of God: The Post-critical Reconstructionist Mission of the Emerging-Church." *The Journal of Theology Dialog* 47, no. 1 (February 24, 2008): 29.  
<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/119389701/abstract> (accessed March 17, 2009).
- Moulton, W. F. and A. S. Geden, eds., *A Concordance to the Greek New Testament*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963.
- Moulton, James Hope, and George Milligan. *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1930. Reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974.



- "Nature and Mission of the Church." World Council of Churches.  
<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/programmes/unity-mission-evangelism-and-spirituality/called-to-be-the-one-Church/nature-and-mission-of-the-Church.html>  
 (accessed February 27, 2010).
- Neill, Stephen. *Creative Tension*. London: Edinburgh House, 1959.
- Niebuhr, Reinhold. "Walter Rauschenbusch in Historical Perspective." Edited by Ronald H. Stone. *Faith and Politics*. New York: George Braziller, 1968.
- Niebuhr, Richard H. *Christ and Culture*. New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1951.
- Nelson, Janet R. "Walter Rauschenbusch and the Social Gospel: A Hopeful Theology for the Twenty-first Century Economy." *CrossCurrents* 59, issue 4 (December 2009): 442-56.
- "Newbigin.net: Online Bibliography."  
[http://www.newbigin.net/searches%5Cnew\\_only.cfm](http://www.newbigin.net/searches%5Cnew_only.cfm) (accessed November 28, 2009).
- Newbigin, Lesslie. *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Gospel and Our Culture: A Response to Elaine Graham and Heather Walton." *Modern Churchman* 34, 2 (1992): 1-10
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Household of God: Lectures on the Nature of the Church*. London: SCM, 1953.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Mission in Christ's Way*. Geneva: WCC, 1987.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *One Body, One Gospel, One World: The Christian Mission Today*. London and New York: International Missionary Council, 1959.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Open Secret: Introduction to a Theology of Mission*. Edited by Eleanor Jackson. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Open Secret: Sketches for a Missionary Theology*. London: SPCK, 1978.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Other Side of 1984: Questions for the Churches*. Geneva: WCCC Publishers, 1983.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Relevance of Trinitarian Doctrine for Today's Mission*. CWME Study Pamphlet No.2. London: Edinburgh House Press, 1963.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Trinitarian Doctrine for Today's Mission*. Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1998.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Unfinished Agenda: An Autobiography*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985. Rev. ed. St. Andrews: St. Andrews Press, 1993.
- "NewSong History." NewSong Church. <http://newsongsd.org/253217.ihtml> (accessed March 17, 2009).
- "The Origin Project." [www.originproject.org](http://www.originproject.org) (accessed January 10, 2009).
- Oswalt, John N. "The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66." In *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*. Edited by R. K. Harrison and Robert L. Hubbard Jr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Pagitt, Doug. *Reimagining Spiritual Formation*. Grand Rapids, Zondervan: 2003.
- Peters, George W. *A Biblical Theology of Missions*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1972.
- Polanyi, Michael. *Personal Knowledge*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958.
- Pletka, Bob. *Educating the Net Generation: How to Engage Students in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Santa Monica: Santa Monica Press, 2007.
- "Programmes." World Council of Churches. <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/programmes.html> (accessed February 27, 2010).
- Rainer Thom. *Surprising Insights from the UnChurched and Proven Ways to Reach Them*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001.
- Rauschenbusch, Paul B., ed. *Christianity and the Social Crisis in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. New York: HarperCollins, 2007.
- Rauschenbusch, Walter. *Christianity and the Social Crisis*. New York: Macmillan, 1907.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Christianizing the Social Order*. New York: Pilgrim Press, 1912.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *A Theology of the Social Gospel*. New York: Macmillan, 1917.
- Reid, Alvin. *Evangelism Handbook: Biblical, Spiritual, Intentional, Missional*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2009.

- Rengstorff, Karl Heinrich. "ἀποστέλλω/ἀπόστολος." In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, edited by Gerhard Kittel, translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 1:398-447. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964.
- Rollins, Peter. *The Fidelity of Betrayal: Towards A Church Beyond Belief*. Brewster, Massachusetts: Paraclete Press, 2008.
- Rose, Margaret. "Defining the Post-Modern." In *The Post-Modern Reader*, edited by Charles Jencks, 119-36. New York: St. Martins Press, 1992.
- Rusaw, Rick and Eric Swanson. *The Externally Focused Church*. Loveland, Colorado: Group, 2004.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Externally Focused Quest: Becoming the Best Church for the Community*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010.
- Sandeen, Ernest R. *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970.
- Scaramanga, Url. "R.I.P. Emerging-Church." Scaramanga entry posted September 19, 2008.  
[http://blog.christianitytoday.com/outofur/archives/2008/09/rip\\_emerging\\_ch.html](http://blog.christianitytoday.com/outofur/archives/2008/09/rip_emerging_ch.html)  
 (accessed March 20, 2009).
- Scherer, J. A. "Church, Kingdom, and *Missio Dei*: Lutheran and Orthodox Correctives to Recent Ecumenical Mission Theology." In *The Good News of the Kingdom: Mission Theology for the Third Millenium*, edited by C. Van Engen, D.S. Gilliland, and P. Pierson, 82-88. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993,.
- Schlatter, *Der Evangelist Matthaus*. Stuttgart: Calwer, 1948.
- Shenk, Wilbert R. "The Culture of Modernity as a Missionary Challenge." In *The Church between Gospel and Culture: The Emerging Mission in North America*, edited by George R. Hunsberger and Craig Van Gelder, 69-78. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.
- Sire, James W. *The Universe Next Door*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004.
- Sittser, Gerald L. *Water from a Deep Well: Christian Spirituality from Early Martyrs to Modern Missionaries*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007.
- Smith, James K. A. *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism? Taking Derrida, Lyotard, and Foucault to Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006.

- Snell, R. J. Review of "Who's Afraid of Postmodernism? Taking Derrida, Lyotard, and Foucault to Church." *Calvin Theological Journal* 42, no. 2 (November 2007): 426-27.
- Stark, Rodney. *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries*. San Francisco: Harper, 1996.
- Stetzer, Ed and David Putnam. *Breaking the Missional Code: Your Church Can Become a Missionary in Your Community*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2006.
- Stetzer, Ed. *Planting Missional Churches: Planting A Church That's Biblically Sound and Reaching People in Culture*. Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2006.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "First Person: Understanding the Emerging-Church." *Baptist Press* (January 6, 2006). <http://www.sbcbaptistpress.org/bpnews.asp?ID=22406> (accessed March 20, 2009).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Thursday is for Theology of Missions: Meanings of Missional, part 3." The LifeWay Research Blog. Entry posted August 29, 2007. <http://www.edstetzer.com/2007/08/thursday-is-for-theology-of-mi.html> (accessed September, 2010).
- Stott, John. "The Great Commission." In *One Race, One Gospel, One Task*, vol. 1, ed. C.F.M. Henry and W.S. Mooneyham. Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1967.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Christian Mission in the Modern World*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1975.
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed., *Making Christ Known*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *New Issues Facing Christians Today*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Significance of Lausanne" 64, no. 3 (July 1975): 288-94.
- Swanson, Eric. "Combining Good News and Good Deeds." Lecture, Kansas City Missional Network Conference, Kansas City, Kansas, November 10, 2009.
- Swanson, Eric and Sam Williams. *To Transform a City: Whole Church, Whole Gospel, Whole City*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010.
- Sweet, Leonard. *Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who's Already There*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010.

\_\_\_\_\_. *So Beautiful: Divine Design for Life and the Church*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2009.

"The 1908 Social Creed." The United Methodist Church.  
<http://archives.umc.org/interior.asp?ptid=16&mid=5430> (accessed September 20, 2010).

*The Web Gallery of Art*, Online, s.v. "Michelangelo," <http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/bio/m/michelan/biograph.html> (accessed November 28, 2008).

Tickle, Phyllis. *The Great Emergence: How Christianity is Changing and Why*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008.

Van Engen, Charles. *God's Missionary People: Rethinking the Purpose of the Local Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1991.

\_\_\_\_\_. "'Mission' Defined and Described." In *MissionShift: Global Mission Issues in the Third Millennium*, edited by David J. Hesselgrave and Ed Stetzer, 7-29. Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2010.

Van Gelder, Craig. "Evangelicals and Lausanne II: What Happened to a 'Contextual' Gospel?" *The Gospel and Our Culture Newsletter* 2, no. 1 (June 1990): 5-6.  
<http://www.gocn.org/files/021-newsletter.pdf#page=5> (accessed July 18, 2010).

\_\_\_\_\_, ed. *Confident Witness—Changing World: Rediscovering the Gospel in North America*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Ministry of the Missional Church: A Community Led by the Spirit*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Missional Church and Denominations: Helping Congregations Develop a Missional Identity*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008.

Vicedom, Georg F. *The Mission of God: An Introduction to a Theology of Mission*. Translated by Gilbert A. Thiele and Dennis Hilgendorf. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965.

Viola, Frank. "The Ultimate Plagiarism." Reimaging Church: The Blog of Frank Viola. Entry posted July 5, 2010. <http://frankviola.wordpress.com/2010/07/05/francis-chan-mark-driscoll-andy-stanley-and-the-church/> (accessed December 23, 2010).

- Wacker, Grant. "Religious Liberalism and the Modern Crisis of Faith." *National Humanities Center*.  
<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/twenty/tkeyinfo/liberal.htm> (accessed September 9, 2010).
- Wainwright, Geoffrey. *Lesslie Newbigin: A Theological Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Walker, Andrew. *Different Gospels: Christian Orthodoxy and Modern Theologies*. Hodder & Stoughton, 1988.
- Warner, Stephen R. "'New Paradigm' Churches: Lessons from California." *Christian Century*, 114, no.33 (November, 2007): 1,085. <http://0-web.ebscohost.com.catalog.georgefox.edu/ehost/detail?vid=10&hid=116&sid=7f75f276-18ef-4d16-9928-1ddb14b18%40sessionmgr104&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWWhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#db=aph&AN=9712124014> (accessed March 17, 2009).
- Weston, Paul. *Lesslie Newbigin: Missionary Theologian*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006.
- White, Heath. *Postmodernism 101*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006.
- Wink, Walter *Naming the Powers*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1984.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Unmasking the Powers*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1986.
- Wright, Christopher J.H. *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006.
- Young, Mark S. "Turning Theology Inside Out: Missio Dei (Part I)." Dallas Theological Seminary Chapel Missions Week. *YouTube*. November 7, 2006,  
<http://mediafiles.dts.edu/chapel/mp4/20061107.mp4> (accessed December 3, 2010).