

Missional Church: How Can Domestic Missiology Become Global?

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During the discussion of a book on “Missional Church” I became concerned about the direction of the dialogue. Much of the discussion revolved around how we could do church better. Even though missional-church literature brings a needed corrective to a domesticated ecclesiology I was feeling uncomfortable. Most of the discussion was about the second part of that phrase, “church,” not “missional.” (All this discussion, by the way, comes at a time when the western church is in decline and ecclesiastical navel-gazing is almost the norm).

Much of the dialogue was influenced by a book “Shaped by God’s Heart: the Passion and Practices of Missional Churches.”¹ The nine essential practices in the book focused primarily on the church, more specifically the local church. Essentials related to membership, teaching, worship, purpose, measuring growth, church structures, and leadership. Albeit, each of these issues was analyzed in a new light recommending an outward focus, ninety per cent of the recommendations pertained to local mission. The lights went on. The majority of the issues concerned “domestic mission,” and one related to “global mission.” This raised serious questions. The main one was this: how can the Church regain a full orbed Acts 1:8 missiology

in light of the current trends in missional thinking?

And then, another insight: I reread one of the early writings produced by *Gospel and Our Culture Network* (GOCN), first published in 1996. The Church Between Gospel and Culture: the Emerging Mission in North America² was heavily influenced by missiologist Lesslie Newbigin who wrote about reintroducing the Gospel in Great Britain, which at that time was quickly becoming a “missional culture.” He had been in India for a number of years, attempting to introduce the Gospel in a pluralist country. Upon returning to England, he reflected on the country of his calling and realized he had to write about introducing the Gospel in what was now a missional context at home (although obviously religiously different).

The above mentioned book, edited by George Hunsberger and Craig Van Gelder, was one of the first written on the missional church theme in North America. The first chapter of the book succinctly put the discussion in context. It was entitled “The Newbigin Gauntlet: Developing a Domestic Missiology for North America.” This seemed to frame the contextual content of the book, a corrective to a previous ecclesio-centric orientation in Western theology. However in the framing and development of a domestic missiology, the contextual

missiological dialogue gives little attention to global mission, thus a blind spot in its orientation. A generalization can be made that missionary writing of the past focused on “panta ta ethne.” Contemporary missional writing tends to focus on the themes of “missio dei,” “basileia tou theou,” and “cultura.”³

This is to suggest that North American missional thinking has taken significant turns in the past quarter century. In his book, *Faith Seeking Action: Mission, Social Movements and the Church in Motion*⁴ Gregory Leffel elucidates this. He writes:

The GOCN’s reflection is concerned with North America, a region of the world already filled with many (potentially missional) churches. Allowing for this fact, however, its recognition of the boundary-crossing challenges of mission – the extension of the church across geographical, linguistic and ethnic boundaries into populations without (or at least functionally without) the witness of existing churches – is at best understated. The language of mission or missional mobilization in a more traditional sense, of church extension or church planting in order to make the missional community’s witness more accessible to other (especially crossculturally), for example, is not incorporated into the definition of an ostensibly “missional” church. Nor is

the sending of the church from North America to non-Christian regions of the world (alone or in partnership with churches in other nations) included in its vision for apostolic and ecumenical faithfulness (Emphasis mine).⁵

This is an important critique that will be addressed further in this paper. In addressing this topic, this paper will focus on three main areas. They are: 1) the contribution of “missional church” literature to contemporary theology; 2) the deficiency of “missional church” literature for a global missiology; 3) suggestions for a way forward.

1. The contribution of “missional church” literature to contemporary theology

One cannot write about blind spots in contemporary missional church literature without first of all acknowledging its significant corrective to western theology. Missional church dialogue is an effort to recapture a biblical theology of congregational life and to articulate an understanding of the church’s mission in light of challenges of postmodern culture. Here is what I perceive are its three major contributions.

First, it gives ecclesiology a new missional orientation. It reveals a deficient ecclesiology, formed by historical antecedents, and cultural norms. It recognizes that mission is a matter of focus; discipleship starts with being and not with doing. It deals with the essence of the church not the essentials of the church.

Missional ecclesiology offers a dynamic outward looking alternative to the static inwardly-looking “place where” concept of the church that has dominated Protestant theology. Reformation ecclesiology emphasized the church as a place where the gospel was taught and the sacraments rightly administered. In the words of David Bosch: “It is a place where something is done, not a living organism doing something.”⁶ Under contemporary cultural conditions shaped by consumer capitalism, privatized individualism and an increasingly therapeutic worldview, the “place where” definition of the church has intensified. It has now come to be a “vendor of religious services and goods.”⁷

Missional church teaching insists that “mission is not just a program of the church” but constitutes the nature of the church itself. Often quoted in this theological movement is Emil Brunner’s dictum: “the Church exists by mission as fire exists by burning.”⁸ The implication of that statement is that when mission dies the Church fails to exist.

Secondly, on a broader scale it addresses the issue of a theological locus.⁹ The historical attempts to make mission the centre of theology have received undue academic attention elucidating a deficiency in Euro-Western theology.^{10,11} The “missional ecclesiology” movement draws attention to the importance of rediscovering a mission-centered conception of theology. Bosch cites the view of Martin Kaehler that “mission is the mother of the

church” and that theology began as “an accompanying manifestation of the Christian mission.”¹² An example of this notion of theology is provided by J. Andrew Kirk who states, “. . . Mission as a discipline is not then the roof of a building that completes the whole structure, already constructed by blocks that stand on their own, but both the foundation and the mortar in the joints, which cements together everything else.”¹³

This problem has been identified by Jeffrey Greenman who traces some of the ecclesiastical introspection to the seminary itself. He suggests that the character of theological education in twentieth century North America tends to focus on professionalism where the clergy are focused almost exclusively on “taking care of their own.” The dominant approach in seminary education, including theological education in the evangelical tradition, has been what Edward Farley has identified as “the professional paradigm.”¹⁴

Third, missional-church literature recognizes the contextual nature of the Gospel as well as the unique contemporary contexts in which it exists. It not only brings a corrective to the nature of the church but also a reality check to the diverse contexts in which the Gospel is diffused. The contemporary view of the church has not only been shaped by the church itself (an emic perspective) but also by the context in which it is found. For over 1700 years a particular view of the nature of the church existed and its ministry informed by what has

been called the Christendom model.¹⁵ Lesslie Newbigin observed, “We have lived for so many centuries in the ‘Christendom’ situation that ministerial training is almost entirely conceived in terms of the pastoral care of existing congregations.”¹⁶

The Christendom situation no longer exists. Furthermore, the context in which the North American church finds itself is uncomfortably strange. This is due to the rapidity of change, the marginalization of the church, the privatization of faith, the unraveling of meta-narratives, the loss of influence, and the questioning of values. The church finds itself in a place unknown for centuries. It is a form of exile, an uncertain context. Missional literature reminds us that the church cannot do business as usual; our context will not allow it. Contextualization must be understood and practiced as the church attempts to address issues shaped by its current milieu.

2. The deficiency of “missional church” literature for a global missiology

While missional church literature has made a significant contribution to the understanding of the church in North America, it is already in danger of losing its original focus. Alan Roxburgh, author and contributor to the GOCN has recognized this. As early as 2004 he wrote, “Almost everywhere one goes today the word *missional* or the phrase *missional church* is used to describe everything from evangelism to reorganization plans for denominations, to how we make coffee in church basements and denominational meeting rooms. It was into this

context that the *missional* language came and was received as a hopeful sign of how we could talk again about the challenges facing Christian identity. But at the same time, it is a testimony to the absorbing power of modernity that the *missional* language could become so meaningless so quickly.¹⁷

The lack of clear understanding of a concept as well as its domestication is what gives me concern. The following are seven issues needing consideration. *First*, one must be aware of a reduction of original focus – the co-opting of missional thinking for utilitarian purposes. Theological discussion has centred on themes such as “*missio dei*,” the sending of the Church, the Church as apostle to the world, communities of the Holy Spirit, equipping God’s people for mission, a theology of the laity, etc. As a called-out community, the Church (which in essence fulfills the Old Testament calling of Abraham and Israel), is also called to be the people of God on mission. The acknowledgement of this ontological reality can be quickly sidelined by functional concerns. This is particularly true as evidenced by second and third generation literature, reinterpreting the original writings.¹⁸

Missional church theologizing has developed a significant theoretical/theological corrective to culture bound ecclesiastical practice.¹⁹ The theological work is complemented by sociological analyses, practical theology and functional application. There is a danger that the latter contextual work will overshadow the theological framework and

diminish the contribution of theological correctives.

Second, contextualization must be used as a legitimate tool, helping exegete the context of the hearer, and aid in relevant communication of the Gospel. One must be aware of the principle, however, that when one contextualizes in, he/she also contextualizes out. By focusing on the North American context for relevant communication of the Christian message, the remainder of the globe gets ignored. Missional intent has to exceed one community, province or country. If focus is strictly regional, true missional faithfulness is not the result.

Contextualization has occurred throughout history. For simplicity sake we will refer to only four major eras and make generalization about the nature of the Church in each. The era of the early church is generally recognized as lasting from 30-311 A. D. It was an era characterized by the idea of being “in but not of the world.” Jesus prayed explicitly for the Church in John 17:15-16, *“I’m not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. They do not belong to this world any more than I do.”* The very existence of the early Christian communities carried a missional message to those around them. A hostile world existed on their doorsteps and missional engagement was everywhere.

The period from 312 - 1789 is recognized as the era of the “imperial church,” which began with the ascent of Constantine to the Roman throne. Constantine established Christianity as

the official religion of the Roman Empire. His goal was one language, one law and one religion – Christianity. The event dramatically changed the relationship between the Church and the world. While the early Christian community exhibited a sharp contrast between a dynamic faith and the world, that distinction soon became obsolete. Christianity became identified with Roman imperialism. The power of the Church was not seen as the way of the cross but as the Roman way, exhibiting status, wealth, power and control. This precipitated the loss of the church’s identity as a reconciling community in contrast to the surrounding culture.

The imperial church was followed by the “establishment” church prominent from 1789 - 1960. In Europe the Establishment Church was officially supported by the state. In North America, churches were never statist, but still became an integral part of the political-military-industrial-social establishment. While the roots of North American culture were deeply nourished by Christian commitments, perspectives and values, the culture became increasingly secular and religiously plural. The church lost its prophetic voice and became simply part of the “establishment.” The Establishment Church as such became the “place where,” - the vendor of religious programs and services.

This ended in the post 1960s. Mainline churches began to face an unrelenting pattern of shrinking and aging membership, and a declining influence in society; former “fringe”

denominations (evangelical, fundamentalist and Pentecostal) become more prominent; people were offered more choices than ever, even the choice not to attend church; Sunday was no longer seen as a special day, commercial activity became the norm; the Catholic Church faced a significant diminishing number of men entering the priesthood – and the list could go on.

The Church needed to find its place amidst such social malaise. Unfortunately much of this period has been spent by evangelical churches trying to recover their place in a fast-departing Christendom. The results oriented church, the emphasis on pragmatic methods, strategic planning and a corporate approach to leadership have all been attempts to find ways to remain relevant. They are attempts at contextualization. Such visual struggles for relevance and even survival consume huge energies and tend to be domestic focused. Because they are couched in missional terms, they purport to be global. Because they are western initiatives, they tend to be domestic. Such attempts at contextualization, however, must not become a trap that squeezes us in our own cultural mazes, at the expense of truly being globally missional.

Third, missional church literature must explicitly strive to be global, and thus not domesticated. In our present context, we are reminded that “the mission field” is no longer only “over there” because we are also living in a post-Christian society to which the mission needs to be extended. We no longer need to “send over there,” but now need to “be sent” in

our own social contexts. The juxtaposition of these directives in either/or categories is not helpful. It needs to be both/and. Furthermore, it can be argued that missionaries, mission agencies and cross-cultural workers, while focusing on their areas of global mission, never ever intended to diminish the work of the church at home. They always saw themselves as the extension of the local church. They also assumed that the “regular clergy” had the local context in their vision and the Christian community was indeed doing mission at home. After all, over ninety-five per cent of church resources were being used on the domestic scene. Maybe they were just inappropriately applied.

Roxburgh also elucidates this point. He reduces the missional foci to three main areas. These are: 1) western society is a mission field; 2) mission is about “mission dei;” 3) missional church is about the nature and purpose of the church. In a nutshell, this sums up the critical areas of missional concern and engagement. Moreover Roxburgh suggests that “the language of *missional* was coined in order to capture and express a) the locus of the Gospel on God and God’s actions, b) the depth of the compromise that has overtaken Christian life and c) the extent of the challenge we face in addressing this situation.”²⁰

This confirms that much of the missional literature being written is indeed contextual (the writing from “down under” also fits the same critique)²¹ and exhibits a western

orientation. Now it needs global voices to speak prophetically and apologetically. It must truly become a global dialogue.²² To be truly missional it must become truly global.

Fourth, it must not jettison the issues that concerned traditional missiology for over two and a half centuries.²³ It cannot neglect the Matthew 28:18, Mark 16:15, Luke 10:1-4 passages that pronounce the boundary-crossing nature of the Gospel, and the global intent of God's reconciliation. The Gospel must still cross geographical, linguistic and ethnic boundaries where there is no witness of existing churches. It is God's desire that "panta ta ethne" hear the good news and have an opportunity to respond. This was the message of some Old Testament prophets, and a message that must be included in the missional church dialogue. There is a need to bring a corrective to the "over-there" missiology but to neglect it almost entirely is to do injustice to Christian mission.

Fifth, the Church has to give serious attention to the *words* of Jesus as well as the *works* of Jesus. In constructing a starting point for Jesus missional ministry, Luke 4:18,19 is often quoted. We are also reminded that Jesus said, "as the Father has sent me into the world, so I am sending you" (John 20:21). The works of Jesus become the model for missional engagement.²⁴ In doing a missiological study of Jesus' mission, we recognize the geographical and ethnically confined boundaries of His own ministry. Such a model would lead us only to our own Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria. But

then we have to seriously consider His words. His post-resurrection message to his disciples cannot be diminished. Jack Hanes reminded his audience a few years ago that "Jesus' last command [Matt 28:18 "to make disciples of all nations"] must become our first priority."²⁵ This definitely transcends a domesticated Gospel. Jesus' words must be taken as seriously as His works.

Sixth, North Americans have to work very hard not to reduce the missional church to a pragmatic exercise. The penchant of North Americans is to quickly jump to "how to." Their reflective tendencies naturally lean toward productivity. But the admonition "to be," to understand the essence of the church and to commit to a life of true discipleship must still be emphasized. The doing has to come out the being. Here I will refer to the book identified earlier in this paper, "The Passion and Practice of Missional Churches." The author wanted to address the "being" issue because the main title was "Shaped by God's Heart." However the whole book is shaped around "practices" of missional churches. If the North American church cannot get to the "being," or cannot learn the reality and value of true discipleship, the dialogue will be in vain.

Roxburgh issues this caveat, "the formation of a missional church is going to be a very costly matter. It calls for a people who are willing to conform their lives to practices and habits of Christian life which, at their root, are about the willingness to give up one's personal needs and

rights.”²⁶ This is about formation, individual and collective, spiritual and social, intellectual and experiential. Formation will need to precede praxis. Maybe it could better be said, that formation will occur through praxis but praxis of the right kind.

Seventh, a discussion on missional church must address issues of the Church catholic, not just the church local. Much of the writing on missional church addresses theological issues relative to the Church as the body of Christ. The body of Christ must be seen for its “oneness.” Jesus prayer to the Father in John 17:11 was that “they all be one even as we are.” This prayer for unity, mutual love and sharing is replete throughout the Scripture. There is a propensity when using missional church language to always apply it to the local church. Thus it very quickly becomes myopic and self-centred.

Admittedly, when working out the implications of the theology of the missional church, it must have concrete expression which is locally applied. However, effort must be made to understand the church in light of Kingdom theology. A healthy tension must exist, and a humble attitude exhibited. Missional churches relate to the global body. Local churches must recognize their place in the larger body of Christ and not become exclusive or exhibit one upmanship. If so they are not truly missional.

3. Suggestions for a way forward

I have already alluded to some recommendations for a way forward. In this brief section, I will introduce three main points

which I consider need further attention. There is the need to develop 1) a truly global “missio-ecclesiology; 2) a praxis-oriented Kingdom theology; 3) a “body” theology focused on missional communities.

First, missional church literature needs to go beyond “domestic missiology.” Most of the GOCN literature begins with clear theological thinking on the Kingdom of God, the sent-ness of the Gospel, the formation of true disciples, and the eschatological dimension of Christ’s message. However its practical application exhibits a narrow global focus. Biblical understanding and theological formulations need to be trans-cultural. Cultural contexts vary greatly around our globe and the application of missional church principles will have significant nuances. We all have conceptual deficiencies due to our cultural blinders. Recognizing this, the addition of other voices into our own particular contexts would be of inestimable worth in our own understanding of the Gospel.

This calls for a truly global missional dialogue. One of the ways to address this is to invite other voices to the table. Asian, African and Latin America voices need to be heard. It would be most interesting to hear their articulation of missional church concerns arising out of their own contexts.

In developing a global missio-ecclesiology, traditional missiological concerns cannot be ignored. While addressing a possible corrective to traditional missiology, a matter which could elicit a debate on its own, the missiological

voices that have framed missional dialogue for two and half centuries must still be consulted. Recent as well as distant history surely have important lessons to teach us. Furthermore, traditional missiology addresses themes such as centripetal/centrifugal mission; universalism versus universality; dialogue/proclamation; evangelism/proselytism; exclusivism/inclusivism/universalism; salvific reductionism; holistic/integral mission . . . and the list could be extended.

In addressing contemporary contextual concerns, Leffel has made a significant contribution. He deals with the evolution and significance of movements. This takes the Church debate beyond individual local organized entities to the growth, influence and declension of movements themselves. While analyzing the social construct of movements, he relates his research to the North American church. He writes, “Over-preoccupation with the structural forms and organizational dynamics of individual congregations will . . . likely obscure the wider dimensions of the Christian mission to demonstrate the fullness of the reign of God. . . . only when mission as a concrete movement of God’s people is placed first as the unit of analysis will congregational renewal follow as an indigenous set of responses to the demands of mission.”²⁷ Leffel is pleading for the need to understand the global village in which we live, and the significance of the wider dynamics of movements (thus challenging self-serving organizations) and suggesting how this

missional debate will work itself out in the North American context. This adds a valuable component to missional church contextual dialogue.

Second, more attention needs to be given to “*basileia tou theo*,” as it relates to “*missio dei*” and “*missio ecclesia*.” In this regard, I will give a lengthy quote from Gordon Fee who states:

. . . the roots of our conviction about the global mission of the church are to be found in Jesus’ proclamation of the kingdom of God – as already present in his own mission and message. . . . Nonetheless, I hope to demonstrate (1) that the global mission of the church rests ultimately in Jesus’ proclamation of the “good news of the kingdom,” especially as good news to “the poor;” and (2) that such a proclamation is to be understood as the fulfillment of the covenant of Abraham, embraced by the prophetic tradition, that God’s intent from the beginning has been to bless “all peoples on earth” (Gen. 12:3).²⁸

In this regard Guder appeals for a theocentric view of missions.²⁹ He suggests that a shift has occurred in the past four decades from an ecclesiocentric (church-centred) view of mission to a theocentric (God –centred) one. He writes, “Mission is founded on the mission of God in the world, rather than the church’s effort to extend itself.”³⁰ Furthermore, “what explains

the church – what makes it the church – is that its life is birthed by the Holy Spirit as the Spirit gives hearing and response to the gospel.”³¹ The Gospel was for Jesus a pronouncement that the reign of God was at hand. This was both a present reality for Him and an eschatological foretaste. Believing in Jesus Christ also means believing Jesus Christ about the reign of God.

This theme has to be explored more in depth and Kingdom theology must complement ecclesiological understanding in order to have a full-orbed missiology. Someone has suggested that missiology must flow out of a sound Christology, which then elucidates a clear Kingdom theology.

Third, more stress needs to be put on the church as community instead of the church as a “place where.” Missional communities speak of communities of faith in intentional spiritual formation, with outward rather than inward foci. They are communities, learning together, struggling together, seeking together, sharing together, and loving together, indeed being transformed. This flies in the face of North American individual, consumer mentality, but indeed elucidates the essentials of the Gospel. We need to be reminded once more about one of Newbigin’s notable observations: The body of

Christ is after all the best exegete of the Gospel. The world will read our lives before they read our book.

Guder expresses it well when he writes, “Missional communities are called to represent the compassion, justice, and peace of the reign of God. The distinctive characteristic of such communities is that the Holy Spirit creates and sustains them. . . . Through this power of the Holy Spirit a “people sent” are cultivated through the practices by which they are formed, trained, equipped, and motivated as missional communities.”³²

Mission communities take an outward posture. They live in eschatological awareness. They truly have global concerns because they serve a God on a mission, who is truly concerned with His whole world.

Each of the above three topics need further elaboration. They profile the need for a significant paradigm shift, a theological reorientation to occur if indeed mission is to become central to the Church’s awareness and life, and maximum faithfulness occurs in the body of Christ.

¹ Milfred Minatrea, Shaped by God's Heart: The Passion and Practices of Missional Churches (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004).

² George Hunsberger and Craig Van Gelder, The Church between Gospel and Culture: The Emerging Mission in North America (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996).

³ The ancient Romans didn't have a word for our modern English word "culture"; their word "cultura" (the origin of our word "culture") is probably best translated as "tilled land," "agriculture," "the process of cultivating," etc. In Neo-Latin, "cultura" is a fine translation, but if you want an authentic term that the Romans may have used, then a word like "humanitas" is probably better. "Humanitas" meant "humanity" or "human endeavors" as well as "kindness," "culture," and "refinement." The point being made by the statement in the paper just suggests that contextualization is a major focus of current missional writing.

⁴ Gregory Leffel, Faith Seeking Action: Mission, Social Movements and the Church in Motion (Lonham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press Inc, 2007).

⁵ Ibid. 33, 34. Leffel furthermore reinforces his point by stating, "Having said this, the missional church concept finds resonance with evangelicals from more explicitly missionary traditions, especially among the "emerging" churches that call for a new contextualization of the church throughout the West (Frost and Hirsch 2003:3-30). Whether this indicates a growing convergence of ecumenical and evangelical concerns, or whether the GOCN's process can similarly ignite a moribund mainline tradition, remains to be seen, but it is a very hopeful spark."

⁶ David Bosch, Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 249.

⁷ George R. Hunsberger, "Sizing up the Shape of the Church," in The Church between Gospel and Culture The Emerging Mission in North America, eds. George R. Hunsberger and Craig Van Gelder (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 337-338.

⁸ Emil Brunner, The Word and the World (London: SCM Press, 1931), 108.

⁹ Theologians have debated the concepts and biblical theme which should be central and formational in the development of theological systems whether they be covenant, eschatology, creation, etc. Attempts have been made on a number of occasions to suggest that mission or "missio dei" should be the organizational centre of theology. Most often the area of missions has been relegated to practical theology, and received scant attention by theologians.

¹⁰ Colin Chapman. "Mission and the Theological Education: An Admirable Idea . . . But Exceedingly Difficult to Work Out." Unpublished paper presented at the inaugural conference of British and Irish Association of Mission Studies, at New College, Edinburgh, July 1990.

¹¹ Suggestions have been offered to integrate missions and/or missiology into theological curricula for over 150 years. In 1867 the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland passed a resolution "that a Professorship of Evangelistic Theology be established in this church, the professor to be chosen by the Assembly of 1867." Alexander Duff accepted the invitation to occupy the chair. His vision was to make the study of mission interdisciplinary . . . and become central to all theological study. In Germany, Dr. Karl Graul, director of the Leipzig Mission, moved to Erlangen in the hope to obtain permission to lecture at the university on the subject of mission. In 1864 he gave an address with the title, "On the Position and Significance of Christian Mission in the totality of University Sciences."

Known as the father of modern missiology, Gisteve Warneck moved to the University of Halle in 1897 where he became the first professor of Mission in Germany. His inaugural address was entitled, "Mission's right to Citizenship in the organism of Theological Science. He argued that mission constitutes an essential concern of the church and therefore of theology. He divided *Missionswissenschaft* into, a) history of missions, b) theory of missions, and c) missionary apologetics.

¹² David Bosch, Witness to the World: The Christian Mission in Theological Perspective (John Knox Press, 1980), 16.

¹³ J. Andrew Kirk, find source.

¹⁴ Jeffrey P. Greenman, "Mission as the Integrating Centre of theological Education" Unpublished paper at Tyndale Theological Seminary. See also Edward Farley, Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of theological Education (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983).

¹⁵ See Loren Mead, The Once and Future church: Reinventing the congregation for a new Mission Frontier (Washington, DC: Alban Institute, 1991).

¹⁶ Lesslie Newbigin, Foolishness to the Greeks, 124.

¹⁷ Alan J. Roxburgh, “The Missional Church,” Theology Matters, Vol. 10 No. 4; Sept/Oct 2004, 1, 2.

¹⁸ It is most interesting to do a study of movements to see how they morph and change over time. The Church Growth Movement is an example. The writings of Donald McGavran, which initially had global missional import, were soon co-opted to fit the North American context and some of the intent of his original contribution was soon lost.

¹⁹ Books of Note: Church Between Gospel and Culture; The Continuing Conversion of the Church; The Ministry of the Missional Church; Missional Church.

²⁰ Ibid., 3.

²¹ I would note here the works by Frost and Hirsch; The Forgotten Ways by Hirsch, and The Shape of Things to Come, by Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch.

²² I would bring your attention to a book edited by Spencer and Spencer entitled, The Global God: Multicultural Evangelical Views of God. This global dialogue now needs to be introduced around missional church.

²³ Some of the classical texts I would bring to your attention are; Missionary Principles and Practice by Harold Lindell; The Christian World Mission Today and Tomorrow; by J. Herbert Kane; A Biblical Theology of Missions by George W. Peters; Frontiers in Missionary Strategy by C Peter Wagner; Church/Mission Tensions Today by Peter Wagner; Transforming Mission by David Bosch; The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World by Hendrik Kraemer. These suggestion, of course do not crack the surface of traditional missiological writing. It would be interesting to analyse historical traditional missiology in light of contemporary missional thinking!

²⁴ I sometimes feel that the argument for social and philanthropic engagement misses the point. It is true that Jesus was concerned with the poor, the physically disabled and corrupt structures, but most often Jesus used supernatural means to address these matters. If we were truly to follow the example of Jesus, we would also emulate His methods. A number of years ago Peter Wagner aptly addressed this issue in “Church Growth and the Whole Gospel.” Here he elicited the distinction between [category A] social signs and [category B] personal signs. Category A signs were fulfilled somewhat gradually while category B signs were usually miraculous and supernatural. After all Jesus Himself admitted that the supernatural ministry He exhibited was indeed the sign of the Kingdom (Matthew 12:28, Luke 10:9).

²⁵ Jack Hanes, His Last Command our First Priority (Megalife Ministries, 2003).

²⁶ Roxburgh, ibid., 3.

²⁷ Leffel, 37.

²⁸ Gordon D. Fee, “The Kingdom of God and the Church’s Global Mission,” in Called and Empowered: Global Mission in Pentecostal Perspective, eds. Dempster, Klaus, & Peterson, (Peabody, Mass, Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1991), 7.

²⁹ Darrell L. Guder, ed., Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Eerdmans, 1998), 81.

³⁰ Ibid., 82.

³¹ Ibid., 86.

³² Ibid., 142.