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The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st Century Church by Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch

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Lee; *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st* obvious that Christians are more comfortable being in their own community and secluding themselves from others (121); thus, I plan to continue to lead my church into radical discipleship (150) by incorporating this information in my sermons and lay training (133).

In conclusion, *UnChristian* is a must read for pastors, staff, and other leaders in a church. It will change their attitude and approach to evangelism for it gives insight into how Christians might better engage outsiders. While it is true that all who hear the gospel of Jesus will not accept it, Christians should not be the reason for their rejection.

Christianity is a process of growth, a journey so to speak. Christians did not get in their current state overnight. By observing the data and testimonies, all Christians are able to see the past, visualize the reality of the present, and predict the future based on their responses to the information provided. I am confident that as I incorporate this information into my church context we will become a more loving church. Like Rick Warren, my dream for our congregation is “that thirty years from now, the church will be known more by what it is *for* than what it is *against*” (245).

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Frost, Michael, and Alan Hirsch. *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st-Century Church*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003, 236 pp., \$21.99.

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Michael Frost is the Vice Principal of Morling College located in Sydney, Australia; the Director of the Tinsley Institute; and the founder of the Forge Mission Training Network. He wrote *Freedom to Explore* and *Exiles*, among others. Alan Hirsch is a strategist of mission, a missionary, a poet, and a visionary. He has written *The Forgotten Ways* and *ReJesus* (with Michael Frost).

The Shaping of Things to Come suggests a biblical church that is incarnational in its ecclesiology, messianic in its spirituality, and apostolic in its leadership. These are key elements so that the contemporary church can overcome the traditions of Christendom. The authors assert that a reader cannot easily accept this shift because it is radical. However, their ideas in this book are radical in order to change and improve the concept of the church. Therefore, this book is good for

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both a seminary student and a pastor because it suggests a biblical model for the church.

In the first part, the authors begin with a story of “Black Rock” and “Burning Man” (3). These two stories point out that a secular meeting can seem more spiritual and religious than church. However, although the authors use this example to challenge the church’s radical power, some concerns arise. Several communities in postmodern society have come and gone. Postmodernists often emphasize the value of individuals and their cultures. It is surprising that they have experienced catharsis and spirituality. Even though they seem to have most things that a church needs, such as spiritual experiences, their meetings cannot be construed as “church.” Sometimes, churches follow the spirit of the secular community because of its phenomenon. If the church engages culture in this manner, does it represent the heart of God or the spirit of secular community?

In the first part of this book, Frost and Hirsch suggest the church must overcome Christendom (8). This idea has been introduced by many scholars, but the authors argue that the majority of Western churches adhere to the traditions of Christendom. However, they do not consider that many churches in the world utilize physical buildings and a tradition-laden system.

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After the authors criticize problems of the contemporary church, they suggest the missional church as an alternative (17). In this, they display the future model of church planting (22). This is the theme of this book. The authors provide three characteristics to support the theme. The first aspect of the missional church is a shift from an “attractional” to an “incarnational” church (30). Several scholars have adapted the term incarnational to fit the concept of missions. Another part of the missional church is Messianic spirituality as opposed to one that is “dualistic” (30). Piety in daily life is challenging for even the mature Christian. The authors opine that Messianic spirituality requires acting out spirituality in one’s daily life. It plays a significant role in evangelism because non-Christians who live near Christians can see God through the Christian. All three characteristics are weaker points in most contemporary churches. As the authors point out, most churches have a building from which they hardly move. Consequently, they focus on Sunday meetings, and as a result, many have lost the power of daily piety. Many do not serve in the church but instead take a passive approach to ministry.

Regarding an incarnational church, the authors demonstrate the process of “going to them,” “living together with them,” and “disciplining them” (33). Although they are important procedures, there is something more significant, and that is how one opens his heart so that he can accept Christ as Savior and Lord.

Lee: The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21s

The authors introduce two examples of the church going to the people: the pub (9) and chocolate shop church (60). Many visionaries have attempted to plant churches on Manhattan Island in New York City. However, most fail because of financial problems. While a business model of a missionary (or church planter) can be a good model, a gap remains between incarnational churches and church planting. If only churches that have sufficient money can complete the mission of the incarnational church, it seems that this model does not accurately depict a missional church.

Messianic spirituality is a good idea concerning the restoration of daily piety of a Christian. In this part of the book, however, the explanation seems theoretical because the application about Messianic spirituality is weak. Some churches do not recognize that they live a life of Messianic spirituality. For instance, some church members gather together for LTG (Life Transform Group) at lunchtime at their work place or school. During the group, each one shares the Word that they read in the morning; then, they exhort and help each other live through their application of the Word. Although this example might not exactly meet the standard for Messianic spirituality, it works because the groups are gathered in the living places of each person. Also, it is good that anyone can invite his friends into the group. The group can be an incarnational church at the same time.

The authors quote Marshall McLuhan's phrase, "The medium is the message" (149). This phrase has a significant role in the identity of Christians in the church. Over the years, many Christians have become passive. They are always waiting for their leader or minister to do something for them. However, if they hear the phrase, "The medium is the message," they understand it as, "You or your life is the message." Therefore, Christians cannot stay passive because they are the message and the Gospel. They are also partners with God (159). These two statements are brief but serve as a concise conclusion to this part. If a church has passive members, these statements help motivate them in discipleship and service in the ministry, because they should also be the message of God.

Frost and Hirsch suggest five roles of biblical leadership (166). According to them, APEPT comes from Ephesians (167). The five kinds of leadership seem to be necessary; however, the authors have to clarify whether the five roles of leadership are simply functional or absolute standards of Scripture.

The APEPT model is interesting. The matrix that presents specific functions seems like a psychological test such as the MBTI and Enneagram (174). A pertinent question is the following: Can the church use psychological tests to arrange members for effective ministries? If yes, some questions remain: What test

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will the church use? How does the church trust the results? However, it helps one to understand each role's function more precisely.

In chapter 10, the authors state that the missional church should be organic, reproducible, and self-sustaining (175). The term "organic" is an interesting word for the church. If the church is organic, when one team plants a church, the whole church should rejoice with them. When another team fails, the church should comfort and exhort them because it is not only their mission, but also the mission of the whole church. Similarly, one small group might fail to reproduce another small group. Then, it is not the failure of one group, but the whole church's because the church is one body that serves Christ, the head.

The authors suggest several keys for paradigm shifts in churches (192). Of the keys, "encouraging holy dissatisfaction" is not an easy one. Many leaders think they fail when they face opposition. Also, the authors quote Howard Snyder's mention of "nontraditional or nonordained leadership" to organize the revolution (204). These two relate to the flexibility of leadership. If leadership does not have flexibility, the church is set in the Christendom tradition.

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To summarize, Frost and Hirsch effectively present why and how churches should pursue the missional church model. Their strongest points in this book involve the three aspects of the missional church. Some parts look theoretical, but they give readers many implications. This book is a required book for a pastor who is preparing for church planting and also for a current leader of a church. Furthermore, if one church is too large to do something the authors say in this book, it needs to consider other options. Churches move and work dynamically. Many churches plant other churches in unchurched areas. The principles in this book can help churches plant other churches in a biblical way.

McIntosh, Gary and Alan McMahan. *Being the Church in a Multi-Ethnic Community: Why It Matters and How It Works*. Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2012. 219 pages. \$16.99.

Reviewed by Jeffrey Medina. Medina has an M.Div. from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is currently enrolled in a Ph.D. program on Church Vitalization with a Minor in Islamic Studies at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

How can the Church be what Jesus Christ has called it to be in the ever-changing communities of North America? This is the question that Gary McIntosh and Alan McMahan set out to answer. These two authors have a wealth