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INTRODUCTION

Alan McMahan, General Editor

The purpose of the Great Commission Research Journal has always been to communicate recent thinking and research related to effective church growth and evangelism. Since its original founding, the purpose and role of this journal has not waivered. It has continued on, serving in this manner, even as other voices have gone silent or been broadened beyond their founding purpose. In the last several years, this journal has been unique in the industry.

Going back to its historical roots provides some perspective. In 1984, a meeting was called to discuss the formation of an academic society focused on the research on effective evangelism, mission, and church growth. It was hoped that this academic society would provide a place where scholars, academicians, writers, and practitioners could come together and share their research findings on the effective means for engaging the harvest to yield maximum benefit to the work of completing the Great Commission. This society came to be called the American Society for Church Growth, and the first meeting was announced for the fall of 1985. John Vaughan founded the journal for this society, publishing it under the name *Church Growth Journal*, with the first issue released in 1990. Four issues followed, one per year in 1990, 1991, 1992, and 1993. No issue was printed in 1994, as leadership was passed to Dr. Gary McIntosh, but he soon resumed publication in 1995 and 1996 under the new name *Journal of the American Society for Church Growth* in order to give more visibility to the society with which is was con-

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nected. From 1997 through 2008, as many as three issues a year were produced under Dr. McIntosh's leadership, and respect for the journal grew.

In 2009, the American Society for Church Growth was rebranded as the Great Commission Research Network, and to maintain connection, the journal became the *Great Commission Research Journal* (GCRJ). Biola University picked up the sponsorship of the GCRJ, and I assumed the role as General Editor.

It is with a grateful heart now that I write this, the introduction to the 18th issue of the *Great Commission Research Journal* under my leadership and the last to be published by Biola University. In next few months, we will seek to transition the journal over to a new sponsor and perhaps in a new format as we seek to continue the work that has been entrusted to us over the past 27 years of faithful publishing.

Much appreciation goes to the staff of Biola University who has generously supported the efforts of the GCRJ over the years. They have provided enormous logistical support in the design, publication, distribution, and promotion of the journal.

A special and heartfelt thanks goes to our Publication Manager, Joy Bergk. Joy has patiently waited for the completion of all our articles to be submitted issue after issue. Her positive, buoyant spirit has been a constant blessing. Her professional, yet kind, demeanor has been evident in each publication cycle. Thank you, Joy, for your tireless work and your keen eye for detail.

Thanks also goes to Lee Wilhite, Biola's Vice President for Marketing and Communications, who has provided leadership support in all of the university's publications. He has made the publication of this journal possible by assigning capable staff to the task.

Laura McIntosh, our Technical Editor, is located off site from the university, but she has played a pivotal role in the success of each issue. Laura has done the very important and very tedious work of making each issue comply with good form and proper standards. Thank you, Laura, for making us all look good!

Gary McIntosh has worked alongside me as Assistant Editor. His insight and advice is invaluable, not just as an editor, but also as a mentor and friend. I have learned much from this able guide who has always been in the business of multiplying leaders who will lead in the multiplication of churches and disciples. The impact Gary has had on the kingdom is incalculable. Everywhere I have gone, I have found people who have been encouraged through Gary's books to believe that God is going to build his church and that the new believers who come into relationship with the Savior are worth the effort we all give to see this happen.

Mike Morris, one of our esteemed colleagues from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, is also our Book Review Editor. Mike is nothing short of amazing. I think he lives near his computer, because any request is met with lightning speed. Mike has natural instincts

to assess the value of an article or contribution and to suggest improvements for it. Thank you, Mike, for all of your hard work and faithful service.

Len Bartlotti, a crazy Italian who has been a great friend of mine throughout the years, rounds out our current team of editors. As our International Editor, Len has a profound grasp of what God is doing around the world, and no one emits more passion for the lost than he does. Each one of these people is greatly appreciated for their insights and contributions.

In this issue, we have a host of quality articles and book reviews. Bob Whitesel explains how different generations approach change, while Samuel Lee shares insights on entrepreneurial church planting. Russell Bryan unpacks moving forward in the Church Growth Movement. George Hunter shares his insights on the emotional relevance in outreach ministry, and Mike Norton discusses caring for Muslim ministry workers. The next chapter of Gary McIntosh's biography of Donald McGavern is included in this issue. Finally, Tom Steffen concludes with an article on how the grand narrative of Scripture works against fragmentation to reveal the beauty and power of God to the hearer.

Dustin Slaton, Kenneth Nehrbass, Joey Chen, Benjamin D. Espinoza, and Mike Morris submit book reviews for new important publications. We appreciate your valuable insights and critical reviews to these new publications. Thank you all for helping us to capture the importance of these works through your interaction with them.

In closing, let me say that I have deeply appreciated the opportunity to put this journal together over the last few years. It is an honor to work with others who strive to get the gospel of Jesus Christ into each corner of the world.

In the weeks to come, we will soon reveal the next steps for this journal and invite your ongoing support.

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HOW CHANGING GENERATIONS . . . CHANGE: HARNESSING THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GENERATIONS AND THEIR APPROACHES TO CHANGE

Bob Whitesel

Abstract

This article will compare and contrast two leadership change strategies as observed in older generations (influenced by modernity) and younger generations (influenced by postmodernity). It will be suggested that modernist leadership strategies may focus more on command-and-control and vision. It will be further suggested that postmodern leaders may employ a more collaborative and mission-centric approach to change leadership. This latter approach will be shown to have been described in postmodern circles by organic metaphors and four conditions as set forth by organizational theorist Mary Jo Hatch. Subsequently, it will be suggested that the style of leadership embraced should depend upon the cultural context of the generational actors and the environment.

This study must begin with a few delimitations and explanations regarding terminology that will be employed. I present these as juxtaposition propositions.

BOOMERS VS. GENERATIONS X, Y, AND Z

Generational cultures can be designated in varying ways. The most widely accepted labels have been put forth by Philip Bump in his article, "Here

Is When Each Generation Begins and Ends, According to Facts."[1] Synthesizing work conducted by the US Census Bureau, the Harvard Center, and Strauss and Howe, Bump suggests these designations:

- Greatest Generation, born before 1945
- Baby Boomers, born 1946–1964
- Generation X, born 1965–1984
- Generation Y, born 1975–2004 (overlapping Generation X)
- Millennials, born 1982–2004
- TBD, 2003–today.[2]

To complicate matters, I have suggested the older generations are more influenced by modernity while the younger generations are more influenced by postmodernity.[3] Though it is difficult to designate an arbitrary point at which the majority of a generation crosses the modernal divide, this article will assume these influences. I have made a lengthy case for this elsewhere.[4]

MODERNITY VS. POSTMODERNITY

To contrast modernity and postmodernity is beyond the scope and scale of this article. However, the genesis of these two views coupled with a meta-perspective on culture can frame our discussion.

Modernity roughly coincides with the emergence of education as the interpreter of knowledge. Emerging with the Reformation and gaining momentum in the Enlightenment, modernity viewed the mentor-mentee form of education as the arbitrator of civilization. Modernity hoped that through education, the world would become a better place. Therefore, while sitting at the feet of experts, neophytes could build a better life for themselves and others.

Somewhere around the beginning of the twentieth century, disenchantment with the modern experiment arose. Modernity hoped that its emphasis upon education and knowledge would usher in a new world of peace. Instead, it had created new powers who tapped their educational resources to create weapons of mass destruction. The carnage of World War I was a verification that modernity had failed, as witnessed through the most edu-

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[1] *The Atlantic* magazine, March 25, 2014.

[2] Generation Z has been suggested as the descriptor for this generation by the *New York Times*, see Sabrina Tavernise, "A Younger Generation Is Being Born in Which Minorities Are the Majority," *New York Times*, May 17, 2012.

[3] Bob Whitesel, "Toward a Holistic in Postmodernal Theory of Change: The Four-forces Model of Change as Reflected in Church Growth Movement Literature," *The Journal of the American Society for Church Growth* (Fall 2008).

[4] Bob Whitesel, *Preparing for Change Reaction: How to Introduce Change in Your Church* (Indianapolis: The Wesleyan Publishing House, 2007), 53–56.

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cated countries on the earth becoming the most likely to devise new ways to kill people *en masse*.

The reaction first took hold in the art world, which employed an oxymoron (*postmodernity*) to describe a world in which humans move beyond the modern experiment (i.e. into *post*-modernity).[5] While modernity saw education from experts as the redeemer of culture, postmodernity began to prefer experience as its arbitrator of civilization. Modernity dictums such as "Get an education to get ahead" were replaced with postmodern maxims of "Try it; you may like it." Thus arose in postmodernity an emphasis upon experience as a better teacher than experts.

To highlight this, the terms *modern* and *postmodern* will be used to highlight the difference in leadership approaches between younger and older leaders. The reader is cautioned to not apply these descriptors too narrowly or too generally. Rather, the judicious academic should allow these categories to inform his or her analysis of leadership while also taking into account the context and the players.

ORGANIC VS. ORGANIZATION

Over time, the term *organic church* has been more palatable in Christian circles than the term *postmodern church*. For instance, my publisher rejected my use of the term *postmodern* in the chapter titles of a 2011 book, because of the perceived anti-religious bent of postmodernity. Thus, I chose the term *organic* because it is helpful when describing the New Testament concept of a church as an organism with its interconnected, inter-reliant parts as seen in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 1, and Colossians 1.

Theologian Emil Bruner also emphasized that though the church is a spiritual organism (requiring pastoring and spiritual growth), it is also an organization (necessitating management and administration).[6] Therefore, the term *organic organization* will be employed in this article to emphasize both elements.

I find it interesting that secular, postmodern, organizational theorists, such as the influential Mary Jo Hatch, have detected the organic metaphor as a designation for healthy organizations.[7] Hatch suggests that organic organizations embrace four conditions, which I will utilize in this discussion to frame how change mechanisms respond to them.

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[5] Eddie Gibbs in *Church Next* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 23, explains that though Frederico de Onis created the term *postmodern* in the 1930s, it was not until the 1960s that it gained popularity due to its use by art critics.

[6] Emil Bruner, *The Misunderstanding of the Church*, trans. Harold Knight (London: Lutterworth Press, 1952),15–18.

[7] Mary Joe Hatch, *Organizational Theory: Modern, Symbolic, and Postmodern Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 53–54.

Condition 1: Organic, postmodern leadership understands it is dependent on its environment. While a modern leadership approach might try to colonize or impose a leader's preferential culture upon another culture, according to Hatch, an organic approach adapts its leadership practices to the indigenous cultures in which it hopes to bring about change.

Condition 2: Organic, postmodern leadership envisions a dissonant harmony that must be cultivated between the varied parts in the organization.[8] While a modernist strategy might overlook parts of the organization in order to emphasize those organizational aspects with growth potential, the postmodern sees an interconnectedness that requires addressing weaknesses in addition to building upon strengths. (Biblical examples for this view may be inferred from I Corinthians 12:12, 14, 20, 27; Romans 12: 4–5; and Ephesians 4:12–13).

Condition 3: Organic organizations adapt continually to their changing environments. The organization learns from its environment, weeds out aspects that can be unhealthy, and learns which aspects can be embraced without compromising the mission or vision. To do so without compromising an underling mission, Kraft suggests this requires us to see Christ as "above but working through culture."[9] Eddie Gibbs elaborates by suggesting that behaviors, ideas, and products of a culture must be "sifted."[10] Using a colander metaphor, Gibbs suggests this is an incarnational approach when he writes, "He (Christ) acts redemptively with regard to culture, which includes judgment on some elements, but also affirmation in other areas, and a transformation of the whole."[11]

Condition 4: Organic uniqueness recognizes that certain species flourish in some environments and die in others. Hence, to Hatch what works in one organization cannot necessarily be franchised into another context. Therefore, Hatch and other postmodern theorists like Zalesnick reject the notions of "irrefutable" and "unassailable" leadership laws or rules that can be applied in a general manner.[12]

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[8] While Hatch utilizes the term *requisite harmony*, I have substituted the helpful term *dissonant harmony* as employed by Bruno Dyck and Frederick A. Starke, "The Formation of Breakaway Organizations: Observations and a Process Model," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 44 (1999): 792–822. I have applied the Dyke-Starke model to the church in Bob Whitesel, *Staying Power: Why People Leave the Church Over Change and What You Can Do About It* (Abingdon Press, 2003).

[9] Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1979), 113.

[10] Eddie Gibbs, *I Believe in Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), 120.

[11] Ibid., 92.

[12] See, for example, the hedgehog versus fox's comparison in Abraham Zalesnik *Hedgehogs and Foxes: Character, Leadership, and Commanding Organizations* (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2008). Zalesnik uses this metaphor of hedgehogs that live by unwavering rules with the more long-lived foxes that adapt to their environment.

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With the above understanding of generational depictions, the philosophical forces that inform them, the organization as organism, and the conditions of an organic organization, we can move on to compare two areas in which modern and postmodern leadership may differ. This is not to say these are the only or even most powerful areas in which they differ. I have compared and contrasted eight areas in my Abingdon Press release, *ORGANIX: Signs of Leadership in a Changing Church*, in which more depth on this discussion can be found. However, for the present article, I will delve into two aspects that were not discussed to this depth in the aforementioned book.

COMMAND-AND-CONTROL LEADERSHIP VS. COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

Modern leadership has customarily been associated with command-and-control leadership as depicted in Adam Smith's seminal book, *The Wealth of Nations*.[13] In this model, the role of the leader or manager is to command often-unwilling workers to pursue a goal while controlling their actions to attain it. Upon Smith's ideas, Frederick Taylor built Theory X, famously asserting, "The worker must be trimmed to fit the job."[14]

Postmodern leadership, not surprisingly, reacted against this emphasis on a leadership expert and instead embraced a consensus building and collaborative approach. Harrison Monarch describes the contrast as follows:

> The archaic command-and-control approach is shelved in favor of a culture in which managers admit they don't have all the answers and will implement and support team decisions. This means managers become the architects of that team dynamic rather than the all-seeing purveyors of answers. The result is a culture of trust and employee empowerment that is safe.[15]

Support for this approach can be found in the research of Bruno Dyck and Frederick A. Starke. Not only are they organizational theorists who study the formation of breakaway organizations (e.g. how organizations lose their change proponents), but they also participate on the boards of their churches. They have applied their understanding of breakaway organizations to what they have witnessed in churches.[16] Dyke and Starke found that pastors who dictate change (or even who align themselves with a subgroup

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[13] Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (1776; reprint, Chicago: University of Chicago press, 1976), books 1 and 4.

[14] Quoted by Daniel Boorstin, *The Americans: The Democratic Experience* (New York: Vintage, 1974), 368–369.

[15] Harrison Monarth, *Executive Presence: The Art of Commanding Respect Like a CEO* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2009), 55.

[16] Dyck and Starke, "The Formation of Breakaway Organizations," 792–822.

of change components who do so) will usually be pushed out by the status quo unless the leader demonstrates collaborative leadership. They discovered that the successful leader will build consensus for a change, even among the naysayers, before the change is implemented. They also discovered that implementing change too fast and without vetting it with the status quo results in failed change. Thus, change often fails in churches because it is not implemented in a collaborative fashion. Disturbingly, they also discovered an end result is that pastors and those proposing change are forced out of the church because they did not attain a unifying outcome.[17]

John Kotter is a Harvard management professor who wrote the seminal article (and the resultant book) on change, titled, *Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail*.[18] He states that the second step for bringing about change is to create a "guiding coalition" to generate that change. He found that when one person or one side pushes for change, the other sides will push back with the resultant change, creating division rather than progress. Kotter's solution is to create (as the second step of the eight-step process) a guiding coalition of both change proponents and the status quo who will bring change in a collaborative manner.

Best practices for the church: A leader must resist command-and-control tendencies and instead embrace approaches oriented toward collaboration. Best practices include Dyke and Starke's suggestions that church leaders go to the status quo and listen to their concerns before launching into a change.[19] While field-testing this, I have found that simply giving status quo members a hearing goes a long way to helping them feel that their voice and concerns are heard. Dyck and Starke also found that when an inevitable alarm event occurs through which some change begins to polarize the congregation, the collaborative pastor will bring the people together to grasp the common vision and cooperate on a solution.[20] Kotter even pushes the establishment of a guiding coalition to the top (second) of his eight tactical steps.

MOTIVATING BY VISION VS. MOTIVATING BY MISSION

Some confusion exists among practitioners regarding the difference between vision and mission. Kent Hunter and I, in an earlier book, sought to compare and contrast various ecclesial definitions of vision and mission and suggest an abridgment.[21]

[17] For more on this, see Whitesel, *Staying Power: Why People Leave the Church Over Change* and the chapter titled, "Go Slowly, Build Consensus, and Succeed" in *Preparing for Change Reaction*, 151–169.

[18] *Harvard Business Review*, January 2007.

[19] Dyck and Starke, "The Formation of Breakaway Organizations," 812–813.

[20] Ibid., 813–819.

[21] Bob Whitesel and Kent R. Hunter, *A House Divided: Bridging the Generation Gaps in Your Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 107.

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	George Barna[22]	Elmer L. Towns[23]	Whitesel/Hunter[24]
Mission:	A philosophic statement that undergirds the heart of your ministry.	Your ministry emphasis and your church gifting.	"What do we do?"
Vision:	A clear mental image of a preferable future imparted by God, and based on an accurate understanding of God, self, and circumstances.	Same as Barna.	"Where do we believe God is calling our church to go in the future?"

My experience has been that older generations, influenced by modernity, typically emphasize the vision. By this I mean they have a clear mental picture of the future, and they try to muster all of their forces to attain it. This can, and often does, result in a parade of different programs being promoted to the congregation, which often—by their sheer frequency—overwhelms and wears out the congregants. Burnout is often the result.

I have noticed that younger generations are more likely to emphasize the mission that undergirds these various visions. This is perhaps because they have witnessed this in their parents' congregations. According to Barna, a mission is "a philosophic statement that undergirds the heart of your ministry."[25] This leads postmodern-influenced leaders to emphasize less the different programs that are being implemented and instead to motivate by stressing the mission behind them.

An interview with Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella's in *USA Today* yields a useful example.[26] In the article, Nadella criticizes founding CEO Bill Gates for mixing up the difference between a mission and a vision. Nadella states, "It always bothered me that we confused an enduring mission with a temporal goal . . . When I joined the company in 1992, we used to talk about our mission as putting a PC in every home, and by the end of the decade we have done that, at least in the developed world."

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[22] George Barna, The Power of Vision: How You Can Capture and A*pply God's Vision for Your Ministry (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1992), 28, 38–39.*

[23] Elmer L. Towns, Vision Day: Capturing the Power of Vision (Lynchburg, Virginia*; Church Growth Institute, 1994), 24–25.*

[24] Whitesel and Hunter, A House *Divided, 107.*

[25] Barna, *The Power of Vision*, 28.

[26] Marco della Cava, "Microsoft's Satya Nadella Is Counting on Culture Shock to Drive Growth," *USA Today*, February 20, 2017.

Nadella was right, because "putting a PC in every home" is not a mission—it is a vision. It is something that can be reached, can be pictured in one's mind, and is temporally bound. Every house having a PC is something that can be envisioned. That is why every house today does not have an IBM PC. Instead, many have Apple Macs.

A mission, however, drives the company and its values, therefore shaping its decisions. It is much bigger and grander than a vision.

When Steve Jobs was luring Bill Scully from PepsiCo to become CEO of Apple, Jobs shared a mission, not a vision, saying: "Do you want to spend the rest of your life selling sugared water, or do you want a chance to change the world?"[27]

A mission is just like that. It is exciting, world changing, but somewhat imprecise so it could manifest in many different outcomes (i.e. visions). It is also not temporally bound, like "putting a PC in every home." A mission drives values and decisions through many different projects.

Apple's mission reminds me of the trend I see in my youthful seminary students to emphasize mission over vision. They correctly understand that mission can be realized in many different visions. Apple's mission would be realized in varied visions, including the vision to revolutionize the way music is purchased via iTunes and the vision to miniaturize the computer into a handheld device, etc. The result is that Apple devotees have a passion that IBM followers do not. Apple has an ongoing mission that continues to be realized in various visions. As a result, the clarity of Apple's mission, best exemplified in Apple's "1984" Super Bowl ad, unleashes a passion in its followers.[28]

Best practices for the church: When leading younger leaders, it may be helpful to emphasize the mission while letting many subcategories of vision come and go as opportunity rises and wanes. The younger generations appear to want to be reminded of the mission but allowed to create multiple visions of how it may be carried out. They do not want to stick to one idea or tactic but rather one mission. Therefore, the mission becomes more important than a time- and measurement-constrained vision which often influenced their parents' church.

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[27] John Sculley and John A. Byrne, *Odyssey: Pepsi to Apple: A Journey of Adventure, Ideas, and the Future* (New York: HarperCollins, 1987), 90.

[28] The "1984" Apple commercial is available on YouTube and is best described by MacWorld writer Adelia Cellini in the following: "Apple wanted the Mac to symbolize the idea of empowerment, with the ad showcasing the Mac as a tool for combating conformity and asserting originality. What better way to do that than have a striking blonde athlete take a sledgehammer to the face of that ultimate symbol of conformity, Big Brother?" "The Story Behind Apple's '1984' TV Commercial: Big Brother at 20," *MacWorld*, 21 (1), 18.

Though they may not realize it, Hatch's four conditions of organic organizations are reflected in the postmodern emphasis upon an unchanging mission in lieu of the temporal- and quantitative-bound nature of vision. For example, "Condition 1: An organic dependency on its environment" is reflected in the postmodern emphasis that church should not be a closed, self-contained system; but rather, it should be an organic congregation tied to those it serves inside and outside the organization. Hatch's "Condition 2: An organic harmony among the parts" is reflected in the postmodern propensity toward dissonant harmony among multiple constituencies. "Condition 3: Organic adaption to the surroundings" is exhibited as these organic experiments adapt to the culture of their surroundings by changing visions as the environment changes. Finally, "Condition 4: Organic uniqueness from other organizations" is mirrored in their intentions not to franchise what works in other churches but to create indigenous and elastic visions that serve an immutable mission.

THE TIP OF AN ICEBERG

These approaches to change are just the tip of an iceberg of divergences between the leadership modality of the modernist and postmodernist. I have compared and contrasted more areas in my book, *ORGANIX: Signs of Leadership in a Changing Church*. The reader may be interested in how I delve into the striking difference regarding how younger generations offset the disadvantages of homogeneity. For a thorough investigation of the distinctions between modern and postmodern leadership, I would encourage the reader to consult this volume.

About the Author

Bob Whitesel, DMin, PhD, holds two doctorates from Fuller Seminary and is the founding professor of Wesley Seminary at Indiana Wesleyan University. A speaker/consultant on church health, organic outreach, and multiethnic ministry, he is the award-winning author of 13 books published by national publishers. National magazines have stated, "Bob Whitesel is the change agent" (*Ministry Today*) and "Bob Whitesel is the key spokesperson on change in the church today" (*Outreach Magazine*). The faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary awarded him The Donald McGavran Award for outstanding scholarship in church growth, and The Great Commission Research Network awarded him The Donald A. McGavran Award for outstanding leadership in church growth.

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A HOLISTIC FRAMEWORK FOR MEASUREMENT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL CHURCH PLANTING

Samuel Lee

Abstract

For too long in missions, financial stewardship (Business as Mission) or conversions (Tentmaking) has sufficed as a measuring tool for mission endeavors. However, Fresh Expressions of Church (FXC), such as a "café church," have enlightened us to the need not only to be governed by the quantifiable elements of reconciliation or financial flourishing, but also to evaluate outcomes of transformation, i.e., to be accountable. The purpose of this article is to provide specific historical examples as a basis for Entrepreneurial Church Planting (ECP) and develop a systematic way to evaluate ECP through the creation of a holistic framework for metrics relevant to ECP activities and its assessment indicators.

INTRODUCTION

In many cases, mission to people on the margins assumes that "our" task is to meet "their" needs spiritually or economically. Whether the need be for the good news of Christ (the Great Commission—evangelism/reconciliation/discipleship) or for bread and a place to work (the Creation Commission—cultivation/productivity/stewardship), we tend to think that resources emerge from external hands.[1] This has resulted in a misplaced

[1] Christopher L. Heuertz and Christine D. Pohl, *Friendship at the Margins: Discovering Mutuality in Service and Mission*, Resources for Reconciliation (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2010), 19.

emphasis on either financial stewardship or conversion as sufficient measuring tools for mission endeavors. However, Fresh Expressions of Church (FXC), such as a "café church," have enlightened us to the need not only to be governed by the quantifiable elements of reconciliation or financial flourishing, but also to evaluate outcomes of transformation, i.e., to be accountable.[2] Thus, it is presumed that a focus on relationships or holistic transformation (the Great Commandment—transformation/new creation) in FXC may help guide metrical analysis for mission endeavors. The thesis of this article is that missional success should broaden its metrics beyond economics and evangelization to include relational dynamics. In order to achieve this goal, this article will suggest a holistic framework for metrics of economic-ecclesial models.[3] Here economic-ecclesial models refer to Tentmaking, Business as Mission, or Fresh Expressions of Church. I call these three economic-ecclesial models Entrepreneurial Church Planting (ECP).[4] The genesis of an ECP can occur at either the business or church level, but what is essential is that these two spheres are integrated through relational connections. Regardless of which comes first, both models of ECP provide entrepreneurial approaches to form communities of Christ followers among unchurched people through businesses in the marketplace. ECP will be discussed later in more detail. This study will attempt to integrate the Creation Commission (economic vitality) with the Great Commission (evangelistic vitality) by means of the Great Commandment (relational vitality). This article will be organized as follows: 1) this study will provide specific historical examples as a basis for Entrepreneurial Church Planting ministries. 2) It will consider what relationship with the poor looks like from a biblical perspective and from the history of Christian social action. 3) It will attempt to create a holistic framework for measurement of ECP.

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[2] A fresh expression of church is defined as "a new gathering or network that engages mainly with people who have never been to church" (http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/about/whatis). Michael Moynagh uses the term "new contextual churches" to describe the Fresh Expression movement as follows: Christian communities that serve people mainly outside the church, belong to their culture, make discipleship a priority, and form a new church among the people they serve. They are a response to changes in society and to the new missional context that the church faces in the global North.

[3] Here economic-ecclesial refers to the combination of business endeavors with community-based spiritual aims. An ecclesial model may involve a community outside of a local church that seeks to influence the wider community as a leavening agent, or it may actually take the form of a church, as in ECP.

[4] Samuel Lee, "Can We Measure the Success and Effectiveness of Entrepreneurial Church Planting?" *Evangelical Review of Theology* 40, no. 4 (October 2016): 327.

https://place.asburyseminary.edu/gcrj/vol9/iss2/1

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF ECP

The church has engaged the marketplace through various forms throughout Christian history.[5] A brief investigation into the diverse Christian traditions illuminates this point; for example, one could consider Paul's tentmaking, the Nestorians, the Moravian missions, the Basel Mission, and the Methodist circuit riders, to name a few. Though Christian history offers a basis for the melding of a church plant with a business venture, this approach (the integration of economic activity with evangelism and church planting) was not widely accepted until the middle of the twentieth century. This might partly have been driven by the tendency historically for Christian missions to have emphasized one of three foci—the Great Commission (evangelism/reconciliation/discipleship), the Creation Commission (cultivation/productivity/stewardship), or the Great Commandment (transformation/new creation)—depending upon the time and place. For example, Celtic missionaries in the fifth century stressed the Great Commandment. They first established a loving relationship through fellowship, and this often led to belief in Christ.[6] Though evangelism was present, the core focus was on neighborly love as demonstrated by the Great Commandment.

Pushing forward chronologically, the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century is widely regarded as shifting the emphasis to the creation mandate.[7] Since Martin Luther emphasized the priesthood of all believers, the theological impetus was on calling and vocation. Due to Luther's great rediscovery of the priesthood of all believers, the sixteenth century was a time of great confidence in ordinary callings, human reason, and cultivation of the world, thus later birthing Protestant liberalism and, more recently, secularism.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, we can see another shift occurring with the focus on the Great Commission. Beginning with William Carey, many Christians began to conceive of the Great Commission as a mandate to fulfill. This resulted in numerous churches and mission societies reaching out to the heathen in non-Christian lands for purposes

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[5] See, for example, William J. Danker, *Profit for the Lord: Economic Activities in Moravian Missions and the Basel Mission Trading Company* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971); Michael Pocock, Gailyn Van Rheenen, and Douglas McConnell, *The Changing Face of World Missions: Engaging Contemporary Issues and Trends* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005); Tom A. Steffen and Mike Barnett, eds., *Business as Mission: From Impoverished to Empowered* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2006); James L. Lowery, *Case Histories of Tentmakers* (Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow Co., 1976).

[6] George G. Hunter, *The Celtic Way of Evangelism: How Christianity Can Reach the West Again* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000), 54.

[7] Hans-Werner Genischen, "Luther, Martin," in *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Mission,* ed. Gerald H. Anderson (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 416.

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of conversion and gospel proclamation.[8] At the end of the nineteenth century, European colonies witnessed a phenomenal growth in the number of converts as new Christian communities came into existence. Thus, we see the following three overarching frameworks for missional practice throughout history: the Great Commandment, the Creation Commission, and the Great Commission.

By the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, many church planters and Christian ministers sought to converge these missional paradigms into a holistic model by way of business. Major events such as decolonization, the rise of nationalism, and the cataclysmic destruction of two world wars provided a springboard for those changes. After 1945, with the movement toward decolonization in two-thirds of the world, the newly independent nations passed laws and policies that restricted the church's activities and forbade missionaries from entering their countries. However, restrictions and world events did not end the enterprise of the Great Commission; churches were now faced with the prospect of creating innovative methods for entering and serving in restricted countries. Various mission strategies have been used to capitalize on the growing variety of opportunities available to mission endeavors. Around the middle of the twentieth century, scholars such as Doug Sherman, William Hendricks, Michael Novak, and R. Paul Stevens became particularly interested in the role of business as a mission strategy. As a result, tentmaking, based on Paul's model in Acts 18:1–3, was reconsidered. People of all professions began to use their specialization to gain access to countries that restricted the church's activities and forbade missionaries from speading the gospel. While this model produced some fruit, limitations quickly began to surface. Tentmakers often experienced an ethical dilemma as they entered countries officially for work but then unofficially—and often illegally—engaged in evangelistic outreach. These missionaries also experiened financial strain that came with the tension of having to support themselves in a foreign context.

In the latter half of the twentieth century, more thought has been given to the strategic use of business for God's mission. The church realized that restricted access nations were eager to initiate economic reform and to grow their business sectors. While these countries would not permit missionaries to enter, many of them welcomed businesspeople. The merit of using business in global missions was taken seriously by churches, networks, and denominations, and the concept of Business as Mission (BAM) was fast gaining momentum in missions circles.[9] The term Business as Mission was

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[8] James A. Scherer, *Gospel, Church & Kingdom: Comparative Studies in World Mission Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2004), 36.

[9] M. Tunehag, W. McGee, and J. Plummer, "Business as Mission," Lausanne Occasional Paper no. 59, 2004, http://www.lausanne.org/documents/2004forum/ LOP59_IG30.pdf.

officially adopted at the Lausanne 2004 Forum Business as Mission Issue Group. From its inception, BAM has used business to assist in fulfilling the creation mandate (cultivation/productivity/stewardship) and the Great Commission (evangelism/reconciliation/discipleship).[10] However, in a similar predicament faced by Luther in the sixteenth century, an overenthusiastic stress on the creation mandate led BAM practitioners to relegate the church to merely one of several sacred venues advancing the kingdom of God. Furthermore, two-way interchange did not exist between missionaries and those who received the gospel and aid. The tendency was for missionaries to see themselves as superior to those served—often referred to as "heathens"—because missionaries were the distributers of both resources and the gospel. The poor heathen became more of an object to receive help or to "be fixed," rather than a person looked upon with dignity and empathy.

In recent years, another term of incorporating business (the Creation Commission), evangelism, and church planting (the Great Commission) with a focus on holistic transformation of a community and society (the Great Commandment) came on the scene.[11] It is called Fresh Expressions of Church (FXC), referring to church planting that is integrated with business in such a way that a synergetic revelation of the kingdom of God occurs. FXC is similar to BAM and Tentmaking in terms of both the integration of business and ministry and its openness to laity having a full role in ministry. In addition, for FXC, discipleship is part of the other two models. While FXC shares a common concern with BAM and Tentmaking endeavors, its focus differs; BAM is business oriented, Tentmaking is church oriented, and FXC is kingdom oriented. However, understandings of God's kingdom vary. Divergent conceptions of the kingdom of God have led to differing ideas of the calling of the church and an overemphasis on Christian social action.[12] Furthermore, currently no suitable measures to evaluate FXC activities are available.

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[10] For further discussion, see "Business as Mission Manifesto," 2004, Appendix I, http://www.lausanne.org/en/documents/lops/875-lop-59.html (accessed June 17, 2016).

[11] Ed Stetzer, "5 Future Trends of Church Planting," *Christianity Today*, April 25, 2016, http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2016/april/future-trends-of-church-planting.html (accessed June 30, 2016).

[12] According to Howard Snyder, a "biblically faithful, theologically sound," and contextually relevant understanding of God's reign must strike a balance between six tensions: 1) present versus future, 2) individual versus social, 3) spirit versus matter, 4) gradual versus climactic, 5) divine action versus human action, and 6) the church's relation to the kingdom. Howard A. Snyder, *Models of the Kingdom* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001), 13–17. Cf. Craig Ott, Stephen J. Strauss, and Timothy C. Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission: Biblical Foundations, Historical Developments, and Contemporary Issues* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 50.

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In sum, ECP such as Tentmaking, BAM, and FXC commonly use business strategically to assist in fulfilling the Creation Commission, the Great Commission, or the Great Commandment.[13] In both least-reached nations and post-Christendom nations, these economic-ecclesial models have become a unique way of fulfilling the mission of God.

While Tentmaking and BAM offered unique gifts to the church, they also restricted the church from embracing a truly holistic model for missions. For instance, Tentmaking and BAM tended to reflect errors made in previous Christain eras; Tentmaking focused on membership (quantitative metrics) rather than discipleship (qualitative metrics), which is the core of Jesus' Great Commission to his disciples (Mt 28:19).[14] BAM, on the other hand, unbalanced the scale in the other direction, focusing on financial stewardship as fullillment of the the Creation Commission. It was in light of this revelation that an evaluative swing occurred from counting conversions, to demonstrating financial stewardship, to centering towards holism. Questions arose about the most effective way to do missions that would demonstrate stewardship, accountability, and desirable outcomes, such as: 1) how to determine when a given mission's approach has produced a good return and 2) how to measure the effectiveness of that approach. Conversion rate (Tentmaking) or detecting revenue (BAM) were indicators used early on, but these metrics only focused on empirically measurable elements, neglecting intangible components such as transformed lives and community.[15]

It was in the aftermath of this reality that FXC was refocused with the hopes of pushing the envelope further toward the unification of the Great Commandment, the Great Commission, and the Creation Commission. FXC intends to offer loving relationships—with God and with others—in contrast to the predominant consumer-oriented relationships found in the world and in other models; relationality is at the core of FXC. Therefore, FXC pursues ongoing contact with potential believers and emphasizes the need to listen to what they are saying. For FXC, relationship becomes the central concept, because business and church planting occur within the context of relationships in the larger community. FXC believes that if a church/business achieves relational proximity with customers, it results in favorable social, financial, and spiritual outcomes.[16] Thus, FXC does not merely want

[13] For further discussion, see "Business as Mission Manifesto."

[14] Gilbert R. Rendle, *Doing the Math of Mission: Fruits, Faithfulness, and Metrics* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014), 12.

[15] Intangible attitudes are regularly measured by self-reports on the way people feel about issues or by examination of their behavior. Obviously, before transformed lives could be measured, it would need an operational definition.

[16] Samuel Lee and Mary E. Conklin, "Conceptualization of the Relational Proximity Framework in Christian Missions," *Journal of Asian Mission* 17, no. 1 (May 2016): 10.

relationships for business purposes. Part of its vision is being a good neighbor and helping the wider community, as well. That is, FXC's vision involves a social dimension, because social action makes relationships genuine. In the section following, I will continue this discussion by exploring in more detail what ECP's social action should look like.

ECP'S SOCIAL ACTION

As noted above, at the core of FXC is a focus on relationships. It appears that the relational factors of FXC enable the ECP to maintain balance between church planting and business activities. If so, what specific relational factors with the poor should ECP pursue? In order to establish the holistic framework, we need to consider what relationship with the poor looks like from a biblical perspective and from the history of Christian social action.

First, the Bible clearly tells us that we must act on behalf of the poor and for those who suffer injustice.[17] While Scripture is replete with examples that point to a theology of social action, this article will draw on two references that exemplify social responsibility for the poor. The first example is the prophet Amos who reminds us of our responsibility to others. David Hubbard, prompting us in his introductory remarks about the book of Amos, writes, "[O]ur worship must motivate and inform our acts of righteousness and justice towards all humanity, especially the poor, afflicted, and oppressed."[18] Amos' rebuke of Israel serves as a reminder that Christians are called to action on behalf of the marginalized and the poor.

A second example can be identified in the New Testament missional practice of both Jesus and the Holy Spirit. As David Bosch states, "once we recognize the identification of Jesus with the poor, we cannot any longer consider our own relation to the poor as a social ethics question; it is a gospel question."[19] Jesus laid the foundation for missional praxis. Luke also portrays the early church's practice of compassion and sharing in Acts 2:43–47; when God's Spirit came upon the people at Pentecost, they were empowered to care for everyone in their midst who was in need. This shows that God awakened believers' hearts to participate in his all-encompassing kingdom. In this way, the New Testament places a heavy emphasis on social action.

[17] Here the poor is not merely a socioeconomic class but is an "all-embracing category for those who are the victims of society, including the marginalized." David Jacobus Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, American Society of Missiology Series, no. 16 (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 436.

[18] David Allan Hubbard, *Joel and Amos: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries: 22b (Leicester; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 88.

[19] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 437.

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In *The Moral Vision of the New Testament*, Richard Hays presents several diverging yet interrelated images for the social mission of the church. Firstly, the church as a resurrection community embodies the kingdom of God "in the midst of a not-yet-redeemed world."[20] In this image, we see a focus on empowerment for mission. Secondly, the church has been understood as a countercultural community. In this portrayal, the church is called out and instructed not to conform to the ways of the world. This thematic emphasis has been popular in works like David Platt's *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream* or the older Donald Kraybill's *The Upside Down Kingdom*. Thirdly, the church may emphasize God's love for the world (Jn 1:29; 3:16). Hays, explaining this image, writes, "to manifest love and service within the community, the disciples who share in Jesus' mission to the world can hardly remain indifferent to those outside the community of faith."[21] Fourthly, the church may be a community of liberation. The Lukan lens is most helpful in this regard, because Luke has long been noted for his particular concern for the vulnerable in both his gospel and Acts. The theme of liberation is pneumatic in that, "where the Spirit is at work, liberation is underway."[22] A theme that runs through these four motifs is that God's people transformed by his love and shaped by the inner life of the Trinity are called to be God's agents to care for the poor and liberate those imprisoned by unjust societal structures.

We find these motifs modeled as we consider a brief historical sketch of Christian social action in the global North. As early as the seventeenth century, the Religious Society of Friends protested the treatment of prisoners and their living conditions, especially for children imprisoned with their mothers.[23] Starting in 1865, the Salvation Army also demonstrated what faith in action looked like. They established schools in Britain in order to teach children who were unable to attend public schools how to read. The faithfulness of the Salvation Army's care for the poor across time, even to the present, is legendary.[24] Timothy Smith, a social historian, reminds us that attention to social issues characterized the post-1865 era in America.[25]

[20] Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 198.

[21] Ibid., 145.

[22] Ibid., 135.

[23] Jim Powell, "William Penn, America's First Great Champion for Liberty and Peace," *The Freeman*. http://www.quaker.org/wmpenn.html (accessed May 17, 2016).

[24] Roger J. Green, "William Booth's Theology of Redemption," *Christianity Today* 26. http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-26/2627.html (accessed June 17, 2016).

[25] Timothy Lawrence Smith and Alfred D. Chandler, *Revivalism and Social Reform: American Protestantism on the Eve of the Civil War* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), 148–49.

While the dominant preoccupation was with personal, spiritual faith and the preparation of souls for another world, attention to "poverty, workingmen's rights, the liquor traffic, slum housing, and racial bitterness"[26] surged. Seminaries began to stress sociology, and settlement work was found in many large cities. Several of those classified as perfectionists theologically taught that a sanctified Christian "must relieve the poor, visit the sick and imprisoned, and instruct the ignorant in the ways of the Lord."[27] For example, Charles Finney was deeply committed to such social transformation.[28] As a leading evangelist of the Second Great Awakening, Finney called for the reformation of humankind and served as founder and president of Oberlin College. Finney brought a great deal of impetus to the female role in social action and Christian ministry through revivalism, in addition to joining the fight against slavery.

Furthermore, the inner-city missions that are associated with Chicago, Pacific Garden Mission, and New York City illustrate a concern to help the down-and-out in American society. Even though the vibrancy of social action by Christians waned as America entered the twentieth century, the social action associated with the Civil Rights Movement aroused congregants once again. One can note the presence of clergy at the forefront of the marches led by Martin Luther King Jr. in Selma, Alabama.

A gamut of responses by evangelicals emerged following the Civil Rights Movement. Some Christians had eagerly awakened from their inactive slumber to participate in the movement for racial equality; others had stood mutely on the sidelines, perplexed about the church's role in the political and social tensions of the era. Out of this crusade for racial justice came concerns about the moral fiber of the evangelical church. Calls for a radical examination of their spiritual roots and heritage abounded. In 1977, one of the more influential books that attempted to honestly assess complacent Christian praxis was Ron Sider's *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*. Common to many of the writers was the proposal that one's life needed to bear witness to holistic gospel transformation.[29] In other words, an inner transformation needed to be reflected in one's action, or as James 2:17 says, "In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."[30]

What then has occurred is a maturation of evangelical assistance to the needy in which early, well-meaning attempts sometimes resulted in harm-

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[26] Ibid., 148.

[27] Ibid., 155.

[28] Donald W. Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988), 88.

[29] Timothy Bradshaw, *Grace and Truth in the Secular Age* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 1998), 144.

[30] NIV.

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ing the very people they were trying to assist. Christians involved in the spheres of sociology, anthropology, political science, and business began to join the crusade to help the needy, and, in doing so, they brought greater clarity to effective holistic praxis. Thus, a more thorough consideration emerged regarding the short- and long-term consequences of proposed assistance and of the efficacious ways of administrating ministry. Exemplary of this paradigmatic shift are the books, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development* and *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor*.[31] Especially, a widely used textbook among Christian institutions, *When Helping Hurts* offers a way for Christians to engage in holistic transformational development. The popularity of this text has resulted in other authors extending the discussion on holistic ministry, as can be seen through works like the recently published *Advocating for Justice: An Evangelical Vision for Transforming Systems and Structures*.

Maturation in evangelical missional praxis resulted in the movement from transactional service to holistic transformational development.[32] Transactional service, often taking the form of handouts, is limited because it rarely involves ongoing, transformative interaction with the needy; in this way, the relational dimension is limited to a one-way exchange because service systems are based on inadequacies.[33] Consequently, much of the transactional service ends up leading to an unhealthy dependency by the poor. On the other hand, holistic transformational development, using the model of partnerships, is predicated upon relationships and capacities. Theologically, holistic trasnsformational development grounds relationships in both the Great Commandment (person-to-God) and the Great Commission (person-to-person), so someone who has been transformed then reaches out to someone in need. This shift in thinking further posits an understanding of poverty alleviation based upon the concept of biblical stewardship (person-to-creation); specifically, thinking patterns are transformed regarding humanity's right relationship with creation (Ge 1:26–28). Holistic transformational development helps us realize who we are as co-creators

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[31] Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert, *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor—and Yourself* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2009).

[32] Ram A. Cnaan and Stephanie C. Boddie, *The Invisible Caring Hand: American Congregations and the Provision of Welfare* (New York; London: New York University Press, 2002), 10–11; John Perkins, *Restoring At-Risk Communities: Doing It Together and Doing It Right* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 163–80; John McKnight, *The Careless Society: Community and Its Counterfeits* (New York: BasicBooks, 1995), x–xiii.

[33] John McKnight, "Why 'Servanthood' Is Bad: Are We Service Peddlers or Community Builders?" *The Other Side* 31, no. 6 (November 1995): 2.

with God in our cultivation of the world in all of our activities.[34] In this way, holistic transformational development integrates whole-life discipleship (the Great Commission and the Great Commandment) with a call to cultivate the world (the Creation Commission).

As North American evangelicals have shifted their attention to helping the poor holistically, a growing number of churches discovered their *raison d'etre* in the process, and churches have become beacons of help and hope in their neighborhoods. What then is emerging is that evangelical social action is built on the trifold mission of relief assistance, transformational development, and structural change. Some churches are now embracing advocacy to bring attention to needed reforms in institutions of power.[35] Even though evangelical discourse on advocacy still largely remains individualistic or community based, a few voices are emerging that engage structures to bring about kingdom-based transformation that equalizes access and the use of societal resources to those who are marginalized by current social arrangements.[36] This evangelical advocacy seeks to level the playing field by ensuring justice, equality, freedom, sustainability, and shalom as a foretaste and embodiment of God's kingdom. The problem is exacerbated because few people show love to the needy and help the marginalized to create prosperity for their families and communties through the work of their hands. What is thus needed is a framework for empowerment toward transforming social structures within their sphere of influence. Thus, some evangelical voices are now combining holistic transformation with advocacy.

Taken together, the ultimate goal of the social mission of the church is to participate with the God of righteousness and justice in championing the cause of the weak and oppressed. The Exodus narrative illustrates well how

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[34] Greg Forster, "Theology That Works," *Oikonomia Network*, August 5, 2013. http://oikonomianetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Theology-that-Works-v2-FINAL.pdf; Stewardship comes from the same Greek word (*oikonomia*) as economics, which refers to "the care for our common home" or "the art of living together." Howard A. Snyder, *Liberating the Church: The Ecology of Church & Kingdom* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1983), 61.

[35] Brian Steensland and Philip Goff, *The New Evangelical Social Engagement* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014), 252–57; Gregg A. Okesson, "A Theology of Institutions: A Survey of Global Evangelical Voices," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 40, no. 1 (January 2016): 38, 43; Mark R. Amstutz, *Evangelicals and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 113–17.

[36] Refer to "For the Health of the Nation," which is a 2004 document produced by the National Association of Evangelicals, http://www.ricklove.net/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/For_The_Health_Of_The_Nation1.pdf. Steensland and Goff, *The New Evangelical Social Engagement*, 254.

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God liberated the people of Israel from Egyptian economic, social, political, and spiritual oppression.[37] Social participation necessitates solidarity with those who cry under the weight of economic, political, social, and spiritual injustice. It is not enough to merely acknowledge oppression; solidarity with suffering requires connecting the dots between sound biblical theology and transformative praxis. Since solidarity is multifaceted, it should include the elements of relief, development, and structural change based upon context and need.

In view of all that has been mentioned thus far, an appropriate vision of ecclesial social mission with the poor involves being a countercultural community as participants in God's mission, "because to be church means to share in the mission of Jesus, which is to preach, to serve, and to witness with his whole heart to the kingdom of God."[38] Here a countercultural community is a missional community called out but sent into the world to act for God's universal mission. This missional community, then, requires both gathering and dispersing, exclusion and embrace, and institution and organism.[39] Borrowing from Abraham Kuyper, the church as an *institution* maintains its distance from society and retains its missional focus in calling people to itself and equipping them to be disciples of Jesus as shown in Ephesians 4.[40] The church as an *organism*, however, does not hide its light or withhold its salt from the world. Rather, informed by God's self-giving love and guided by scriptural precepts as opposed to societal norms, the body of Christ goes out to the world[41] and seeks to transform the world by forming transformative social justice networks.[42] Accordingly, the church as *institution* and *organism* interdependently bears witness to the five marks of mission: 1) "to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom, 2) to teach, baptize, and nurture new believers, 3) to respond to human need by loving service,

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[37] Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 272.

[38] Stephen B. Bevans and Roger Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today*, American Society of Missiology Series, no. 30 (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), 306.

[39] R. Paul Stevens, *The Other Six Days: Vocation, Work, and Ministry in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans; Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishers, 1999), 211; R. Paul Stevens, *Liberating the Laity: Equipping All the Saints for Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 22; Miroslav Volf, "A Vision of Embrace: Theological Perspectives on Cultural Identity and Conflict," *Ecumenical Review* 47, no. 2 (April 1995): 200–205.

[40] Gordon Graham, *The Kuyper Center Review* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2010), 78.

[41] Ibid., 79.

[42] Timothy J. Keller, *Generous Justice: How God's Grace Makes Us Just* (New York, NY: Dutton, Penguin Group USA, 2010), 145–46.

4) to seek to transform unjust structures of society, and 5) to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth."[43] To use James Davison Hunter's words, the church is the "faithful presence within,"[44] and it aims to reflect holistic gospel transformation in its action.

As can be seen from the scriptural passages, historical examples, and the emergence of a countercultural vision in harmony with the early church, it is evident that the church has decisively stood in solidarity with the poor and marginalized by meeting their needs and in seeking justice and shalom throughout the centuries. Across time, the church has functioned politically, economically, educationally, and as a family, but its transcendence comes from allowing the reign of Christ to dominate all spheres. Therefore, the God-given role of the church in society is to become neighborly to the poor and needy in every aspect of life as God became a neighbor to us all.[45] If ECP rediscovers this vision, the doorway will be opened widely to evangelism, reconciliation to God, self, others, and creation, and the flourishing of humanity.

A HOLISTIC FRAMEWORK FOR MEASUREMENT OF ECP

Thus far, we have examined the eschatological "not-yet" gaze on the social nature and the mission of the church for contemporary missional praxis. Hopefully this discussion has provided a theoretical and theological framework for contemporary Christian relationships with the poor. It is, therefore, cautiously assumed that genuine spiritual transformation and human flourishing (the Great Commission and the Creation Commission) occur through loving, relational interaction with God and others (the Great Commandment). Thus, if an assessment tool of ECP centers on relationships,[46]

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[43] The General Synod of the Church of England adopted the Five Marks of Mission in 1996. Cf. *Mission in the Twenty-First Century: Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission*, eds. Andrew F. Walls and Cathy Ross (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), xiv.

[44] James Davison Hunter, *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 237–54.

[45] Kōsuke Koyama, "Neighbor: The Heartbeat of Christ-Talk," *The Living Pulpit* 11, no. 3 (July 2002): 24.

[46] Bryant L. Myers' book entitled, *Walking with the Poor*, highlights "relationship" in all kinds of ways as the link. This book also talks about assessment as well (i.e., who is the assessment for, what should be assessed, who has a voice in developing the assessment apparatus, etc.). Though those metrics tools cannot be directly used for the type of assessment that the research hopes to do, they contain many helpful ideas and principles that may help the researcher develop an assessment tool. In measuring ECP ministries, the following indicators will enable us to get an idea of whether the ECP church/business solves its target economic, social, and evangelistic problems and determine whether an individual, community, and nation have been transformed.

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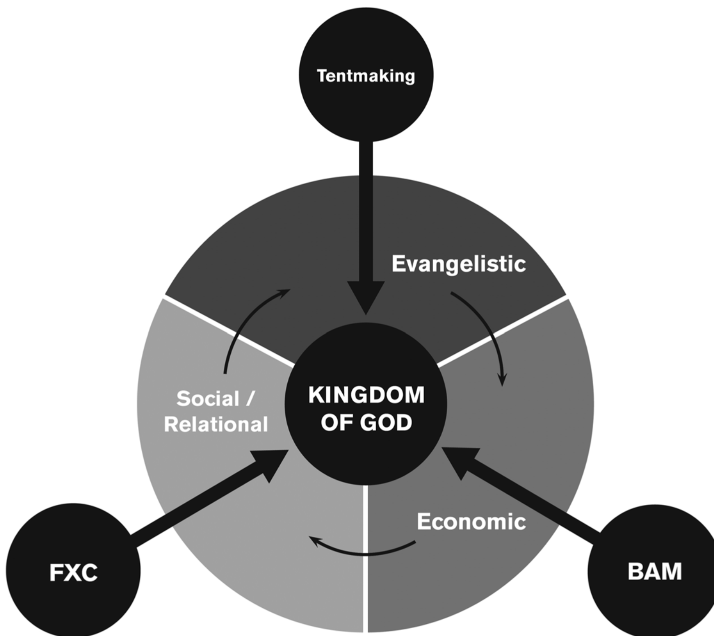
in the three other models (Tentmaking, BAM, and FXC), their deficiencies might be corrected. Here loving, relational interaction with God and others (the Great Commandment) involves the Holy Spirit's call for God's people to apply the relational commission of love for God and others in their roles and responsibilities (the Great Commission). Thus, it should be noted that evangelization is a chief priority in the gospel proclamation of the church, and that the Holy Spirit is the prime transforming agent of that gospel proclamation. He empowers believers with various gifts to continue the mission of Jesus Christ and the Father in the world. We thus can observe a type of holistic synergy between the Holy Spirit's power and the pouring out of his gifts upon all flesh; the Spirit empowers believers for partnership with God and others toward global holistic transformation.

With the above discussion in mind, I developed a holistic foundation for metrics. The following diagram may serve as a framework for tracking church planting and business effectiveness of ECP.

Diagram 1 seeks to provide an integrated model that demonstrates that instead of separating ECP metrics of success into the three categories of financial stewardship (BAM), versus evangelism and church planting (Tentmaking), versus relationality (FXC), mission endeavors should be

DIAGRAM 1.

ECP's Holistic Framework for Measurement



measured by the "functional integration" of ministry.[47] The functional integration of ministry indicates that each ministry is functionally integrated so that a change in the social sector will influence economic and evangelistic sectors to create change. Furthermore, the diagram above implies that all three of these ministries have the same goal—the kingdom of God. My thesis is that ECP coalesces all elements reflecting the coming of the kingdom by proclaiming the gospel and making disciples (the Great Commission), becoming neighborly to the poor and needy (the Great Commandment), and seeking the shalom of creation through stewardship (the Creation Commission).[48]

Though ECP seeks to offer a holistic paradigm that unites evangelistic vitality with economic sustainability, metrics have been complicated by a perceived need for quantitative outcomes. For example, Tentmaking has emphasized the quantitative scale (numbers or activity),[49] while BAM has sided with an economic emphasis. Besides the inherent complexities of uniting these two visions together, FXC's additional emphasis on the social dimension only heightens the need to have a holistic metric centered on the kingdom of God. However, as mentioned above, no suitable measures to evaluate FXC activities are currently available.

Therefore, we now must explore relationality further in terms of the metric, due to a current lack of metrical interest. While Tentmaking quantified evangelization, and BAM measured profitablity, little has been offered in terms of a metric for relationality. Thus, I created ECP's holistic assessment tool that assists in fleshing out what the holistic framework for measurement of ECP centered on relationships (the Great Commandment) might entail. I assume that relational connection may serve as an entry point for both personal and community-based transformation. In other words, the social dimension will open doors to evangelism, reconciliation to God, self, others, creation, and the flourishing of humanity. It is believed that with clear and relevant ways to assess these three outcomes, accountability can occur, and effectiveness can be evaluated in ECP efforts.

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[47] I adapt Charles Kraft's functional integration of culture model, adjusting this to ECP. For more information on the functional integration of culture, refer to Charles H. Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 122–26; Jay Moon, "Holistic Discipleship: Integrating Community Development in the Discipleship Process," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, January 1, 2012, 17–18.

[48] Snyder, *Models of the Kingdom*, 153. Snyder pointedly remarks that we are not kingdom builders but kingdom workers, because the kingdom of God is God-initiated, God-oriented, God-centered, God-fulfilled, and God-glorified. Newbigin also strongly asserts that mission is not our business, but God's.

[49] Lovejoy, *The Measure of Our Success*, 26; Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the Church* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2009), xvi–xvii.

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The focus of this measurement tool is on multifaceted relationships, because it is in relational space where holistic transformation occurs. As implied by Diagram 2, relationality requires progressing from an intial connection to a more rooted relationship. Because the holistic framework for measurement of ECP assumes that all three dimensions are necessary for a synergetic revelation of God's kingdom, I have provided a chart below that explores in more detail the role relationality plays into this metric. ECP's holistic assessment indicators imply how to maintain balance between church planting and business activities through three types of relationship—initial, rooted, and transforming relationships. To push the use of this holistic metric for ECP ahead, further discussion of how to make the three relationships a reality is put forward in Chart 1 below.

Each indicator listed above taps into different aspects of the relationships found across the dimensions in the holistic framework for measurement. Intentional initial relationship provides specific examples of ways to personally relate to people in the neighborhood. These activities may take people out of their comfort zone, particularly when venturing into the neighborhood. Yet, the neighborhood is where the people are. They need to become known as they are. Initial relationship actions range from organizing a com-

DIAGRAM 2.

ECP's Relational-Centered Framework for Measurement

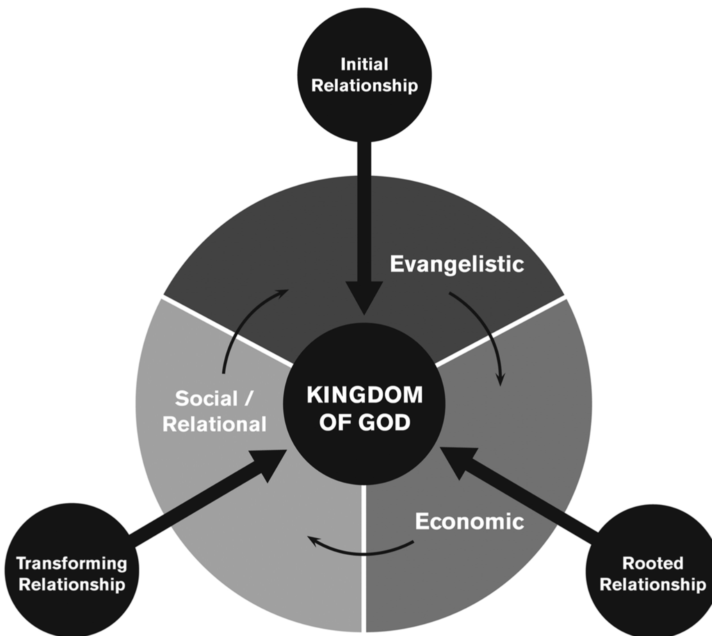

CHART 1.

Operational Indicators of Three Relationship Types

Initial Relationship	Rooted Relationship	Transforming Relationship
• Introduction of the church and yourself to the neighborhood	• Hosting job fairs for the unemployed	• Developing a neighborhood quality-of-life plan
• Saturday morning fellowship sessions within the church	• Providing space for people to learn how to find, apply for, and keep a job	• Taking care of the local environment together
• Social committee participation	• Initiating a new family crisis support program for non-custodial parents	• Increased awareness of neighborhood needs
• Serving meals weekly	• Providing reentry housing to help people adjust to society	• Forming networks of holistic transformation
• Hosting a barbecue competition for the neighborhood	• Offering mentoring assistance for people to become self-supporting	• Collaboration with local churches
• Organizing community gatherings	• Resume training and job follow-up	• Racial integration and collaboration
• Accompanying/standing in solidarity with people on trial	• Increased economic dynamism based on employment numbers	•Enhancing the sense of community ownership
• Visiting mentally/ physically handicapped, those with addictions, and people with a criminal record	• Socioeconomic integration in which employees give back to society	• Manifestations of collective neighorly efforts toward aid and care

munity fellowship to providing a mutually recognized gathering venue for local events, such as hosting a neighborhood meal once a month. Actions may include standing outside the church in the morning with a coffee urn to attract people by offering a free hot drink. Additionally, initial relationship allows an opportunity to demonstrate the incarnate presence of Jesus and the good news in a neighborhood of need. For example, ECP practitioners can help their neighbors come alive in God by revealing greater spiritual understanding and depth to their Christian walk in conversations. Accordingly, the activities I listed under initial relationship help in demolishing barriers between church and neighborhood and between people and people.

The second dimension, rooted relationship, happens as an ECP seeks not only to extend beyond boundaries, but also to open up new spaces

for economic productivity.[50] As an ECP begins to respond to neighborly problems, new spaces for the wellbeing of the neighbors and neighborhood emerge. For example, an ECP hosts job fairs and puts up notices that the fair is being held to help the unemployed find jobs. Additionally, some places specifically collect clothes so people can be dressed appropriately for job interviews. Furthermore, ECP provides space where people can learn how to find, apply for, and keep a job. ECP is willing to come alongside new hires to teach them how to function in a work setting. All these multiple spaces can create neighborly love between Christians and neighbors. Interestingly, one facet of rooted relationship is very similar to the idea of "reflected love," which refers to lived-out expresssions of paying forward what a person has received from another. Both rooted relationship and reflected love find their expression in their economic activities and transactions. By working alongside neighbors in relationships that lead to economic flourishing, people trust each other and create value for one another. In this way, rooted relationship can be measured in part by improved responsible stewardship that leads to mutual economic development in the neighborhood.

The last dimension, transforming relationship, indicates participation in the *missio Dei* (divine self-giving). As people get involved with the church and their neighbors, they recover the *imago Dei* in rooted relationship. They come to recognize that the flourishing of their community is not an end in itself; rather, the community seeks to point beyond itself to the kingdom of God. This transforming relationship can be gauged in part in areas such as developing a quality-of-life plan for the community, cleaning up a messy area of a city, and collaborating with local churches across racial barriers. All of these examples involve mutual collaboration between church members and neighbors for the common good. Furthermore, it is through the level of volunteering for wider social change that one may survey neighborly collaboration occurring in a local community. Illustrations of possible variables of neighborly collaboration include: intentional mixing of black, white, brown, and yellow individuals to break down barriers; internship programs for the steady maintenance of neighborly collaboration; and the level of participation in neighborly collaborative programs. Success would consider the formation of new friendship circles in neighborly collaboration. For example, transforming relationship indicators will track teens released from drug and alcohol rehab programs to make sure they have a suitable place with a positive environment in which to live, along with required participation in volunteer projects so they could learn the benefit of helping others. What most people do not understand is that new friendship circles need to be formed upon release from a rehab program. This is because old friends support their involvement with drugs or alcohol. Thus, success is to see that an increasing number of teens involved with an ECP are getting training or finding employment.

[50] Alan J. Roxburgh, *Missional: Joining God in the Neighborhood*, Allelon Missional Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2010), 103–4.

Collectively, the indicators for each relationship type are tabulated to help ECP practitioners clearly describe how far an ECP has come towards its outcomes. They are also listed to deepen ECP practitioners' understanding of how and when ECP activities should be conducted to meet holistic transformation. Note that, rather than the focus being primarily on counting ECP activities, the variables are categorized to supply a systematic way of measuring ECP's *neighborly* movements towards its outcomes. In other words, the variables listed above are intended to give more attention to the quality of relational connection rather than numbers. The danger with statistics is that data tends to imply a one-size-fits-all approach without navigating context or multiple causation. In this way, numbers are not the most helpful indicator of goal achievement.[51] However, since counting ECP's resources and activities is at the root of ECP's outcomes, quantification cannot be totally discounted in the development of metrics. Therefore, both quantified numbers and descriptions of ECP's outcomes need to be taken into account regarding effectiveness.

Let us briefly consider the usefulness of a holistic framework for metrics for ECP outcomes and ECP's holistic assessment indicators. If used rightly, the framework and indicators may provide a way of visualizing how various relational activities generate initial, rooted, and transforming relationship in the church, in the business, or in the wider community. Additionally, tracking of indicators may foster a relational assessment of holistic transformation. Another use of metrics may be to see if an ECP is progressing from initial relationship to rooted relationship, and eventually to transforming relationship. At this juncture, ECP practitioners may need to quantify initial relationship activities to see if they have diversified across racial or social class lines over time. Greater diversification or relational growth will be taken to indicate the progression of relationship. If initial relationship activities are undertaken for four years and fail to advance to rooted relationship, activities need to be improved or replaced by other programs. I suggest four years because this should give the ECP enough time to be economically sustainable, socially connected, and spiritually progressive.[52] We must not be afraid to honestly evaluate the current level in our ministries, because it is the only way to move forward in relational growth.

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[51] Gilbert R. Rendle, *Doing the Math of Mission: Fruits, Faithfulness, and Metrics* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014), 59–60.

[52] Literature on startups and on church planting usually suggests that it takes four years for either a church plant or business to achieve a level of survivability. Refer to Ryan Jorden, "What Are the Real Small Business Survival Rates?" *Linkedin*, September 15, 2014. https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20140915223641-170128193-what-are-the-real-small-business-survival-rates (accessed January 17, 2017); Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird, "The State of Church Planting in the United States: Research Overview and Qualitative Study of Primary Church Planting Entities," *Journal of the American Society for Church Growth*, July 1, 2008, 8.

CONCLUDING REMARK

In this article, I developed a systematic way to evaluate ECP through the creation of a holistic framework for metrics relevant to ECP activities and its assessment indicators. I speculated that the relational view of ECP to address the three commissions (the Creation Commission, the Great Commision, and the Great Commandement) offers a corrective to the tension between business (economics) and ministry (evangelism/church planting). In particular, the framework highlights that proximity of relationships is a significant standard against which an ECP enterprise can operate and measure. Furthermore, it underscores that universal standards for practitioners of ECP to measure mission endeavors do not exist. Instead, proximities of relationships, both in Community and in *a* community, are a significant standard against which an ECP enterprise can operate and measure. Here, Community (capital C) refers to the perichoretically-entangled *missio Dei* of the triune God in the world, and community (small c) refers to transformed human relationships. Practitioners with a heart for neighborly proximity create opportunities for ECP to achieve the eschatological not-yet gaze of social mission of the church. The focus on neighborly movements in *perichoretic* relationships permits the use of various paths to narrow the gap between the kingdom of God and a not-yet-redeemed world.

Thus, the vision of those who use ECP should include the *missio Dei* where interaction between the church and the neighborhood/society occur. This is because the mission of the church is to engage in the *missio Dei* as two-way traffic of intercultural interactions between the church and the neighborhood/society and between whole-life discipleship (the Great Commission and the Great Commandment) and a call to cultivate the world (the Creation Commission). In the process of presenting the entire gospel, faith, work, and economics should eventually integrate. This integration will enhance the quality of ministry in global churches to reflect a holistic picture of God's working in the world—ministries that feature Christian communities living out the entire gospel in their neighboring communities, the larger society, and the world.

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THE BENEFIT OF THE DIVERSIFICATION OF THE CHURCH GROWTH MOVEMENT AND A WAY FORWARD

Russell Bryan

Abstract

Although the diversification of the Church Growth Movement has created an environment in which people balk at its definitions and its principles, many fail to realize the benefit of the diversification. The diversification of the Church Growth Movement allows theologians and missiologists to evaluate the impact church growth thought has had on both the culture within the church and the church's ability to reach its surrounding culture. As a result, theologians and missiologists not only can assess and address the current state of churches, but they also can offer a biblical way forward. In doing so, churches can realign with sound scriptural truth as they seek to engage culture through both proclamation and incarnation.

The term "church growth," and, in essence, the Church Growth Movement (CGM), unfortunately, have been shrouded in controversy since Donald McGavran's key works gained prominence in America. While proponents of both church growth and the CGM often seek to minimize the debate, the disagreement is existent nonetheless. The diversification, while often considered with a negative connotation, allows an opportunity for scholars and ministers to reorient church growth principles to biblical church growth discussions.

In essence, the diversification of the CGM benefits the church today by causing it not only to reorient its commitment to the Great Commission, but also to prioritize theological and biblical approaches that faithfully engage

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the culture today.[1] In light of the discussions of Great Commission faithfulness in a post-modern culture, this article seeks to offer a biblical approach that will enable faithful engagement with the culture while remaining firmly rooted, without teetering on the precipice of syncretism on one side, or the crag of isolationism on the other side. In order to grasp the panoramic view of the controversy, a brief examination of both the diversification[2] of the CGM and two key disagreements are necessary.

AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE DIVERSIFICATION OF THE CHURCH GROWTH MOVEMENT

As McGavran's missiological insights gained popularity in the United States and the CGM gained prominence, a subtle shift concurrently occurred, and "Classical Church Growth" began to morph into divergent trajectories.[3] Within the North American missiological context, church growth's foundation expanded from a principle-based movement to a methodologically based rubric. Gary McIntosh discerns the shift of emphasis, which gave birth to the "Popular Church Growth." He states,

> The decline of churches in the 1960s, primarily mainline churches, sparked a renewed interest in research to help turn around struggling churches. Much of this research, though helpful, did not flow directly from the Church Growth school developed by McGavran, but it was often labeled as Church Growth in a popular sense since the research sought to help churches grow.[4]

Thus, the surge of the "Popular Church Growth" methodologies cleared a path for the diversification of the CGM. Christopher DiVietro explains that while "scholars recognize diversification," not all agree regarding the "categorization of the various expressions of church growth thought," the demarcation of "dates in tracing diversification," or "the common cause

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[1] Gary McIntosh, *Biblical Church Growth: How You Can Work with God to Build a Faithful Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003), 9 and 25.

[2] See Christopher DiVietro, "Understanding Diversification in the Church Growth Movement," *Great Commission Research Journal* 8, no. 1 (2016): 56–81. DiVietro seeks "to synthesize various strands running through the history of the Church Growth Movement and isolate contributing factors to diversification through critical interaction with a contemporary of Donald McGavran—Lesslie Newbigin," 57.

[3] Ibid., 19. Gary McIntosh and Paul Engle provide a thorough development of the diversification of the classical Church Growth Movement into both a branch of international missiology and a branch of North American missiology. Gary McIntosh and Paul Engle, *Evaluating the Church Growth Movement: Five Views* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 9–25.

[4] McIntosh and Engle, *Evaluating the Church Growth Movement*, 19.

undergirding diversification."[5] In addition, Gary McIntosh and Paul Engle acknowledge that in the 1990s, the CGM experienced "a number of transitions that seemed to undermine the technical understanding of church growth as developed by McGavran," but they are unwilling to designate a singular source that resulted in a principle-laden movement in nonconformity with classical church growth principles.[6]

While DiVietro, McIntosh, and Engle are loath to label a culprit, their research suggests a multifaceted cause of diversification. The likely epicenter of the shift in CGM thought is the emerging influence of Peter Wagner. Upon McGavran's death in 1990, Wagner not only became the prominent voice for the CGM, but he also "further developed the use of social sciences and social scientific method, proposing a 'consecrated pragmatism' as a means of practically implementing the Great Commission without compromising doctrinal or ethical principles" of Scripture.[7] McIntosh and Engle note that Wagner's leadership and influence resulted in CGM "specializations and sub-specializations." No longer were principles relegated to the causes and barriers to church growth, which McGavran emphasized. As noted by McIntosh and Engle, the CGM had been deconstructed into foci such as church planting, prayer, conflict management, and fund raising.[8]

While Wagner's influence fueled diversification, another culprit behind the diversification of the CGM was the dawning age of the "church health" emphasis through Rick Warren's *The Purpose Driven Church* and Christian Schwarz's *Natural Church Development*. Interestingly though, church health discussions carried the same tone as the classic CGM.[9] Yet, the subtle shift, which focused on *health* rather than *growth*, continued to elevate interests in methodologies over principles. A launching pad of success-driven methodology seized the interest of pastors, which resulted in the abandonment

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[5] DiVietro, "Understanding Diversification in the Church Growth Movement," 57.

[6] McIntosh and Engle, *Evaluating the Church Growth Movement*, 20.

[7] DiVietro, "Understanding the Diversification in the Church Growth Movement," 60. DiVietro observes that while McGavran "relied on statistical, sociological, and numerical methods only for evangelistic accountability," Wagner's "consecrated pragmatism relied on culture, historical, and theological sources." He further states that Wagner's methodological premise was to use "popular methods extant within a given culture." In addition, DiVietro acknowledges the development of alternate church growth thinking streams of thought that developed during this time, 70. See also, McIntosh and Engle, *Evaluating the Church Growth Movement*, 20.

[8] McIntosh and Engle, *Evaluating the Church Growth Movement*, 21. McIntosh and Engle state, "The conceptual broadening of the term *church growth* to embrace more and more sub-specializations of ministry and more and more ministry organizations has created, to a large extent, a popular misunderstanding and wrongful criticism of the Church Growth Movement."

[9] DiVietro, "Understanding Diversification in the Church Growth Movement," 62.

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of "the philosophy of Church Growth."[10] DiVietro states, "When pastors saw churches growing, they studied the growth itself rather than the fundamental church growth principles driving growth."[11] Recognizing this trend, many advocates of church growth reduced church growth principles to simple "formulaic expressions dependent on human ingenuity rather than divine initiative," resulting in a diminished appreciation for the CGM.[12] Furthermore, the impact of the dilution of the CGM created an environment in which *classic* church growth principles were no longer articulated. Rather, church growth principles morphed to adapt to the culture of success-driven methodologies. As a result, the CGM became the focus of two key disagreements that remain today.

TWO KEY DISAGREEMENTS AS A RESULT OF THE DIVERSIFICATION OF THE CHURCH GROWTH MOVEMENT

The diversification of the CGM created a quagmire of disagreements ranging from the focus and mission of the church; that is, is the church to be about *growth* or *health*, to the emphasis of spiritual growth over numerical growth and vis-à-vis, which impacted the church especially as it pertains to its ecclesiological identity and mission.[13] The church was intrigued with "doing church" rather than discerning its identity and calling to its surrounding culture.[14]

[10] Ibid., 61.

[11] DiVietro, "Understanding Diversification in the Church Growth Movement," 61.

[12] Ibid., 65.

[13] This question raises legitimate concerns as to the discussion of the mission of the church. See Ed Stetzer, "The Evolution of Church Growth, Church Health, and the Missional Church: An Overview of the Church Growth Movement from, and back to, Its Missional Roots," *Journal of the American Society for Church Growth* 17, (2006): 15. Stetzer states, "Churches which focused on church health were struggling with how they ought to 'do church' in order to be healthy, not by whom and to whom they were sent." As McIntosh postulates, "Is the church's mission to proclaim the gospel of salvation to people and persuade them to become followers of Christ and responsible members of his church? Or is the church's mission to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom and form an eschatological community of faith to be a witness to the world?" See McIntosh and Engle, *Evaluating the Church Growth Movement*, 266.

[14] Ibid. See also, Craig Van Gelder, "Gospel and Our Culture View," in *Evaluating the Church Growth Movement* ed. Gary McIntosh (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 99. Craig Van Gelder suggests that balance between *health* and *growth* can be achieved. He asserts that churches that understand the "biblical indicatives" about ecclesiological identity are "empowered" to faithfully fulfill the "biblical imperatives" given to the church.

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Perhaps of all the disagreements, two key disagreements surrounding the CGM and its diversification are the most significant. The disagreements pertain, first, to whether or not "church growth" is primarily methodological or theological in nature, and second, what is the nature of a church's engagement with culture. These two points of disagreement converge to form a vital discussion that will drive the church's faithfulness to fulfill the Great Commission in its context.

Through an examination of the diversification of the CGM, critics and supporters of church growth cannot avoid the prominence methodology has gained in church growth discussions to the detriment of its theological roots. On one hand, Stetzer states, "There is a great lack of theological depth in much of the contemporary CGM because much of these are movements of technique, paradigms, and methodologies without genuine biblical and missiological convictions."[15] On the other hand, McIntosh argues that an apparent lack of description of theological depth in the CGM does not imply that it is necessarily lacking. He suggests that church growth authors erred in their assumption that the church growth's biblical foundation was without question; thus one is rarely stated.

Unfortunately, as McIntosh admits, "Time has demonstrated that many people did not, and do not, understand the biblical foundation of church growth."[16] Rather than being grounded in theological conviction, the church gravitated to and was motivated by culture-driven models of ecclesiology and missiology.[17] However, church growth proponents, such as Howard Snyder, continue to emphasize the necessity of "not losing the dynamic nature of Scripture" when churches seek to engage culture.[18]

The debate over whether or not a church decides to prefer cultural alignment over scriptural alignment is essential because the nature of the discussion concerning methodology and/or theology pivots upon the pendulum of cultural engagement. No one disagrees that the church should engage its community and culture, but the precise foundation upon which it develops a strategy to engage its surrounding culture remains contentious.

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[15] Stetzer, "The Evolution of Church Growth," 11.

[16] McIntosh, *Biblical Church Growth*, 10.

[17] Stetzer, "The Evolution of Church Growth," 11.

[18] See also Howard Snyder, "A Renewal Response" in *Evaluating the Church Growth Movement* ed. Gary McIntosh (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 64. See Elmer Towns, "The Relationship of Church Growth and Systematic Theology," *JETS* 29, no. 1 (1986): 68–69. Elmer Towns asserts, "The Church Growth movement must recognize the following [principle] to remain on track: the Word of God is the ultimate standard of faith and practice, and no principle of Church Growth that contradicts Scripture, even if it produces numerical growth, is a Biblical Church Growth principle." However, "where Scripture is silent, scientific research can determine Church Growth principles." Towns admits that tension exists with this disagreement.

The church will either give precedence to methodology or theology in its attempt to reach the lost.[19] While the disagreements exist, the diversification of the CGM assists missiologists in affirming necessary realities as the church seeks to impact its culture.

THE IMPACT OF THE DIVERSIFICATION OF THE CHURCH GROWTH MOVEMENT ON CULTURE ENGAGEMENT

Without the diversification of the CGM, the church's relationship to today's culture and its mission to its context would not be as thoroughly investigated as it is today. In order to understand how the CGM and its diversification impacts a church's missional strategy, this article seeks to examine the twofold result of the diversification. The first impact would be upon the church's relation to its culture.

Church and Its Relation to Culture

DiVietro argues that the impact of the diversification of the CGM resulted in the formation of a church that McGavran despised. The church that formed across the landscape because of the diversification of the CGM embodied the characteristics that McGavran sought to correct in the church.[20] McGavran initially sought to challenge both the isolationism of churches and the mindsets of the mission station approach, which hindered the church's ability to experience conversion growth through group conversions. Thus, McGavran focused on "evangelistic accountability and culturally informed sociological research."[21]

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[19] McIntosh and Engle, *Evaluating the Church Growth Movement*," 24. See also Stetzer, "Evolution of Church Growth," 17–35.

[20] See Roland Allen, *Spontaneous Expansion of the Church and the Causes which Hinder It* (Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1962), 23–25. See also, McGavran, *The Bridges of God*, 136. Allen's work influenced McGavran to approach the missionary station approach critically. For McGavran, in order for the church to be biblical, it had to emphasize "sending" out into unreached areas. See also, DiVietro, "Understanding the Diversification of the Church Growth Movement," 69. DiVietro also acknowledges McGavran's critique of the mission station approach. Also, note that when the diversification of the Church Growth Movement is discussed, this writer speaks of *classic church growth*, *popular church growth,* and *the church health movement* collectively.

[21] See DiVietro, "Understanding Diversification in the Church Growth Movement," 68. DiVietro provides a helpful chart that compares and contrasts both the Church Growth Movement and the church health movement.

According to DiVietro, the unintended result of the diversification of McGavran's approach caused the church to be isolated from its culture.[22] DiVietro states:

> In a sense, the reliance on culturally informed techniques such as marketing, logistics, demographical research, and methodological ingenuity stemmed from a syncretism that overvalued cultural sources of authority. Syncretism led to methodological copycatting that, in time, rendered those very practices obsolete. As cultural sources of authority shifted, failure to shift methodological practices accordingly rendered congregations increasingly isolated.[23]

Stetzer also affirms that the methodological impulses of the CGM not only isolate the church in its own subculture, thus creating a "chasm of cultural understanding," but it also locks the church "into a self-affirming subculture while the larger culture continues to move in other directions."[24] Consequently, the church no longer occupies an effective posture to engage the culture, thus making it difficult for the church to fulfill the *missio Dei* today.

Not only did the expansion of the CGM result in a church that was isolated from its culture, but also the enlargement of the movement to encompass church health principles pushed churches toward irrelevance. DiVietro states, "Though McGavran's initial thinking promoted [centrifugal] mission efforts that sent missionaries out with the Gospel, church growth thought developed [centripetally] into church compounds attracting nonbelievers."[25] Consequently, the church became a subculture of its culture. DiVietro asserts, "Contemporary manifestations of church growth thinking create isolated Christian sub-cultures in a post-Christendom context."[26] In other words, the church health movement's inward focus blinded the church from appropriately perceiving its ministry context.[27]

To be fair, the resulting impact of the diversification of the CGM is not to be credited to McGavran alone. When McGavran formulated his church growth principles, never did he imagine fifty years later the expedient departure that would occur from his original principles and the consequential impact it would have upon the church. McGavran devoted his life not only

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[22] Ibid., 69.

[23] Ibid., 68–69.

[24] Stetzer, "Evolution of Church Growth," 17–19. See also DiVietro, "Understanding Diversification in the Church Growth Movement," 69. He states, "Despite the initial emphasis on contextualization, the diversification of the church growth thinking resulted in churches that were contextually isolated rather than contextually sensitive."

[25] DiVietro, "Understanding Diversification in the Church Growth Movement," 69.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Stetzer, "Evolution of Church Growth," 22.

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to understand why some churches grew and others did not, but he also dedicated his life to seeing men and women experience salvation in Christ Jesus. For example, McIntosh recounts a situation in which McGavran expresses his concern for the "Church Growth School of Thought" in a letter to Donald Hoke, the treasurer of the Lausanne committee. McGavran states in the letter,

> The church growth school of thought is a theological and biblical movement arising in violent opposition to the neglect of mission by both the right and the left. The right had settled back into carrying on good church and mission work whether the Church grew or not. Institutionalism was firmly in the saddle. . . . The left neglected church multiplying evangelism (mission) because, it said, "The day of church planting is over. . . ." The left proposed a tremendous swing to social action, church mergers, and renewal of existing congregations.
>
> To meet all of this, the church growth school of thought vigorously maintained that without conscious dedication to Jesus Christ men are lost. God wants His lost children found; the complexities of the situation must not divert churches and Christians from mission; the world was never more winnable than it is today.[28]

While McGavran's convictions were unwavering, the diversification of the CGM, due to the influence of popular church growth theories and the church health movement, not only diluted McGavran's once clear biblical passion to see the church engage its culture through evangelistic efforts, but it also retarded the church's ability to engage its culture from a sound theological foundation. As a result, the culture of the church was no longer in a healthy place for cultural engagement.

The Culture of the Church

Interestingly, DiVietro and Stetzer uncover much more in their examination of the diversification of the CGM. Whereas the first result of the diversification of the CGM focused on the church's relation to culture, a second result of the diversification reveals an unhealthy culture of the church. DiVietro argues that in an age when modernity resembled Christendom, church

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[28] Gary McIntosh, *Donald A. McGavran: A Biography of the Twentieth Century's Premier Missiologist* (Church Leader Insights, 2015), 239–240. McGavran continues by saying, "Church growth men encourage honest appraisal of each particular situation. They resolve to understand the matrix in which each cluster of congregation is growing, the past growth patterns . . . and the growth potential in each of these small beginning denominations. Church growth men are pro every section of the Body of Christ which is obediently carrying out the Great Commission. Church growth men are against every theory, every theology, every organization, and every ecclesiology which diverts Christians from carrying out the mandate of Christ to disciple the nations."

growth methods were sufficient. However, because modernity has shifted to a post-Christendom culture, church growth practice is "an inadequate strategy."[29] As stated earlier, not only does the church become isolated from its culture, but the culture in the church is also no longer healthy enough to embrace the changes experienced in its surrounding context.[30] Therefore, "non-church goers [would have] to cross cultural boundaries when attending church."[31]

Because of the diversification of the CGM and the application of its principles, a consumeristic culture currently resides within the church. DiVietro agrees, "McGavran's overreliance on cultural sources of authority combined with the emphasis later church growth advocates placed on effective methods yielded a church more reminiscent of a modern organization than a missionary congregation." Now, "Christians view themselves as consumers of church activity. . . . Methods become goals, and proper program execution is mistaken for faithful ministry."[32] Inevitably, a consumeristic mindset will infiltrate and manifest itself in a church that hastily pursues CGM principles, especially the principles that morphed during the diversification of the movement.

Furthermore, the church that pursues the same principles will be amiss theologically. Stetzer's research affirms this reality. According to Stetzer, each aspect of the diversification of the CGM manifests deficiencies. Each individual nuance of the CGM leaves the church standing on a three-pronged stool with one prong being splintered. According to Stetzer, the CGM, which includes principles from classic and popular strands of church growth, stands strongly upon the pillars of ecclesiology and missiology. However, it lacks a vibrant Christology.[33] Whereas the CGM lacks a strong Christology, the church health movement lacks a robust missiology.[34] In other words, Stetzer's work allows the church to perceive its theological

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[29] DiVietro, "Understanding the Diversification of the Church Growth Movement," 69.

[30] DiVietro states, "The sociological research and methodological reliance of the Church Growth Movement were syncretistic in their acceptance of cultural practices and did not submit those practices to Scripture. Logistical and pragmatic considerations are not wrong but must not become more authoritative than Scripture. The late modern world is culturally diverse and intimately connected; seeking contextually appropriate gospel embodiment while avoiding either cultural syncretism or isolationist irrelevance is a biblically faithful approach to multi-cultural evangelism and mission," 78.

[31] Ibid., 69.

[32] DiVietro, "Understanding the Diversification in the Church Growth Movement," 74. See Thomas White and John Mark Yeats, *Franchising McChurch: Feeding Our Obsession with Easy Christianity* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2009), for the impact that consumeristic culture has upon the church.

[33] Stetzer, "Evolution of Church Growth," 21.

[34] Ibid.

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neglect, which undermines its ability to engage culture with a sure footing biblically.

The diversification of the CGM, while it intended to assist the church as it engaged its culture, unfortunately, not only left the church detached from its culture, but it also left the church with a consumeristic mindset that must be eradicated. Rather than the church settling with its current plight, it can accept the benefit from the diversification of the CGM, which is the ability to recognize the current situation and begin the process of realigning itself with a thorough theological conviction and strategy to engage the post-Christendom context of today.

According to McIntosh, an evaluation of the CGM also provides relevant questions for the church today. He states, "The basic question is how much can a church adapt contextually to its culture without accommodating to the culture?" In addition, he states, "To what extent should pragmatic decision drive the agenda of the church as it seeks to communicate to people in the various cultures of the world?"[35] To this, this article now turns to explore a preliminary avenue of missiological restoration from missiologist Lesslie Newbigin.

DOES A WAY FORWARD EXIST?

Lesslie Newbigin, a contemporary of McGavran, offers an initial way to reorient the church so that it can regain its rightful and impactful place in its context. Newbigin, upon his return from the mission field to his home in Europe, realized the Western culture was no longer a culture with Christendom characteristics.[36] Recognizing the dichotomy created between the private and public sphere of life due to the effects of modernity, Newbigin sought to promote a missiology that would encourage the church to span the newly established chasm between the private and public sector of life.[37]

One missiologist that advanced Newbigin's thought was George Hunsberger. Recognizing that current missiological efforts had become domesticated, Hunsberger argued that the church of the West had to approach its

[35] McIntosh and Engle, *Evaluating the Church Growth Movement*, 266. In addition, the diversification of the Church Growth Movement into different streams of thought creates an opportunity to reevaluate and reestablish the untainted elements and biblical convictions of McGavran. See McIntosh and Engle, *Evaluating the Church Growth Movement*, 8 and 39, for positive elements.

[36] Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks*: *The Gospel and Western Culture* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986), 125–150.

[37] Ibid., 132–133. See also George R. Hunsberger, "The Newbigin Gauntlet," in *The Church Between Gospel and Culture,* ed. George R. Hunsberger and Craig Van Gelder (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 6.

context utilizing missiological approaches that missionaries had spent their life implementing in different cultural contexts.[38]

However, Newbigin and Hunsberger faced similar challenges experienced in the diversification of the CGM. Hunsberger asserts that in order to impact its culture, the church must engage the culture as Newbigin suggested. However, Hunsberger warned, a strategy that embodied the culture "without challenge would lead to syncretism; challenge without embodiment would be irrelevant."[39]

Newbigin's missiology offerings sought to right the church from its ineffectiveness in a post-Christendom culture. His efforts helped not only to challenge "the church to embody its true missionary character," but also to expose, as discerned by Hunsberger, the "crisis regarding the identity of the church and the nature of the church's responsibility in and for the public order of the larger society."[40] In essence, Newbigin challenged the church to embrace a "mission that represents the reign of God."[41]

One vital aspect of a mission that represents the reign of God is its evangelistic nature. Hunsberger, relying upon Newbigin, argues that the church must recover its evangelistic fervor "in terms appropriate to an audience of people who live with post-Christian, secular convictions."[42] Thus, as Hunsberger argues, "The very way in which we conceive evangelism needs an overhaul."[43] One way in which the overhaul is needed in evangelism is "that evangelism be grounded in a credible demonstration that a life lived by the pattern of commitment to Jesus is imaginable, possible, and relevant in the modern and postmodern age."[44] In other words, the evangelism that Hunsberger argued for required the life of the witness to embody and substantiate the gospel proclaimed.[45]

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[38] Hunsberger, "The Newbigin Gauntlet," 5.

[39] Hunsberger, "The Newbigin Gauntlet," 9. Hunsberger argues, "It is important to grasp these features of Newbigin's missionary approach. . . . The authority of the Bible, its affirmation and critique of every culture, and the church's attitude toward both of these elements are essential for a serious missiological encountering of the Western culture that is for us in North American churches both our assumed reality and our missionary assignment," 10.

[40] Hunsberger, "The Newbigin Gauntlet," 14–15.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid., 22.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Hunsberger, "The Newbigin Gauntlet," 22.

[45] Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks,* 143 and 149. Not only did Newbigin desire for men and women to be prepared to think through the relationship their faith had with the public, but he also argued that the result of their life change could influence others to consider the credibility of the message of the gospel.

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While Newbigin's influence offers corrective steps to the church to enable it to engage its culture, his assertions set the church adrift towards the precipice of syncretism through an emphasis on ecumenism,[46] a diminishing view of the local church,[47] and viewing the "culture through Christian minds shaped by other cultures."[48] Keith Eitel warns of this.

Eitel, in his article, "*Scriptura* or *Cultura*: Is There a *Sola* in There?" argues that a subtle shift occurs when churches seek to develop an ecclesiology based on the context of culture. Eitel argues, in a critique of one of Newbigin's proponents, that churches that adapt theological principles to fit contextual situations cause "believers to reshape God's Word into something relevant to and for [any] context."[49] In other words, each culture will eventually promote its own ecclesiology rather than basing its ecclesiology upon Scripture. Therefore, as Eitel states, "There is no guiding element designed to avoid . . . namely, the development of an infinite number of contextual and often mutually exclusive theologies."[50] While Newbigin's efforts to eradicate the church's inability to engage its culture effectively does clear a path forward, Newbigin's efforts veer off into areas that could undermine biblical precedence for the church.

A WAY FORWARD

Harold Senkbeil offers a free church solution as to how a church can engage a constantly shifting culture by discerning key aspects of the culture's impact on the church. Senkbeil argues, the impact of the culture's "loss of virtue, flight from reason, and the debacle of individualism" has infiltrated the church and has resulted in a counterfeit mission.[51] Because of the culture's influence, Senkbeil states, "The mission of the Christian takes over the mission of Christ. The sacrificial death and substitutionary atonement of Jesus is eclipsed by the gospel of progress, happiness, and self-improvement."[52]

[46] Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks*, 145. He specifically says that this ecumenism is not a "federation of denominations," but rather "the bringing together of denominationally separated churches . . . to create a more coherent and credible Christian witness to the human community in that place," 146.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid., 146.

[49] Keith Eitel, "*Scriptura* or *Cultura*: Is There a *Sola* in There?" in *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 55 no. 1, (2012): 67. Eitel quotes Craig Van Gelder, a proponent of Newbigin's principles for engaging a changing Western culture.

[50] Eitel, "*Scriptura* or *Cultura*," 67.

[51] Harold Senkbeil, "Engaging our Culture Faithfully," in *Concordia Journal* 40 no. 4 (2014): 294–295.

[52] Ibid., 296.

Simply put, Senkbeil states, “The improved Christian has taken over the spotlight from Jesus Christ crucified.”[53]

Not only has the culture’s influence taken the spotlight away from Jesus, but it also has clouded the church’s theological commitment to truth. Senkbeil states, “We have abandoned teaching truth and focused on self-improvement. We seem to be driven more by polls and approval ratings than we are by the Word of God.”[54] The resulting effect, as Senkbeil asserts, is that “We have embraced the expectations and norms of our culture and begun to remodel the church in the image and likeness of the world—and in that world, expressive individualism takes precedence over everything else.”[55] Accordingly, the church has shifted to such a degree that it is more concerned about its appropriating cultural norms within its foundation than standing upon a foundation that is distinct from culture. As Senkbeil asserts, the church “seems fixated on remodeling itself . . . albeit with a spiritual veneer.”[56]

Recognizing this reality, Senkbeil argues that the influence of the culture upon the church has generated an underlying and problematic sickness within the church—*acedia* (sloth). According to Senkbeil, historically, *acedia* signified a “disappointment with and spiritual disaffection from God’s divinely ordained gifts, be they in the realm of creation or redemption.”[57] Because of *acedia*, “Christians sink into boredom and apathy” with not only the holiness of the God, but also with personal holiness.[58] Senkbeil is not alone in his evaluation of the church.

Malcom Yarnell, in his article, “Global Choices for Twenty-First Century Christians: Bringing Clarity to Missional Theology,” discerns a current movement within missiological ideology to minimize the value the role that the church’s holiness has within its context.[59] Yarnell, who interacts with current minds such as Mark Driscoll and David Bosch, seeks to expose the deficiency of the argument that churches should prioritize their pursuit of relevance over their call to holiness. Yarnell, who points out the weakness of David Bosch’s missiology, asserts that a church’s holiness within its community cannot be undervalued. To belittle the church and its call to be holy in the world “depends upon the downplaying of Scripture’s call to live uniquely in the world, which cannot be downplayed without a concomitant

[53] Senkbeil, “Engaging Our Culture Faithfully,” 296.

[54] Senkbeil, “Engaging Our Culture Faithfully,” 296.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid., 297.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid., 304.

[59] Malcom Yarnell, “Global Choices for Twenty-First Century Christians: Bringing Clarity to Missional Theology,” in *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 55 no. 1 (2012): 29.

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deflation of the biblical text."[60] In other words, the church cannot live out Scripture's clear teaching on its identity, when it seeks to pursue the mastery of being relevant in its context.

A way forward exists for the church when it recovers the value of the corporate life of the church expressed through evangelism, preaching, and ministry. However, to journey through this avenue of recovery necessitates that both the culture of the church and the church's relation to its culture be addressed.

THE CULTURE OF THE CHURCH

Throughout history, the adaptation of cultural norms within the church has often been critiqued. For example, Søren Kierkegaard was an ardent critique of the culture of Christianity that sought to pattern itself according to Christendom. Malcolm Yarnell relies heavily upon Kierkegaard's attack on the church during the nineteenth century to reveal the "folly" of "cultural compromise" that dictate the mindset of Christ followers.[61]

According to Kierkegaard, the culture of Christendom, which infiltrated the church, left the church "attempting to serve God, by not following Christ."[62] Moreover, the culture of the church in Kierkegaard's day preached a message of Christianity that veiled the Christianity of the New Testament. Kierkegaard perceived within the church that a Christianity that appealed to the fallen nature of man was being declared biblical Christianity, and a Christianity that offends the heart can be certain not to be the Christianity of the New Testament.[63]

In other words, Kierkegaard discerned that cultural Christianity required no cost to follow Christ. Kierkegaard states, "What Christianity wants is the following of Christ. What man does not want is suffering . . . the Christian sort, suffering at the hands of men. So he dispenses with 'following.'"[64] Furthermore, Kierkegaard concludes, "The result of the Christianity of 'Christendom' is that everything, absolutely everything, has remained as it was, only everything has

[60] Ibid. Yarnell provides both a sound critique and the consequence of pursuing relevance at all cost. Yarnell suggests that Scripture does not need to be made relevant because in its sufficiency, it is already relevant by the very nature of it being God's Word to man in every culture and context.

[61] Yarnell, "Bringing Clarity to Missional Theology," 34.

[62] Søren Kierkegaard, *Attack upon Christendom: 1854–1855* (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1956), 121.

[63] Ibid., 151. Kierkegaard states, "Behold, here lies the difficulty. The difficulty by no means consists in making it clear that the official Christianity is not the Christianity of the New Testament, but in the fact that the Christianity of the New Testament and what the New Testament understands by being a Christian is the last thing of all to be pleasing to a man."

[64] Kierkegaard, *Attack upon Christendom*, 123.

assumed the name of 'Christian'—and so . . . we live a life of paganism."[65] In Kierkegaard's day, the church was inundated with a culturally approved Christianity that caused it to drift from biblical Christianity. Although controversial at times, Kierkegaard correctly understood the culture of the church in his day and its need for a serious revival back to the foundation of Scripture. Yet, Kierkegaard is not the sole historical critic of the culture of the church.

John Wycliffe, declared as the morning star of the Reformation, was also critical of the environment of the church in the fourteenth century, especially pertaining to the priest and his office. Often accused of attempting to undermine and abolish the priesthood, Wycliffe sought to transform the priestly (pastoral) office by focusing on the holiness of the priest and the wholesomeness of his teaching.[66]

According to Wycliffe, the priests no longer "lived according to the principle of Christ," nor were they concerned about the divine responsibility that accompanied their office.[67] Rather, they sought to heap and hoard for themselves riches gained through the practice of simony. "For Wycliffe, simony not only polluted the church, but also its effects contaminated the health of society, thus creating a hazardous communal environment."[68] However, Wycliffe called upon the priest to return holiness. "Wycliffe hoped not only for a transformation of the clerical class, but also aimed to reinstitute right doctrine in order that right practice would be returned to the Church."[69] For Wycliffe, "Right doctrine and right practice would only occur through a recovery of holiness in the pastor's life, resulting in the 'wholesomeness' of his teaching."[70]

Both Kierkegaard and Wycliffe serve as a reminder that the church today needs to be challenged to evaluate not only the degree to which culture has compromised its ability to engage culture biblically and effectively, but also the degree to which culture has compromised its message. Perhaps, without the diversification of the CGM, pastors, theologians, and churches would not have considered the impact that culture would have had upon the church and the way in which this impact would isolate it from the culture it seeks to reach. A way forward for the church, in light of the diversification

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[65] Kierkegaard, *Attack upon Christendom*, 164.

[66] See John Wycliffe, *On the Pastoral Office (De Officio Pastorali)*, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, in *Advocates of Reform*, ed. Matthew Spinka, Library of Christian Classics [LCC] (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1953), 32. See also John Wycliffe, *On the Truth of Holy Scripture*, trans. Ian Christopher Ivey, ed. E. Ann Matter, TEAMS Commentary Series (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications of Western Michigan University, 2001), 196. See also, Russell Bryan, "John Wycliffe: An Anti-clericalist?" a paper presented to Dr. Malcom Yarnell for the requirements of CHAHT 7344, December 1, 2016, 15.

[67] Wycliffe, *On the Pastoral Office*, 33.

[68] Bryan, "John Wycliffe: An Anti-clericalist?" 16.

[69] Bryan, "John Wycliffe: An Anti-clericalist?" See also Wycliffe, *On the Truth of Holy Scriptures*, 196.

[70] Ibid., 17. See also Wycliffe, *On the Pastoral Office*, 32.

of the CGM, is for it to evaluate its culture according to Scripture. Once the culture is right, it will then be in a place to engage a culture that questions the value and authenticity of the message of Christ.

THE RELATION OF THE CHURCH TO ITS CULTURE

The diversification of the CGM exposed the church's unhealthy dependence on tools, techniques, and strategies, leaving it isolated and irrelevant to its culture. Learning from the effects that the diversification of the CGM had on numerous churches, one consistent path forward for the church, as it seeks to relate to the culture, requires the church to stand upon both the verbal proclamation of Scripture and an incarnational missiology if it is to engage and impact culture effectively.

Alvin Reid, in his article, "How to Share Jesus without Freaking Out," argues that to be effective in reaching today's culture requires "less of trying to prove Christianity, intellectually, and more of showing the change Christ makes." He states, "Most unchurched people I meet aren't asking whether you can prove Christianity—they are asking whether you can live it."[71] Simply stated, culture is seeking to observe the impact of the power of Jesus in the lives of those who profess him. To impact culture, the church will have to embrace an incarnational strategy. Reid is not alone in his assertion.

Edward Dayton and David Frasier also argue for a visible demonstration of the effect of the gospel upon the life of those who repent and respond in faith to Christ. Dayton and Frasier state, "The gospel must be lived as well as verbalized. Those who follow the One who submitted to the cruel death of the cross have their own cross to carry."[72] In addition, they state, "The evangel is not simply the message Jesus proclaimed. It is also the reality that Jesus lived the kingdom that he brought. The evangelist must live the evangel if it is to have any credibility or authenticity."[73] For Dayton and Frasier, living a life that embodies the gospel is paramount to effective evangelism within shifting cultures.

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[71] Alvin Reid, "How to Share Jesus without Freaking Out," in *Facts and Trends* 63 no. 2 (2017): 17. Reid understands that what culture seeks today is not only a message faithfully proclaimed, but also the evidence of the transformative essence that is promised upon the reception of the message.

[72] Edward Dayton and David Frasier, *Planning Strategies for World Evangelization*, ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 51.

[73] Dayton and Frasier, *Planning Strategies for World Evangelization*, 51. See also Eitel, "*Scriptura* or *Cultura*," 66. Eitel states, "For Scripture's prophetic voice to be heard, the directional priority should flow from God's Word to humanity with an increasingly closer approximation to God's truth. Its signature effect is an increasingly apparent life-evident walk by the believer in a manner worthy of his calling." See also, Orlando Costas, *Christ Outside the Gate*: *Mission Beyond Christendom* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1982), 5. However, Costas understands the importance of embodying Christ, and he carries a tone of liberation theology and emphasis upon a social gospel, 16.

The biblical example of Paul's life also embodies the essence of the incarnational approach. In 2 Corinthians 4:7–12, Paul states that though death is at work in him, it results in life for the Corinthians. According to Steven Smith, Paul would be the physical, present embodiment of the sufferings of Christ on behalf of the Corinthians, not so they would have faith in Paul, but that through Paul, his life and ministry, would be captivated by the power of Christ.[74] Perhaps William Edwards grasps Paul's embodiment of the death of Jesus the clearest. Edwards states, "as Paul embodies the life and death of Christ, [he] continually provides an interpretation that centers others on Christ, making it clear that his letters are to be read not as the story of Paul and his ministry, but the story of Christ's death and resurrection as exhibited in Paul and his ministry."[75] Because of Paul, the Corinthian believers were no longer excused to reject the authenticity of message of the gospel and its impact upon their own life. They, too, were called to live out what Christ had accomplished in them.

CONCLUSION

The CGM has experienced both victories and defeat. As cultures shifted and modernity passed, the CGM flaws became visible, especially in its diversification. Rather than focusing on the flaws, this article attempted to reveal a few benefits of the diversification of the CGM. Not only are the *classic* church growth principles able to be viewed in an uncontaminated light, but also the dangers of the *popular* church growth theories, and even the church health theories, are exposed. Without the dangers being exposed, many more churches in the future can unintentionally succumb to the same pitfalls these theories have caused.

As a result of the diversification of the CGM, churches today can purposefully seek to engage their shifting culture by learning from the misplaced focus in the past. Rather than relying heavily upon culture, the church can attach itself to the mast of Scripture, so that when the winds of culture shift, it can adjust without abandoning its support and foundation. Doing so propels not only a theological priority to undergird the missional strategy of the

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[74] Steven W. Smith, *Dying to Preach: Embracing the CROSS in the PULPIT* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2009), 81–83. See also Russell Bryan, "An Examination of the Suffering of Paul in 2 Corinthians and Its Contribution to the Ongoing Discussion of Pastoral Leadership," submitted to Dr. Steve Lee to fulfill the requirements of CHVIT 7406 (November 21, 2016), 27.

[75] William Edwards, "Participants in What We Proclaim: Recovering Paul's Narrative of Pastoral Ministry," in *Themelios* 39, no. 3 (2014): 463. Edwards also argues that the experiences Paul presents in verses 8–10 are "not occasional moments, but a consistent pattern that frames his conception of ministry," 462. Taken from Bryan, "An Examination of the Suffering of Paul," 24.

church, but it will also enable the church to embody the gospel effectively. Therefore, wherever the Lord may send her, she will effectively demonstrate the power of the gospel through both proclamation and incarnation.

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EMOTIONAL RELEVANCE IN OUTREACH MINISTRY

George Hunter

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Abstract

In Western history, the Enlightenment sold the idea that humans are essentially rational creatures who need to graduate from their primal emotions. Leaders like Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley knew better, commending Christianity as a faith of "the heart" and leading a Great Awakening. Nineteenth century evangelical leaders, however, drank too much of the Enlightenment Kool-Aid and took an excessively left-brained approach to pre-Christian people. The religious tracts of the time expose this turn. This article invites church leaders to rediscover a more biblical (and Reformation) understanding of human nature and to pioneer in "emotionally relevant ministry" once again.

The European Enlightenment (aka "the Age of Reason" that gave us "Modernity") proposed, among other ideas, to redefine human nature: human beings were now the "rational" creatures. Humanity's capacity for rational thinking separates people from the beasts of the fields, forests, and jungles. A human being is a "thinking animal." Descartes said, "I think, therefore I am."

The Enlightenment's leaders acknowledged that rational humans also experience emotions, but they decided that emotion is a relic from humanity's evolutionary past. Humans are graduating from the emotional hangover. Philosophy and science are leading the way, and education will enlighten humanity's advancement into the life of reason.

The Romantic Movement arose to challenge the Enlightenment tsunami in Western history. The Romantics believed that truth could be known through nature, imagination, and emotions. William Wordsworth, for instance, believed that insight could emerge from "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings," which the poet then recalls and writes "in tranquility."

> Enough of science and of art,
> Close up those barren leaves,
> Come forth, and bring with you
> A heart that watches and receives.[1]

Church leaders in Europe and in the American colonies essentially responded to the Enlightenment (and somewhat to Romanticism) in one of three ways.

First, many leaders in the European state churches swallowed the Enlightenment's paradigm in toto. Deism emerged. Its doctrine of God was informed more by reason than revelation. Reason could rationally conclude the existence of a Creator, though this God was less involved with creation—and with a serious personality deficit, compared to the God of Abraham! Christian Deists generally affirmed Christianity's ethic and the duties of a personal moral life, but miracles did not fit within Deism's paradigm.

Second, many Roman Catholic leaders served cultural regions less impacted by the Enlightenment, or they ignored it. They launched a Counter Reformation. They maintained devotional practices, mystery, and the Mass. A new era of mission expanded their ranks, their religious orders proliferated by the hundreds, and Folk Catholicism flourished in many lands.

Third, many Protestant Evangelical leaders responded to the challenge of The Age of Reason in a contrasting way. Two giants, Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley, reintroduced Christianity as a faith of "the heart."

In the 1730s, Edwards was pastor of the church in Northampton, Massachusetts, when a religious awakening broke out in Northampton and surrounding hamlets. In a six-month period, three hundred people became new Christians; in one period of five or six weeks, thirty people per week became Christians. Edwards observed and studied what was happening. He interviewed converts and the people who knew them best, and he wrote case studies, gaining some serious insight.[2] In 1737, he wrote his *Faith-*

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[1] William Wordsworth, "The Tables Turned," in *English Literature: A Period Anthology*, eds., Albert C. Baugh and George Wm. McClelland (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc.), 791.

[2] I have covered Edwards' experience and written at greater length about emotionally relevant ministry in *The Apostolic Congregation: Church Growth Reconceived for a New Generation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2009), chapter three. Read especially what Edwards did as a pastoral strategist—like organizing people into lay-led small group life and sending people out in witness—to extend the Awakening.

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ful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God, which became the primer for a wider awakening in Colonial America, in the British Isles, and into Western Europe.

Edwards learned that virtually all of the conversions were preceded by a period of emotional struggle; people were convicted about their pride, or they experienced shame, fear, unworthiness, or depression. As people neared conversion, they typically became more involved with Scripture, prayer, sacrament, and spiritual conversation. New emotions moved them, often accompanied by tears. Following conversion, people typically experienced profound changes in their emotional life; they experienced gratitude, peace, compassion, empathy, joy, or "an inward burning of the heart."[3]

Compared to earlier revivals in New England, this one reached all sorts of people—"sober and vicious, high and low, rich and poor, wise and unwise," as many males as females, and all ages.[4] Edwards perceived a difference in his Sunday congregation: "Our public assemblies were then beautiful; the congregation was alive . . . from time to time in tears while the Word was preached: some weeping with sorrow and distress, others with joy and love, others with pity and concern for the souls of their neighbors."[5]

In the years following the Awakening, enough of his converts reverted to shake Edwards into a second round of field research. He posed a supreme question: How does one distinguish between a valid Christian experience that is likely to last vis-à-vis its unstable counterfeit? In 1746, he published his deeper insights in *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*.

Edwards was still sure that Christianity is a religion of the heart. He reaffirmed that emotions drive people's lives whether they are lost or saved, and emotions are intrinsic within Christian conversion and Christian experience. More broadly, people do not usually act at all unless they are "influenced by some affection, either love or hatred, desire, hope, fear or some other." Our emotions, after all, are "the spring of men's actions."[6] No one, he said, is "brought back from a lamentable departure from God without having his heart affected."[7]

Still, Edwards discovered that a religious experience with feelings was no guarantee that the person will be a Christian for life. Someone who now

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[3] Jonathan Edwards, "A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God" in *A Jonathan Edwards Reader*, eds., John R. Smith, Harry S. Stout, and Kenneth P. Minkema (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 86.

[4] Edwards, "Faithful Narrative," 64.

[5] Edwards, "Faithful Narrative," 63.

[6] Jonathan Edwards, "A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections" in *A Jonathan Edwards Reader*, eds., John R. Smith, Harry S. Stout, and Kenneth P. Minkema (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 144.

[7] Edwards, Religious Affections, 143, 146.

attends church, quotes Scripture, or gives a touching testimony may not even be around the year after next.

Gradually, Edwards became clear about a dozen distinguishing signs for discerning between gold and fool's gold. At least three of these signs have universal relevance:

1. Since Christian conversion, after all, is supposed to be transforming, people who have experienced a "great alteration" that family, friends, the church, and pre-Christian people can clearly perceive will likely continue and prevail.
2. "Christian practice," Edwards learned, is "the chief of all the signs of grace."[8] Authentic Christians follow Jesus, live by his ethic, seek the will of God, and live selfishly no longer. Their lives bear fruit, and they are the agents of God's new creation.
3. That kind of transformation, Edwards declared, is not possible by human resolution alone. If converts live for Jesus Christ as Lord (and not merely as Savior), this takes additional grace and a deeper relationship with the Holy Spirit.

With that third observation, Jonathan Edwards came perilously close to becoming a "Wesleyan!" Actually, Edwards and John Wesley were contemporaries; both were born in 1703, though Wesley was to live much longer. Wesley learned from Edwards' writings as he, with his colleagues, catalyzed and expanded an awakening in the British Isles and beyond.

John Wesley, from the beginning of his new life, comprehended that Christianity is a faith of "the heart." On the evening of May 24, 1738, in a meeting in London, he experienced justification and describes, "I felt my heart strangely warmed." This experience, in addition to his reading of Scripture and of Methodism's converts, grounded Wesley in a distinctive understanding of the role of emotions in religious seeking, conversion, and the Christian life. Gregory Clapper's *The Renewal of the Heart Is the Mission of the Church*[9] has distilled many insights from Wesley's extensive writings.

Wesley believed that orthodoxy, as right belief, was necessary for the Christian life, but orthodoxy was only part of (what Clapper has named) *orthokardia*—right heart. For Wesley, the term "heart" was a robust metaphor that referred to the core of a human's conscious and subconscious life. One's heart is the source of one's thoughts, values, imagination, emotions, memories, and of the life and actions that emerge from the heart. In his itinerant preaching mission, Wesley offered to his crowds the Triune God who makes hearts right.[10]

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[8] Edwards, "A Treatise," 165.

[9] Gregory Clapper, *The Renewal of the Heart Is the Mission of the Church* (Eugene Oregon: Cascade Books, 2010).

[10] In the writings of our predecessors, terms like "heart" and "soul" could be used rather interchangeably, as could "affections," "passions," and "emotions"—but NOT "feelings."

John Wesley was a cognitive cousin to the Romantics; God can, indeed, be inferred from a natural revelation. However, God is primarily known through the biblical revelation, and people who know the Lord as revealed can more clearly perceive his signs and presence in nature. Nevertheless, the truth that can be known only through God's special revelation cannot be known from the natural revelation alone.[11]

Wesley distrusted the Romantics' confidence in human feelings, which, he observed, can be fickle; he focused more on our deeper and more enduring affections (or emotions) than on transient feelings. "Religious affections" go deeper than mere "religious feelings," and, in agreement with Edwards, affections play a prominent role in one's pursuit, justification, and Christian life.

Moreover, Christian conversion is a community affair. Wesley believed that Christian faith is not a solitary individualistic experience; faith is typically experienced, sustained, empowered, and renewed in congregations and group life. Clapper suggests that Wesley's project features many implications for ministries like spiritual formation, preaching, counseling, and evangelism. He suggests that in ministries, Christian storytelling engages people's hearts better than theological abstractions alone.

Wesley believed that Christian role models are imperative for attracting people toward the faith and for imagining one's own new life in faith, hope, and love. He observed that Roman Catholics are inspired by the stories of the lives of the saints, so in his Arminian magazine, Wesley published biographies of role model Methodists.

Wesley also believed that seekers need to be exposed to the two competing emotional worlds and ways of life that Paul featured in Galatians 5. To say yes to Christ and his way is to say no to a very different world and way of life. After all, we live in a fallen world where the will of God is not yet done on earth as in heaven. To become a "real Christian" involves deliverance from a dysfunctional, emotional world into the emotional world of the kingdom.

While the eighteenth-century Great Awakening was an emotionally relevant social force, nineteenth-century evangelicalism substantially dropped this part of Christianity's vision for people. The story of how this happened is complicated, although Lincoln A. Mullen's *The Chance of Salvation: A History of Conversion in America*[12] helps us resolve this. You just know that the nineteenth century was a different time than ours when Mullen reports that early in that century, the Presbyterians "grew enormously!"[13]

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[11] This, Wesley's most famous line, was part of his reflection in his evening journal entry of May 24, 1738. The journal of John Wesley is available in many editions.

[12] Lincoln A. Mullen, *The Chance of Salvation: A History of Conversion in America* (Harvard University Press, 2017).

[13] Ibid., 23.

Mullen's analysis of eighteenth-century American Christianity reminds us of the Law of Unintended Consequences. One major cause of the eclipse of emotional relevance in Christian evangelism was the emergence of the religious tract.

I had not understood how powerfully the American Tract Society (and other publishers) reformatted the conversion paradigm of American Christianity. The ATS published hundreds of tracts, by the tens of thousands. They published over four million of one tract entitled, "The Dairyman's Daughter." Almost half of all the tracts published were intended to script and elicit conversion. Christians widely distributed them to pre-Christian people.

Most of the conversion tracts featured the way to heaven. A tract would present a brief gospel message, call for repentance, urge an immediate decision, and invite the reader to pray "the sinner's prayer" as written or improvised. At first, the prayer was often lifted, or adapted, from some gem in Scripture—such as David's prayer in Psalm 51 or the tax collector's prayer in Jesus' parable. Later prayers were more formulaic.

The tracts were the victims of their limitations; the available space prohibited much explanation. To their credit, they aimed to make their message intelligible to the "way-faring man" who does not read much. However, they transgressed the second half of what later became known as Einstein's rule of communication: "Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler."

The tracts helped reach many people, and many Christians' first evangelism experiences involved giving out a tract or walking through one with a seeker. In time, however, the age of tracts contributed to seven changes[14] in the minds of many Christians and their leaders.

First, Enlightenment thinking edged more into Christian thought. The Christian witness typically aimed at a person's left brain; witness and apologetics became more rationalistic.

Second, conversion was now understood as an instantaneous event in a person's life. The earlier understanding from Edwards and Wesley, that conversion is a process and occurs in stages and in measureable time, was forgotten.

Third, the understanding of "salvation" became almost only about going to heaven. Themes like the kingdom of God, reconciliation, justification, sanctification, as well as becoming a disciple, living by God's will, and much more of "the unsearchable riches of Christ" were muted. Some tracts invited new Christians to a new life this side of death, but that new life was little more than a "clean life."

[14] The innovation and diffusion of the religious tract, undoubtedly, was not the *only* cause of the seven changes that followed in its wake. History's events and trends typically have multiple causes. They often synergize, and identifying all of the causes is a challenge for historians.

Fourth, the tracts' model of conversion became *the* prevailing model of conversion. The steps in the ritual of conversion became gospel truth declared, an appeal for immediate repentance, a sinner's prayer, and the person's confession of faith. Sometimes a tract taught the ritual straight, sometimes in a story. Most churches adapted to the tracts' conversion model much more than the tracts adapted to the churches.

Fifth, the church became optional. One could, many people now assumed, become a Christian and live as a Christian in the world without involvement in any church's catechism, worship, fellowship, accountability, nurture, teaching, or sacramental life.

Sixth, expressions of Folk Protestantism now proliferated in North America almost as extensively as Folk Catholicism in Europe. For a great many people, Christianity now meant what their family, friends, peer group or sub-culture decided it meant. IF they joined a church, they chose one that ratified their folk religion.

Seventh, although new converts often reported that they experienced God's assurance and emotions like peace and love, religious affections were now considered incidental. One would never know from most of the tracts that people's "hearts," including their emotional life, needed inner revolution. The understanding of human nature that helped inform the eighteenth century's Great Awakening was largely forgotten as the nineteenth century closed—a myopia that continued through the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century.

Meanwhile, as many people in the West have deserted the Enlightenment project and have become "post-modern," leaders in many fields have been rethinking human nature. Consider, as one example, our changing view of economics. Our predecessors taught that people spend and invest their money from rational calculations. Then, in this century, it became obvious that stock market trends can be substantially driven by two emotions—fear and greed.

More recently, the 2017 Nobel Prize in Economics was awarded to Richard Thaler, professor of behavioral economics of the University of Chicago. His work has challenged the long-conventional assumption that people's thinking in areas like finance, education, and health care is objectively rational; biases and emotions often hijack or shape our thinking. When the press asked what he would do with his 1.1 million-dollar prize, Thaler responded that he would spend it "irrationally."[15]

Leaders in many fields are now clear that people are not, after all, essentially rational creatures who still experience emotions. People are essentially emotional creatures who sometimes think. What they think about is influenced by their background emotional state, and how they think about

[15] Derek Thompson, "Richard Thaler Wins the Nobel in Economics for Killing Homo Economicus," *The Atlantic*, October 7, 2017.

it is influenced by the feelings of the moment. People often make important decisions emotionally, then work to rationalize the decision, and then convince themselves that reason alone informed their decision!

In churches today, counselors and many leaders in youth ministry and recovery ministry have learned to engage people's hearts, but many church leaders are still clueless. Meanwhile, the publication of Daniel Goleman's *Emotional Intelligence* in 2012 revealed and helped catalyze an emerging industry. The people who produce the "Great Courses" on DVD report great demand for their course that teaches people to manage their emotions. The drug epidemic (quite including alcohol) is a sure and certain sign that people are self-medicating their pathological emotions, finding temporary relief in their drug of choice, and finding synthetic fellowship in the drug (or bar) culture. If church leaders did not notice in 2016 that the "Brexit" campaign in the United Kingdom and the campaigns of Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders in the United States were emotionally driven, they were not paying attention. Meanwhile, soap operas feast on viewers' emotional needs, and the 24/7 news cycle of CNN, Fox, MSNBC, and much of the talk on radio and websites has morphed into never-ending improvisational soap opera.

The biblical "harvest" has changed. In all of our communities, many people are drowning in anger or rage, anxiety or fear, desire or greed, pride or low self-esteem, guilt or shame, sadness or depression or grief, or entitlement or envy or jealousy or resentment. When we "lift up our eyes," perceive this harvest, love this harvest, and begin where the people are, the once-contagious Christian Movement will be positioned for another Awakening.

HOW we engage people's emotional struggles in outreach ministry is a complex question. After all, ministry in response to grief is different than response to greed, and people are often driven by multiple emotions. Nevertheless, the following guidelines should help chart the course.

1. The Bible communicates a wealth of insight about human emotional issues, IF we study it with that quest in mind. One might begin with the Psalms.
2. Our predecessors in the First Great Awakening can serve as models, and I can immodestly commend my *Celtic Way of Evangelism*[16] for models like St. Patrick's apostolic engagement with the hyper-passionate Irish.
3. We could learn from literatures than inform counseling and recovery ministries and from the behavioral sciences.
4. With emotionally struggling people, the ministry of conversation is essential. Analogous to naming the demon in an exorcism, having them name and own the emotion that is destroying them is a major step; include the Lord in the conversation.

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[16] George Hunter, *Celtic Way of Evangelism* (Abingdon, 2010).

5. Following the basic perennial Church Growth model of field research, we can learn how from churches that are already pioneering in emotionally relevant ministry.
6. Following the Church Growth model, we can ask our people who have experienced emotional healing how the church could help many others to heal.

About the Author

George Hunter taught evangelism at Southern Methodist University's School of Theology, led his denomination in evangelism, and served as founding dean and then distinguished professor of Asbury Theological Seminary>s School of World Mission and Evangelism. Now emeritus, he does some field training, consulting, and writing. He has written over twenty books, mostly with Abingdon Press, including, *How to Reach Secular People, Church for the Unchurched, The Celtic Way of Evangelism: The Apostolic Congregation, The Recovery of a Contagious Methodist Movement: Should We Change Our Game Plan?*, and, most recently, *GO: The Church's Main Purpose.* Now, pushing 80, George still "pumps iron."

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CARING FOR MUSLIM MINISTRY WORKERS IN NORTH AMERICA

Mike Urton

Abstract

Numerous studies have been conducted on the causes of undue stress among missionaries serving overseas. This article represents the first such study conducted among missionaries working domestically among diaspora people groups. The focus is on a particular group of diaspora missionaries in North America, namely those serving among Muslims. It includes a survey of missionaries in this context who were asked to list their top stressors in ministry. The results are organized into relevant categories, along with suggested coping methods for these stressors. It concludes by demonstrating how caring for these missionaries will assist the broader Christian community in Muslim ministry.

INTRODUCTION

It has long been known that missionaries working in an overseas context have faced certain challenges that have created undue stress. These stressors at times can result in a reduced effectiveness in ministry, burnout, or attrition. Many studies have been conducted to discover the root causes of these issues among overseas missionaries, such as the ReMap I&II (Reducing

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Missionary Attrition Project) studies,[1] in order to deal with them. However, no comparative studies have been done for missionaries working cross-culturally among diaspora people groups in North America. Yet, as people have continued to migrate from their countries of origin to destinations in North America, the number of missionaries sent to reach these people with the gospel has also grown.

Studies done for overseas missionaries can be helpful to those working in a diaspora context, but those working overseas do not experience certain stressors in this context. The following study focuses on a group of missionaries working among Muslims in North America. While this is a specific slice of missionaries working in North America, hopefully the lessons gleaned will be applicable to those serving other people groups.

The present study includes responses sent via email from ten missionaries. Participants were asked to share about their top two or three ministry stressors. Suggested stressors included issues of finances, interpersonal relationships, culture (for example, the mixing of North American culture with the culture of origin), health, or organizational factors (sending organization or local team). While these were the suggested categories, respondents were free to share other stressors that did not fall into one of the suggestions. They were also given permission to share stressors voiced by their teammates or other Muslim ministry workers. Out of the ten responses received, only one could not be verified as working among Muslims, yet these responses were included because they were deemed helpful to the outcome of this study.

The responses were grouped into five categories. These categories include face-to-face ministry, support raising, relationship with sending organization, spiritual warfare, and other stressors. This list begins with the most frequently mentioned stressors, of which face-to-face ministry and support raising were tied. Since we are searching for patterns of stressors in this study, a particular issue had to be mentioned more than once in order to be considered in the top four categories.

The category of other stressors includes those issues that were mentioned only once. A study with more respondents may find these stressors occurring more frequently.

Before moving on to the findings, we will define the terms *stress* and *burnout* in order to bring clarity to this study. Ronald Koteskey defines stress as

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[1] ReMap I "included data from more than 400 agencies with a total of nearly 20,000 missionaries from 14 sending countries." ReMap II, entitled, "Worth Keeping: Global Perspectives of Best Practice in Missionary Retention," "included data from 600 agencies with 40,000 missionaries from 22 countries, and it contains more than 400 pages of valuable information." Ronald L. Koteskey *Missionary Member Care: An Introduction* (2013), 45–46, accessed December 21, 2016, http://www.missionarycare.com/missionary-member-care-an-introduction.html.

"a process involving environmental events (stressors), our own reactions to the stress, and the resources we use to cope with the stress. . . . Note that the stress you feel depends both on the events and on your resources."[2]

Marjory Foyle offers three different components to stress—the event itself, appraisal of the event, and coping methods that help to flesh out Koteskey's definition. The event itself "is usually something external to the individual, and out of personal control, both factors determining whether or not it will be stressful." Deciding whether or not a particular circumstance is harmful to us is the appraisal of the event. This is followed by the third component of coping methods "employed to deal with the situation."[3]

When stressors are left to build or the coping methods to deal with them are overwhelmed, a person can reach burnout. Foyle puts forth this definition of burnout originally coined by Freudenberger: "to deplete oneself, to exhaust one's own physical and mental resources, to wear oneself out striving to reach some unrealistic expectation imposed by oneself or the values of society."[4]

This portrayal of missionary burnout by Koteskey adds a helpful dimension to Freudenberger's definition:

> You find it hard to get up and go to work in the morning. Work used to be exciting and you used to look forward to what you did with people, but now you are just tired and it takes a great deal of effort to get out of bed. You wonder what is wrong. Could it be that you are suffering from burnout? Could a really committed missionary burn out? You may only be in your first term; certainly you couldn't burn out in just a few years, could you? Wouldn't God keep you from burning out? Is it better to burn out than to rust out? What about that old gospel song that says, "Let me burn out for thee, dear Lord?"[5]

Now that the parameters of the study have been outlined, and the terms *stress* and *burnout* have been defined, we will turn our attention to the participants' responses. These responses will be organized according to the five categories mentioned above. Again, since we are looking for patterns of stressors, only the top four categories will conclude with suggestions for coping methods.

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[2] Ronald L. Koteskey, *What Missionaries Ought to Know: A Handbook for Life and Service* (2015), 24, accessed December 21, 2016, http://www.missionarycare.com/what-missionaries-ought-to-know.html.

[3] Marjory F. Foyle, *Honourably Wounded: Stress Among Christian Workers* (Grand Rapids: Monarch Books, 2001), 28–29.

[4] Ibid., 202.

[5] Koteskey, *What Missionaries Ought to Know*, 159.

Face-to-Face Ministry

In this category, a particular stressor that emerged was working with people in unstable situations. This is the result of dealing with those who have come out of a traumatic refugee or immigrant situation. Since the lives of these refugees/immigrants are so unstable, ministry to them can also be unstable. As one respondent put it, "they come for help, then they are gone." Thus, a lack of both longevity and spiritual results in evangelism and ministry occurs. Also, since refugees/immigrants can have very high needs, much time can be spent on helping them in areas such as paperwork and language learning, so that little time is actually spent on spiritual ministry.

Another participant described his experience of working with a Muslim Background Believer (MBB), which also highlights this element of instability. He wrote that this particular MBB suffered from issues like extreme paranoia, skepticism of other Arab Christians, and poor decision-making that was contrary to advice given. The MBB's poor decisions resulted in "financial and emotional expenses," according to this missionary.

As a result of the ongoing stress created by dealing with people in these unstable situations, a missionary may begin to exhibit a symptom of burnout known as emotional exhaustion. Koteskey also refers to this as "compassion fatigue." This is when a person feels drained, used up, and overwhelmed "by the needs people come with." As Koteskey concludes, "It is not that you don't want to help, you just do not have what it takes to help anymore."[6]

It was also mentioned that "there is a challenge in ministering the Gospel to Muslims." The issue is that a missionary faces "family and community displeasure" by inviting Muslims to follow Christ. One respondent asks the question, "Down deep, how do Christian workers deal with asking Muslims to make decisions that will lead to persecution?" As he points out, the temptation here might be to change the message in order to avoid the problem of persecution for those who convert.

Still another participant highlighted having "to take more initiative to connect with Muslims" here in North America as a stressor. This is juxtaposed to an overseas context in which a missionary is surrounded by Muslims, making it much easier to have contact with them.

Suggested Coping Methods

1. Firm Boundaries

When dealing with Muslims and MBBs in unstable situations, having firm boundaries may be an appropriate coping method. It would be helpful for

[6] Ibid., 159.

missionaries to decide what and how much help they are willing to give with issues such as paperwork and language learning. This should be weighed with their goals in mind of how much time they would like to devote to other activities like evangelism and discipleship. Certainly the ministry of helping can overlap with evangelism and discipleship, but they are not always one and the same. Thus, decisions should be made as to how much time and energy will go into each activity. Developing a set of goals that assist in defining the missionary's priorities can help accomplish this.

2. Empathy and Integrity

With regard to the struggle of family and community pressures versus sharing the gospel with Muslims, Foyle points out that overseas missionaries face a similar issue of not understanding family pressures that the nationals to which they minister face. Her solution is for the expatriate missionary to love and respect the national first and foremost. She believes that this will cover over misunderstandings of how to behave properly.[7]

While this is a good corrective to keep in mind when dealing with Muslims cross-culturally in North America, it is also imperative that missionaries seek to uphold the integrity of the gospel message when sharing with Muslims. A combined love and respect for the person and their culture, along with communicating the gospel truthfully and graciously, may bring some ease to the tension of family/community pressure versus the invitation to follow Christ.

3. Self-Care

The energy that it takes to be intentional about consistently seeking out Muslims and MBBs to interact with and minister to should be balanced with appropriate self-care. Taking regular days off, scheduling vacations, and engaging in activities that one enjoys can assist in this.

Support Raising

Developing and maintaining a base of adequate financial support was another key stressor mentioned by participants. The issues of not having a regular furlough or home assignment to work on support raising, the time involved to raise support as a domestic missionary, and donors discontinuing their support were all listed as stressors. One respondent added that she believed that stateside missionaries were viewed as inferior to overseas missionaries, making it more difficult to raise necessary funds. Another highlighted that this can be especially stressful for those who are approaching retirement.

The difficulty that ethnic staff have in raising support was another finding in this study. One participant stated that the system of support raising that

[7] Foyle, *Honourably Wounded*, 110.

his organization employed seemed to work for the white staff but not as well for the staff of color. In his observation, this had led to some ethnic staff leaving the organization altogether.

Foyle, in her study of missionaries, also discovered "deputation-related stress" to be among factors contributing to "psychological symptoms." She also found that another problem concerning support raising was "the willingness of supporters in some countries to donate only to the religious aspects of the work, which they call 'ministry,' and not to the other things missionaries may do to serve their people in the name and spirit of Jesus Christ."[8] This is similar to stressors mentioned above in which potential donors may view domestic missionaries as somehow doing a lesser type of ministry.

Suggested Coping Methods

1. Valuing Stateside Missionaries

The emphasis with this coping method actually lies with the sending organization. Sending organizations should demonstrate that they value missionaries working cross-culturally in North America as much as they do those serving overseas. This can be done by communicating to their church and individual partners how they value the role that domestic missionaries play in reaching migrant people groups like those from Muslim countries. Missionaries working in this context can play a role by being involved in conversations with their organization about strategies for communicating domestic, cross-cultural ministry. Having a voice in how this is shaped may help in alleviating the feelings of inferiority and struggle mentioned above.

2. Developing Effective Strategies for Ethnic Staff

Again, this is a task for the sending organization. Perhaps a good starting point would be to interview ethnic staff who have seen some measure of success in raising financial support. These interviews may reveal patterns and successful practices that could be employed by other ethnic staff. Furthermore, staff of color should be included in these conversations, which are designed to shape effective support raising strategies for them.

Relationship with Sending Organization

A lack of understanding and support by the missionaries' sending organizations were among the stressors in this category. These issues seemed to manifest themselves in the forms of the organization lacking a vision for cross-cultural work in North America, operating on "old paradigms of geography-driven 'fields,'" and not understanding diaspora mission. In one case, this frustration has been compounded by the fact that the mission-

[8] Ibid., 85.

ary's sending organization accepted her to serve as a cross-cultural, domestic missionary but has not provided the necessary "spiritual, emotional, or developmental support." She continues, "This has been frustrating, devaluing, and discouraging. At multiple junctures we have looked for a new organization, but unfortunately, there are few options."

A study entitled, "Long-Term Outcomes of an Intensive Outpatient Program for Missionaries and Clergy," also found a disconnect between missionaries and their sending organizations. While this study measured how involved a sending organization was in their members' follow-up from an intensive outpatient program (IOP), some of the responses from their participants have application for this current study.

Those who felt like their sending organization lacked involvement had similar reactions to some of our respondents. One person commented, "Our sending organization hasn't offered us any follow-up to encourage continued restoration/resettlement."[9] Another expressed her frustration by stating, "Get into my husband's life and mine! The only reason they know anything is *my* pursuit of them. There was minimal time, energy, interest, sense of responsibility, or care during time on the field when they knew of serious issues that had happened, or afterward once we had returned to the USA."[10] The common denominator between this study and ours is that the missionaries in both of them greatly desired more involvement by their sending organization.

Suggested Coping Methods

1. Member Care

Missionaries working cross-culturally in North America should be included in the member care structures of their sending organization. Koteskey offers a picture of how member care might look: "This may be something routine such as regularly scheduled visits from a pastor asking, 'How are you doing?' Or it may be as rare as a psychologist rushing to get to a missionary within a couple days for a trauma debriefing to help prevent post-traumatic stress disorder."[11] While this is a task for the sending organization, the missionary can help by communicating to their organization about their need for care.

2. Vision for the North American Context

In order for missionaries in North America to feel like their ministry is valued, the sending organization should have a vision for diaspora ministry in this context. This vision can be developed in collaboration with those who

[9] Christopher H. Rosik, "Long-Term Outcomes of an Intensive Outpatient Program for Missionaries and Clergy," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 30, no. 3, 179.

[10] Ibid., 181.

[11] Koteskey, *Missionary Member Care*, 17.

are already engaged in this work, both inside and outside the organization. Here again, missionaries within the organization ministering in this context should be included in the formation of the vision.

3. Staff Development

A focus on professional development of diaspora mission workers may also help in alleviating some of the stressors mentioned above. This could take the form of promoting them within the organization and providing opportunities for ongoing education. These could be opportunities presented by the sending organization or pursued on the missionary's own initiative. Freedom and opportunity in this area may create hope that a missionary has a future in the organization.

Spiritual Warfare

The Bible tells us that ministry brings with it opposition from Satan and his evil forces (Eph 6:10–12, 1 Pe 5:8–9). This is certainly no less true for missionaries, as Koteskey comments, "Missionaries are on the frontline of a spiritual war between the powers of good and evil, and their battles are even worse." He continues, "With social support absent, emotional needs unmet, and living in a strange culture, why would Satan not take advantage of them as well?"[12]

This phenomenon of spiritual warfare was also mentioned as a stressor by our participants. One wrote, "I believe that ministry to Muslims involves so much spiritual warfare, and this is often overlooked. Lately I have (been) observing insane levels of spiritual warfare in so much of ministry to Muslims." As this respondent points out, since this is an unseen issue, it can often be overlooked as a significant stress factor.

Suggested Coping Methods

Scripture has so much to say on this topic that we can take our coping methods directly from the Bible.

1. Prayer

Scripture commands us to "Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes" (Eph 6:11). Ephesians 6:12–17 details the armor of God given to us to stand our ground against these evil forces. Missionaries working among Muslims in North America may find it helpful to meditate on and pray through the armor of God as a regular practice, in order to sustain them in ministry. They should also mind Paul's command in verse 18 to "pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests."

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[12] Ibid., 44.

2. Regular Time in God's Word

Ephesians 6:17 refers to God's Word as "the sword of the Spirit." Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." Scripture is the instrument that cuts through Satan's lies and spiritual attacks. This is why those working cross-culturally among Muslims should have a regular time to study and memorize God's Word, so that when these attacks come, they will be able to discern them and stand firm.

3. Support from Fellow Believers

At the end of this passage on the armor of God, Paul encourages believers to "always keep on praying for all the saints" and asks the Christians in Ephesus to pray for him (Eph 6:18–19). This highlights how prayer is a means through which believers can support one another in the spiritual battles they face. Fellow missionaries, the sending organization, or those in the local church can practice this.

Other Stressors

This category represents stressors that were mentioned only once among the ten participants in our survey. However, they are worth listing, because as noted in the introduction, a larger sampling may show that some or all of these are patterns of stressors for those ministering among Muslims in North America.

These other stressors include:

- Relationship to the local church
- Missionaries who served overseas missing that context
- Singleness
- Caring for elderly parents
- Underutilization of ministry giftings
- Lack of training for ministry
- Lack of a unified identity
- Lack of a unified team.

CONCLUSION

The hope for this study has been to try to identify patterns of stressors for those serving among Muslims in North America. The aim of the coping methods is to offer strategies for dealing with these stressors, which will help to avoid burnout and assist in longevity in ministry. Given the facts that this study is among the first of its kind and the sample size is small, much more work needs to be done in this area. Perhaps these findings will be useful to inspire future research on this topic, so that those serving

among Muslims in North America will be able to develop long and resilient ministries.

Diaspora ministry to Muslims is a very difficult undertaking, often with little fruit. Those engaged in it need to be dedicated for the long haul, in order to see God's kingdom advance among Muslims in this context. This is not a task that can be accomplished alone. Studies like this one are not only helpful in supporting these missionaries, but are also beneficial to the sending organizations and churches that walk alongside them. Developing care tools like these will assist missionaries, their organizations, and local churches in working together to see the gospel take root among Muslims in North America.

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THE LIFE OF DONALD MCGAVRAN: BUILDING A FACULTY

Gary L. McIntosh

— Editor's Note: Gary L. McIntosh has spent over a decade researching and writing a complete biography on the life and ministry of Donald A. McGavran. We are pleased to present here the seventh of several excerpts from the biography.

Abstract

Following the founding of the Fuller School of World Mission and Institute of Church Growth in 1965, Donald McGavran began to enlarge the faculty. To the initial members—McGavran and Alan Tippett—he added Ralph Winter, J. Edwin Orr, Charles Kraft, C. Peter Wagner, and Arthur Glasser. This excerpt tells the story of these hires and the early development of the Church Growth curriculum.

BUILDING A FACULTY

Donald's publications provided a major source of advertising for the new school, one that penetrated into numerous church families. For example, in 1967, he was published in the *Lutheran Standard*, *HIS Magazine* (Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship), *World Vision Magazine*, *Conservative Baptist Impact*, and *World Encounter* (Lutheran Church in America). Some of his articles, such as "A Bigger Bang for Your Buck or How to Get More for Your

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Missionary Dollar,"[1] spoke to specific local church interest. Other writings, such as "How to Evaluate Missions,"[2] communicated key aspects of church growth theory.

One of his most popular articles was written on leadership. Donald had developed a perspective on leadership that became extremely well known among those who studied church growth theory. He first published his ideas in an article that was published twice in 1967 as "Churches Need Five Kinds of Leaders."[3] He felt, in fact, that effective church growth required the development of at least five types of leaders. First, a church needs class one leaders, unpaid laymen who face inwardly, providing nurture for the saints already in the church. Second, a church needs class two leaders, unpaid lay persons facing outward in evangelistic ministry to those outside of Christ and a local church. Third, a church needs a class three leader, the paid pastor of a small church. Such pastors must be able to identify with the people in the community, speak their language, practice their customs, and teach the Word of God in a manner that brings the people into spiritual maturity. Fourth, larger churches need a class four leader, a highly trained paid pastor. These pastors most often serve congregations in urban centers and have top-flight training and vision for church growth. Last, churches need class five leaders who work among and across numerous churches. Some class five leaders serve denominations, associations, or independent churches in many locations. This article became a staple of his lectures, one he shared at various conferences as "Five Kinds of Leaders."

Along with his writing, Donald was consistently organizing seminars for missionaries on furlough, pastors of local churches, and missions committees. These were meant to educate those who attended but often served to introduce SWM-ICG to furloughed missionaries. Board members of mission agencies would often send a missionary to attend the school, or a missionary would attend on his or her furlough. Registration fees meant a seminar paid for itself, and those offered introduced church growth perspectives and terminology to numerous people. The seminars were usually team exercises, with both Donald and Alan Tippett speaking, along with guest speakers and other SWM faculty members as they came on board. Camp retreat centers, such as those in Glorieta, New Mexico; Montreat, North Carolina; and Mt. Hermon near San Francisco hosted seminars. Other seminars were held on college campuses, such as Biola College in La Mirada, California;

[1] Donald A. McGavran, "A Bigger Bang for Your Buck or How to Get More for Your Missionary Dollar," *World Vision Magazine*, December 1967, 16–17.

[2] Donald McGavran, "How to Evaluate Missions," *His Magazine* 27, no. 5 (February 1967): 22–27.

[3] Donald A. McGavran, "Churches Need Five Kinds of Leaders," *World Encounter* 4, no. 3 (February 1967): 17–19. This article was reprinted as "The Leadership Gap" in the *Lutheran Standard* 7, no. 4 (February 21, 1967): 8–9.

Nyack College in Nyack, New York; Simpson College, at the time in San Francisco, California; Asbury Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky; and Cascade College in Portland, Oregon. A sampling of the many church bodies represented in the 1960s at these seminars includes the Conservative Baptist, Southern Baptists, Christian and Missionary Alliance, the Disciples of Christ, Pentecostals, Nazarenes, the Primitive Methodists, United Methodists, Free Methodists, Lutherans, Mennonites, Episcopalians, United Brethren, Brethren in Christ, and many more.

Along with promoting the school, teaching, and writing—and perhaps most importantly—Donald worked on building the faculty. Ralph Winter (1924–2009), a Presbyterian whose field experience was with the Mam Indians of Guatemala, became the third full-time faculty member added to the School of World Missions. Winter had met McGavran in Guatemala during the early 1960s. In his typical fashion, Donald suggested that Winter spend time studying church growth at the new School of World Missions and also serve as a guest faculty member for the 1966–67 school year. Donald felt that Winter would be a good fit for the school, and after numerous conversations throughout that year, he agreed to join the faculty full time as associate professor of missionary techniques and methods, beginning with the 1967–68 school year.[4] Tippett was delighted with the addition of Winter to the team, feeling that he added at least three significant aspects to the new school: "(1) the introduction of the concept of Theological Education by Extension (TEE), (2) better sociological values in our graphing (e.g. semi-logarithmic graphs), and (3) a new approach to the history of Christian expansion."[5] Later, Tippett recalled that

> McGavran, Winter and myself all had one thing in common: we were all ready to experiment, to try new things, and (if you like) to try outrageous things, we thought that with God nothing was impossible, and each one of us got awfully impatient with beaurocratic humbug. That does mean we always agreed. Sometimes we annoyed each other, and we wondered where the other one was heading; but in the final analysis what God achieved through our combination at the SWM was remarkable.[6]

In contrast to the critics of mission during the 1960s—those who were saying missionaries ought to go home because the day of missions was dead—McGavran, Tippett, and Winter (eventually the rest of the SWM faculty as well) stood by the Great Commission. To them, no one had ever rescinded the Great Commission, and they did not intend to redefine the

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[4] Visiting faculty in the 1967–68 school year included J. F. Shepherd who was Executive Secretary for Columbia of the Latin America Mission, as well as J. Edwin Orr, noted authority on revivals and awakenings.

[5] Alan R. Tippett, *No Continuing City* (Charles Kraft personal collection, 1985), 320.

[6] Ibid.

concept of mission. Winter felt the SWM-ICG faculty must focus on its own growth and suggested that they meet together taking turns presenting a paper as a way to sound out new theories and concepts. The idea of writing a critical paper for exposure to each other took root and became a regular practice for several years. Later, they allowed doctoral students to present papers as well. These presentations served to create an integration of thinking, which helped shape Donald's *magnum opus*, *Understanding Church Growth*. Even though this was his idea, Winter, oddly enough, never presented a written paper to the group. More of a blackboard man, he preferred presenting his ideas out of his head to the group, although the ideas later found their way into various publications. Of these meetings, Tippett recalled, "If our doctoral candidates thought we were tough on them, we were not nearly as tough as we were on ourselves. If we were carving out a new discipline we had no intention of being sloppy about it."[7]

The issue was not his theology, rather the fact that his research and publications on revivals were not considered "sufficiently academic" by the committee.[8] Charles and Margaret (Meg) Kraft, both linguists with missionary experience in Nigeria, joined the SWM-ICG faculty during the summer of 1969. Chuck, as he was commonly called, became the second professor in anthropology, with African studies as his specialty. Chuck took over teaching the basic anthropology course, using Tippett's outline for the first year while developing his own.[9]

The resident theologians continued to doubt the theological scholarship of the faculty in the SWM-ICG. They also were displeased that the missiological curriculum included anthropology. Most of the theologians had earned a degree in Europe and had published solid theological works. They expected the SWM faculty to meet them on their theological turf and were unwilling to engage at the point of the SWM professors' scholarly competence. In truth, just a few of the theologians were outwardly critical and most were open, but the atmosphere was often less than collegial.

The SWM-ICG faculty recognized they had to prove themselves to the entire Fuller faculty, and they took pains to ground all presentations in the Bible before moving into the praxis of principles and methods. As missionary theologians, the SWM-ICG faculty focused on applied theology rather than pure academic theology. For example, Donald's background and training were primarily in education, but he had memorized larger portions of the Bible in both English and Hindi. His long years of meditation on the implication of Scripture passages for mission work meant that his theology

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7 Tippett, *No Continuing City*, 338.

8 Charles H. Kraft, *SWM/SIS at FORTY: A Participant/Observer's View of Our History* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005), 72.

9 Charles H. Kraft interview, August 4, 2009. See also Kraft, *SWM/SIS at FORTY*.

was in his heart, more than it was on paper. While he was not a systematic theologian, to say that he had no theology was and continues to be short sighted. Tippett had a stronger theological education, and Donald relied on him to provide a theological defense for the burgeoning Church Growth Movement. Winter proved a strong theological defender of church growth thought, but Kraft, too, endured criticism for his theological views. True, they all understood that, compared to the academic theologians at Fuller, their writings on theology were much simpler. Some of the theologians were extremely negative toward Donald, and they turned down a couple of his candidates for professorships, greatly annoying him. The Old Testament professors were willing to meet the SWM-ICG faculty as equals, but the remainder of the professors projected a feeling that the SWM-ICG professors were neither theologians nor scholars.

Donald knew that the endeavor needed a church growth theologian and worked to bring a qualified person onto the faculty as quickly as possible. The basic church growth theology that Donald had developed needed someone to take it through the whole Bible. Tippett felt that "we had to work on the origins of the People of God in the Old Testament, the missionary idea of their responsibility to the nations (in Isaiah, for example), and in the vision of the Lord himself. We had to see the mission of God on the canvas of time, rather tha[n] confine it to the New Testament Church and the writings of Paul."[10]

One person McGavran wanted as a faculty member was George W. Peters, a professor at Dallas Theological Seminary. Peters later wrote two influential books on mission theology: *A Biblical Theology of Missions* and *A Theology of Church Growth*. However, in 1966, Peters was invited to interview for a position at SWM-ICG. The process went well, and the Fuller faculty unanimously endorsed his becoming a professor there. Within a week, he received an invitation, along with information on the salary and terms of service. However, he turned down the invitation for three reasons. First, during his interview with the faculty, Fuller faculty members got into a heated debate about inerrancy, which set him on edge. Second, Donald was never precise about what he wanted Peters to teach. Three times Donald changed Peters' assignment from teaching theology of missions to comparative religions to history of missions. Third, Peters was not in full agreement with the philosophy of church growth as advocated at SWM-ICG. Peters had a long acquaintance with the basic framework of church growth theory, since he had studied with Pickett at Hartford between 1945 and 1947. While Peters was sympathetic and had many commonalities with the SWM approach to church growth, he was not fully in agreement. It was for these three reasons that he turned down the opportunity to come to SWM in 1966.[11]

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[10] Tippett, *No Continuing City*, 327.

[11] George W. Peters to Arthur Glasser, November 6, 1979.

During the fall of 1967, Donald was hospitalized with a twisted bowel, which doctors incorrectly diagnosed and treated. He was so sick that the faculty and staff feared they were going to lose him. This event showcased the vulnerability of the new school. When Donald became ill, Winter was out of town, Kraft was unable to teach Donald's courses, and no one could reach Orr. Therefore, it fell to Tippett to keep the ship afloat, which he did at great effort and with the support of Edna his wife. Tippett realized that the SWM-ICG professors had taken on more than they could handle, even with the occasional support of visiting lecturers. To continue the SWM-ICG without Dr. Mac, as Tippett called Donald, would be difficult, especially since his lecture notes were not available in printed form. Until this time, Donald had relied on the *Bridges of God, How Churches Grow*, and some of Pickett's writings as textbooks. Thus, while visiting Dr. Mac in the hospital, Tippett strongly encouraged him to forgo a planned trip to India that summer and instead put his courses into book form, which he did. The book was published in 1970 as *Understanding Church Growth*.

Understanding Church Growth was a highly significant book that was destined to stand the test of time. It immediately attained wide attention in numerous denominations, but especially in those that were conservative theologically. It established church growth as an orderly, systematic science. The book answered the question, How is carrying out the will of God to be measured? It was broken into five major sections: theological considerations, growth barriers, growth principles, understanding social structure, and establishing bold goals. The book is classic McGavran, presenting his more thorough and systematic presentation of church growth theory.

Another point of vulnerability was the leadership of the school. At that time, if Donald had passed away, or if he simply had to retire, the role of dean would have fallen to Tippett, a function he definitely did not desire. Thus, Donald and Tippett agreed that the school must find a man to work full time in church growth theology and prepare to take over the deanship. They felt that the right person must be a mission theologian, someone who knew the missionary world, a North American, and one with good standing with the Evangelical Foreign Mission Society (E.F.M.S.) and the International Foreign Mission Association (I.F.M.A.). The two of them concurred that the future of mission rested not with the mainline churches but with the evangelical wing of the church. Hence, having good credentials among North American evangelical mission societies was a big issue for the new dean.

The search for a professor of church growth theology and future dean eventually found its way to Arthur Glasser (1914–2009). A former missionary in China (1946–1951), Glasser was home director of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship for fourteen years (1955–1969; OMF, originally the China Inland Mission). In addition, he had served as a chaplain in the US Navy (1942–1945), studied Black theology, earned a master's degree in theology, knew the biblical languages, and had written several excellent articles

on theology of mission. He had a civil engineering degree from Cornell University (1936), a diploma in general Bible from Moody Bible Institute (1939), and a BD from Faith Theological Seminary (1942). While he had not attained a PhD (he had a DD), he was well known and respected by both the mainline churches and the evangelical churches Donald desired to win over to the church growth side.

Donald was delighted with the way that the school was developing and with the faculty that included Tippett, Winter, and Kraft. Writing to C. Peter Wagner, he commented that "it is a remarkably strong and many sided faculty. Its impact in the world of mission will be notable. And needed, too. This is precisely the time for great things in the missionary world."[12] Along with the core faculty, the school extensively used visiting lecturers, along with an assistant. One assistant, Roy Shearer, helped keep students on track with their theses. Edwin Orr taught a class on revivals, which was included deliberately to emphasize the role of the Holy Spirit in church growth as a balance to the social science courses.

The task of being the founding dean of the School of World Mission was demanding. Donald mentioned the heavy load in a letter to his pastor in November 1969:

> When we moved here in September 1965—at the age of 68—it was to take up the largest responsibilities of our lives and enter on a man killing job. I am not only dean of the School of Missions and Institute of Church Growth, with fifty career missionaries in attendance from many boards, I not only teach a regular load, supervise many researches, and administer the faculty and the School, but am also fuelling a quiet revolution in missions.[13]

He had always radiated energy younger than his real age, but this letter reveals the toll the work was taking on Donald's life.

The 1968–1970 edition of the SWM-ICG catalog reveals that the school had grown significantly in just three years. The curriculum consisted of thirty-five possible courses, distributed among eight major branches of learning. The branches were Theory and Theology of Missions; Apologetics of the Christian Mission—non-Christian religions; Mission Across Cultures—anthropology, sociology, world revolution, secularism, urbanization; Techniques, Organization, and Methods in Mission; History of Missions and Church Expansion; Church Growth; The World Church—Ecumenics; and Biblical Studies and Theology.[14] Core classes included principles and procedures in church growth, anthropology and mission, animism and church growth, history of mission, case study in church growth, and research

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[12] Donald McGavran to Peter Wagner 1970.

[13] Donald McGavran to Dr. Conner, November 9, 1969.

[14] Fuller Theological Seminary School of World Mission and Institute of Church Growth 1968–1970 catalog, international overseas edition, 6.

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seminars. The 1968–69 school year found forty-two students, enrolled from twenty-five countries, representing twenty-seven denominations.

The SWM-ICG next added C. Peter Wagner (b. 1930) to the growing faculty. As a missionary in Bolivia for sixteen years in the mid-1950s, Wagner had received a copy of McGavran's *Bridges of God*, and he read it one afternoon while resting in a hammock. His first impression was not favorable, and he placed the book on a shelf, commenting, "This is cockroach food."[15] Thus, he was surprised to discover in 1965 that the founding dean of Fuller's SWM-ICG was none other than its author. His curiosity piqued, Wagner decided to return to Fuller on his next furlough to study for an MA with McGavran and determine what was happening at his alma mater. It took some convincing, but gradually Wagner found himself in wholehearted agreement with the new thinking about church growth and produced a thesis on church growth in Bolivia, which William Carey Library later published.

Donald was impressed with Wagner's leadership, enthusiasm, and teaching ability, and in early 1968, he offered him a teaching position in the School of World Mission. While Wagner was completing his stay in the United States, working on his MA, Donald wrote him a letter offering a three-year teaching fellowship. The fellowship would have required Wagner to teach up to four hours in the School of World Mission, assist the other professors in the grading of papers, lead research seminars, and write book reviews for the *Church Growth Bulletin*. The most important requirement would have been the obtaining of a PhD during the three years of the fellowship. Wagner declined the offer, stating that he felt morally obligated to return to the work in Bolivia.[16] Wagner was the assistant director of the Andes Evangelical Mission and believed the mission was in too crucial of a time for him to leave.

Donald understood Wagner's decision but continued to pursue him for a future position. Five months later, he wrote Wagner, inviting him to serve as the visiting lecturer in the spring of 1970:

> What would you think of giving us a couple of two-hour courses—one for the career missionaries in the M.A. program entitled Church Growth Lesson from Latin American Missions; and one for candidates and B.D. men, entitled Why Mission To The Latin American Masses? Of the two, the first is by far the more important. In it you would pack the principles of action, administration, policy, budget distribution, missionary training, theological training of national ministers and laymen, which as a matter of fact have issued in the growth of Christ's Church and, conversely, those principles which have prevented the growth of the Churches.[17]

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[15] Peter Wagner to Gary L. McIntosh, n.d.

[16] Peter Wagner to Donald A. McGavran, March 5, 1968.

[17] Donald McGavran to Peter Wagner, August 19, 1968.

Wagner accepted the invitation after some negotiating with his Andes Mission and started planning to be in Pasadena from January to March 1970. He suggested that the title for his lectures be "Frontiers in Field Missionary Strategy for the 70s" and titled individual lectures as follows;

The Need for a Strategy for Missions
The Great Commission as God's Will for the Church
How to Diagnose the Health of a Mission
Modern Methods of Evangelism
Ministerial Training in Growing Churches
Missionary Go Home?
Those Outside the Camp
Theology and Missions
How About Social Service?
Why Some Churches Are Growing and Others Not (case histories)
Missionary Structures and Their Value
Integration and Segregation—The Danger of Cultural Overhang.[18]

The topics fit what Donald desired for the lectures and eventually formed the foundation for *Frontiers in Missionary Strategy* published in 1978.

Donald continued his heavy load of speaking, traveling, and writing throughout 1968. He participated as a keynote speaker in the European Consultation of Mission Studies held at the Selly Oak Colleges in Birmingham, England, from April 16–19. The consultation focused on Presence and Proclamation and the Meaning and Place of Mission. During July and August 1968, he lectured and researched the growth of the church in Japan. His analysis was published in an article for *Japan Harvest* titled appropriately, "Church Growth in Japan."[19] In the article, he set forth the church growth situation in Japan as he saw it and offered nine observations or suggestions on what churches needed to do to grow more vigorously. From October 16 to December 19, he traveled with Conservative Baptist missionary Vergil G. Gerber (1916–2009) to Taiwan, Manila, India, and Bangladesh, ending up at Colombia Bible College in South Carolina.

Correspondence continued to flow from Donald, highlighting his continued creativity for the SWM-ICG. He wrote theologian Carl F. H. Henry on January 6, 1969, to inquire about his participation in a lecture series for the doctor of missiology students. He sent a copy of the letter to Glasser for comment. In reply, Glasser revealed his commitment to the purposes of SWM-ICG, writing, "We are committed to the growth of the Church. We want our studies and productivity to further this central task. We dare not allow ourselves the least indulgence that would divert us in the

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[18] Peter Wagner to Donald McGavran, December 4, 1968.

[19] Donald McGavran, "Church Growth in Japan," *Japan Harvest*, Winter 1968–69, 15–22.

slightest degree from the emphasis that has brought the SEM-ICG into being."[20]

Letters also flew back and forth between McGavran and Wagner for the next few years. Details were firmed up for Wagner's lectures in 1970, and Wagner sought advice from Donald on the process of getting his MA thesis, "A Preliminary Study of the Origin and Growth of the Protestant Church in Bolivia," published. At first, Zondervan showed interest but eventually turned down the manuscript. Because Eerdmans was publishing a series of church growth studies, Wagner sent it there for consideration. However, Eerdmans was already typesetting two books, and three others, including Wagner's, were waiting for action.

Donald wrote, "These scientific, factual studies of the growth of the Church are not a very good bet financially, for any publishing firm. Eerdmans is likely to lose money publishing them."[21] Donald suggested that the Andes Evangelical Mission consider pre-purchasing one thousand copies of Wagner's future book as a means of encouraging Eerdmans to move quickly on it. Writing back, Wagner noted that his mission was not financially able to purchase that many copies. In the end, William Carey Library published his book on Bolivia. In a final line, Wagner mentioned, "Rumors about Art Glasser going to SWM are circulating internationally and let me offer my word of congratulations to you if they are true."[22]

Actually, conversations with Glasser were still occurring. On March 14, 1969, Donald clarified the circumstances in a letter to Wagner:

> In regard to Arthur Glasser, the situation is this. We have invited him to come to Fuller for a year of missionary studies. He has asked and received permission from his board to do a year of study. It is my hope that this year of study will lead to better things. I would love to have him on the faculty here, and that he is considering coming here means that he, too, is exploring a faculty position here with interest. No commitments have been made.
>
> I am writing this in the hope that you know him well enough so you could drop him a line, telling him you have heard rumors that he is coming here, and would like to encourage him in doing so.
>
> Your word from the field, like that—particularly if it heartily commended SWM, as I know yours would—would help him to make up his mind in the right direction.[23]

Wagner did write to Glasser in March 1969, encouraging him to study at SWM-ICG. Glasser participated with McGavran in three church growth seminars held in Indiana, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey during the sum-

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[20] Arthur Glasser to Donald McGavran, January 1969.

[21] Donald McGavran to Peter Wagner, February 27, 1969.

[22] Peter Wagner to Donald McGavran, March 7, 1969.

[23] Donald McGavran to Peter Wagner, March 14, 1969.

mer of 1969. After returning to Pasadena, Donald wrote to Wagner, "Arthur Glasser's contributions in the last three church growth seminars have been tremendous. I have been in prayer that he will accept a call to SWM-ICG as one of the faculty. We could get no one more able and no one who knows more about the present missionary enterprise."[24]

Glasser must have found the seminars equally invigorating, as the school announced the appointment of Arthur F. Glasser as associate dean and associate professor of missions on May 1, 1970. President Hubbard delighted that "the addition of Arthur Glasser to our faculty brings us a missionary scholar and spokesman of uncommon ability and proven dedication. He and the other full-time teaching staff in the School of World Mission will continue to blaze fresh trails of missionary research and education."[25] Glasser joined the faculty in September of 1970.

McGavran cared for his students, fellow professors, and their families. After Wagner arrived and had started teaching in January 1970, McGavran wrote a letter of gratitude to Doris Wagner:

> Just a line to tell you how pleased we are to have Pete here. His students stop to tell me of what a grand teacher he is and how much they are getting out of the courses. One of them said to me, "It was worth coming to Fuller just to be in Professor Wagner's class for the month of January."
>
> We especially appreciate Pete's being here during the time of your operation and your letting him come. And have been so distressed to hear of the complications you have had after the operation. I hope that by the time this reaches you, you are well out of the woods and indeed on the go again and we are looking forward to your being here in about three weeks.[26]

During February 1970, McGavran spoke at the annual conference for Evangelical Literature Overseas on the topic of "Church Growth and Literature." The lecture was turned into an article by the same title.[27]

In 1969, Eerdmans released the Church Growth Research in Latin America (GRILA) study conducted by William R. Read, Victor M. Monterroso, and Harmon A. Johnson as *Latin American Church Growth*. The most extensive, detailed (421 pages) study of Latin American church growth to that time, it presented an evangelical but broadminded analysis of the Protestant churches in seventeen countries.

Most readers appreciated the book, although James Geoff, a Presbyterian working in Mexico, wrote what Donald considered an "extremely hos-

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[24] Donald McGavran to Peter Wagner, September 18, 1969.

[25] David Hubbard, *Missionary News Service*, 1970, 3.

[26] Donald McGavran to Doris Wagner, January 30, 1970.

[27] Donald McGavran, "Church Growth and Literature," *Lit-Tec*, Spring-Summer 1970, 10–13.

tile and slashing review."[28] Geoff disagreed with the evangelical theology and attacked the statistical errors in the book. As Donald saw it, Geoff was instigating a "first class brawl" in a critical review of *Latin American Church Growth*. Although McGavran granted that the book contained some statistical errors, he felt Geoff's outrage was overdone. First issues of nearly every book often contain such errors, and the second edition generally incorporates corrections. In Donald's mind, some errors were to be expected, since the research covered more than three hundred missions and denominations, spread over all of Latin America, each with its own way of reporting statistics.

The truth was the mistakes were inconsequential. The overall trends and patterns of church growth in Latin America were clear, and correcting the minor faults in the book would not change them. "Dr. Geoff is not interested in correct figures," wrote McGavran. "He is interested in discrediting Evangelical Missions." He concluded, "What is at stake here is not opinion about a book. What is at stake here is Evangelical convictions about the Gospel, salvation, the Church, the evangelization of the world, conversion, social justice, the revolution, and the like. Geoff's clever attempt to discredit the Cause by exposing alleged errors must be beaten back."

Geoff's criticisms reflected the distortion of the Christian mission found in the World Council of Churches, and the old debater in Donald wanted to "hammer them."[29] Peter Wagner agreed with Donald and suggested they tackle Geoff on "(1) His radical theological stance, (2) His indifference to personal salvation, (3) The fact that the errors he uncovers are of little consequence and (4) If I'm not mistaken we can find that he has made some errors mathematically. . . . The byword—Scoff Geoff."[30] Geoff's review caused a major stir in Mexico, and a debate ensued on March 11, 1970, among Manuel Gaxiola, Roger Greenway, and Geoff, with John Huegel moderating. Following the debate, Greenway surmised, "Geoff wanted to limit the discussion to the 'errors,' but as Manuel and I saw it, these were just a pretext for attacking the whole ideology of Church Growth. The discussion which ensued confirmed our suspicions."[31] A personal friend of James Geoff, Ralph Winter, agreed that Geoff was wrong:

> I am certainly not ready to part ways with Jim as a personal friend, but his so-called review of the LACG certainly seems to exceed all bounds of courtesy and respect. . . . Those who know Jim very well are accustomed to his unruffled megalomania. Anyone who is as bright as he is deserves forgiveness in this fascinating fault. . . . Eccesiastica statistics for Latin America are a wilder-

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[28] Donald McGavran to Harold Lindsell, February 6, 1970.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Peter Wagner to Donald McGavran, February 7, 1970.

[31] Roger Greenway to Donald McGavran, March 12, 1970.

> ness of "soft data" which any engineer should know must not be mathematically processed over seriously. Jim's discovery of dozens (out of thousands) of numbers that do not jive precisely with other data in the book is very helpful to us in view of the second edition. But even to imply—much less insist—that such a relatively small amount of discrepancy "invalidates" the book is truly fantastic.[32]

Clearly, the professors at SWM-ICG were going to defend the study, and two formal responses to Geoff's criticisms were written, one each by McGavran and George W. Peters, a professor of missions at Dallas Theological Seminary. The entire controversy illustrated how the SWM-ICG pulled together to propagate and defend church growth theory.[33]

Donald and Wagner continued discussing his joining the faculty of the School of World Mission. A letter to Peter and Doris Wagner provides insights into Wagner's appointment:

> I was very pleased to get your note of March 18th which said, "Since the commitment is just about assured, you may want to consider keeping me 'in' by having copies of SWM minutes sent to me."
>
> I do, indeed, want to keep you "in" and you will receive the minutes regularly from now on. . . . From my point of view, and the timetable I have in mind for faculty movements, September 1972 would be a suitable time for you to join this faculty.[34]

Before Wagner could make a firm commitment, he needed to talk with the director of the Andes Evangelical Mission about fulfilling his responsibilities and obligations. Donald held a mutual concern that Wagner's transition would bring no harm to the Andes mission. Donald addressed this concern to Joseph McCullough, general director of the Andes Mission:

> We have given Pete a very cordial invitation to join the faculty at the School of World Mission and he is giving it serious consideration. At the same time, both he and we are agreed that his work with the Andes Evangelical Mission as Associate director is of the highest importance and must not be jeopardized. Since an immediate move is not contemplated either by him or by us, I am simply leaving this in the Lord's hands, trusting that a way will be found of mutual profit to both the Andes Evangelical Mission and the School of World Mission.[35]

A letter received by Donald from Wagner just two days after his wiring to General Director McCullough gave indication that a forthcoming merger

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[32] Ralph Winter to Donald McGavran, March 14, 1970.

[33] In July 1970, James Geoff also criticized Peter Wagner's *Latin American Theology: Radical or Evangelical?* published by Wm. B. Eerdmans.

[34] Donald McGavran to Peter and Doris Wagner, March 26, 1970.

[35] Donald McGavran to Joseph McCullough, April 6, 1970.

between the Andes Mission and another mission might open the door for Wagner coming to Fuller earlier than originally expected.[36]

Executive Secretary Clyde W. Taylor, however, was not totally pleased that Wagner might be leaving Latin America. He expressed that:

> God seems to have given Peter Wagner a gift that has made him a rather unique personage in the Latin American world. He not only has a tremendous curiosity which has compelled him to investigate every facet of the work in Latin America, but he also has a very agile mind and a tremendous capacity for work. The result is that he has developed into a mission leader in Latin America, for whom we have no substitute.[37]

However, Taylor accepted the fact that Wagner was convinced God wanted him to join the faculty in Pasadena. He only asked that Wagner be allowed to continue service to the church in Latin America by being involved in special events, by traveling to consultations, and by being available in an advisory role as frequently as reasonable.

A return letter was fired off immediately to Wagner, in which McGavran gave a dynamic overview of how he viewed the function of the School of World Mission:

> The function of this graduate school of missions in relation to the whole missionary enterprise is becoming clearer to me. We not only train a few hundred career missionaries, but by: training them, and focusing their conviction and experience on actual communication of the Gospel, and developing a consistent and biblical theory of missions which holds the evangelization of the world steadily in view, and ever aims to be faithful to a discipling of the ethne, and writing about these matters, and publishing books and articles on dynamic mission, and speaking, and teaching, and backing some activities and not others.
>
> We influence styles in missions, and help steer long range goals in biblical directions, and fight crucial battles, knowing which battles are crucial and which are not, seek God's forgiveness for our wrong decisions, vigorously combat error—particularly error which is to death, and vigorously love the brethren.
>
> God deliver us from being a mere school of missions. God grant us the high privilege of being a school of missions which is—to some small extent at least—a lamp to guide the feet of missions and a forum in which its central questions can be discussed and resolved.
>
> The men on the faculty should be those who shiver a bit at the thought of such a demanding task, and delight in having a share in

[36] Peter Wagner to Donald McGavran, April 8, 1970.

[37] Clyde W. Taylor to Donald McGavran, September 10, 1970.

> it, and fight to keep their thinking clear and clean and accurate and creative, and faithful enough to receive from their wonderful peers on a thousand fronts a respectful hearing—are you tuned in, my friend?[38]

While Donald continued to work towards Wagner coming to Fuller, Wagner also gave consideration to the pursuit of a PhD at the University of Nairobi or a ThD at Fuller, neither of which was to happen in the long term.

The April 1970 issue of the *Fuller Bulletin* included a short article by McGavran entitled, "The Sunrise of Missions." In it, he responded briefly to another professor of missions who had written that missionaries should go home, since the era of world evangelization was drawing to a close. Donald's optimism shines in the article: "Far from the mission era drawing to a close, it is just beginning," he announced. "We stand in the sunrise of evangelization. The acceptance of the Lord Jesus we have seen nothing compared with that which we shall see."[39] As though to demonstrate such optimism even more, at the School of World Mission faculty meeting held on May 8, 1970, it was announced that the doctor of missiology program had been accepted.

Donald's view of social responsibility is highlighted in a letter to Wagner. He wrote, "Social responsibility for evangelicals must be interpreted within the evangelistic, church-multiplying orbit—not (as our liberal opponents insist) as a substitute for evangelistic activity."[40] He believed that "we need a top flight thesis on the . . . social action-evangelism issue. Someone needs to lay it on the line that evangelicals are deeply interested in social action and justice and the new day—but resolutely refuse to substitute these for soul salvation, insisting rather that social justice and social action are much more powerful when they result from soul salvation."[41]

The growing impact of the Church Growth School was reflected in an article in *Eternity* magazine in August 1970. Calling McGavran "Today's Expert on Church Growth," Dwight Baker wrote, "Whether speaking against the leaden traditionalism of past mission policies or the heavy pessimism of current theories of mission, his voice is a salutary corrective that needs to be heard—and heeded—today."[42]

December 8 found McGavran leading a church growth seminar in Ventnor, New Jersey. Immediately upon his return to Pasadena, he entered the hospital for gall bladder surgery. The surgery took place on December 14, and it went well. McGavran was back in his office by December 22.[43]

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[38] Donald McGavran to Peter Wagner, April 8, 1970.

[39] Donald A. McGavran, "The Sunrise of Missions," *Bulletin of Fuller Theological Seminary* XX, no. 2 (April 1970): 3.

[40] Donald McGavran to Peter Wagner, June 17, 1970.

[41] Donald McGavran to Peter Wagner, November 25, 1970.

[42] Dwight P. Baker, "Today's Expert on Church Growth," *Eternity*, August 1970, 45.

[43] Donald McGavran to Peter Wagner, December 15, 1970.

Correspondence continued back and forth between McGavran and Wagner, with Wagner making plans to arrive in Pasadena on February 5, 1971, to begin teaching a course at Fuller from February 9 to March 5, 1971. A unanimous recommendation went to the Fuller Seminary administration that Wagner be invited to join the faculty full time in the summer of 1971. Recognizing Wagner's administrative abilities, Daniel Fuller asked him to take over as executive director of the Fuller Evangelistic Association, along with teaching responsibilities in fall 1971.

An article by McGavran appeared in *The Opinion*, a publication of the students of FTS, on February 16, 1971. The article, "How I Work," offered a brief overview of his perspectives and the way they influenced his practices:

> I am a man under orders from the Head. It is, therefore, my constant effort to please Him. My system of priorities, allocation of time, and style of writing must pass an inspection not mine. How will I succeed in this effort is, of course, another matter, of which fortunately I am not judge.
>
> In my system of priorities, people come first. Not people in general, but those to whom I am sent, for whom I can do something. I have little time for casual conversation; but hours for those who have a claim to my services. In my concept of stewardship, nothing can take the place of understanding individuals and doing something for them.
>
> Duties come second. One receives a salary for a certain kind of work done. I get paid for teaching classes and deaning the School of Missions. Many other duties hover on the fringe, however—writing letters to nationals and missionaries carrying heavy responsibilities in many part of the world, speaking in churches on missions, attending and speaking at conferences, writing on missions for magazines, writing books calling attention to the extraordinary opportunities to disciple men and societies today. It is a constant battle to know how to divide my time between all these different duties—in such a way as will please God.
>
> Keeping the body and mind in shape comes third. Pleasure (including eating) come well down the scale. A handful of raisins, a dozen crackers, and a flask of tea constitute my regular lunch—not because I hate tasty food, but simply because it takes so much more time to get. I eat heartily when I go to lunch or dinner as a social duty!!
>
> This system gives me little time to do serious writing. People and tending the store (my first and second priorities) eat up the hours and days. So I use vacations to write. My best known book The Bridges of God was written in the depths of an Indian forest where I spent my four week vacation in 1953. I stalked, rifle in hand, between five and six in the morning, sat at my typewriter from six

> to six, stalked again from six to seven, and wrote till nine. My last book Understanding Church Growth was written in the summer of 1968 when recuperating from an operation. Mrs. McGavran and I hid away in Dr. Schoonhoven's house and there I glued the seat of the pants to the seat of the chair for twelve hours a day. And walked two miles each evening to keep in shape.
>
> The preparation for books, however, is done from day to day. Ideas come constantly and are written down. Books and magazines, which I devour as time permits, yield many ideas—some to quote with approval and some to slaughter. Ideas which come in the middle of the night are often duds, but I get up and write them down just the same. Some gleam.
>
> I strive for clarity and truth in my writing. Obscurantist authors are my bete noir. I reject the assumption that the more difficult a sentence is to understand, the more profound is the writer. I, therefore, shun learned jargon and—as far as possible—technical and little used words.
>
> I rewrite many times. My first draft is always revised ruthlessly. I like to use a professional editor for the final draft. When others are going to spend days reading—and thousands do—I owe it to them to iron out the wrinkles, remove the ambiguities, and make my position crystal clear. What I say must also be true—as true as it is possible to make it. Making it clear and true sometimes leads me into strife with rules of various sorts. My ancestors came from Ireland and I have scant regard for rules for rules sake. I do not hesitate to over-emphasize a point if the situation in 1971 requires it! If in 1981 the situation requires overstatement on the other side, I shall cheerfully comply.
>
> This is the first time I have described my way of working. Or even meditated on it. Consequently the above must be taken as something stuck off in the heat of battle. I am sure it leaves much unsaid. Yet it intends to be true and I know it is clear—and with that I shall have to leave it. To put more time on it would probably not please the head.[44]

Critics of McGavran have commonly mentioned his polemical style of writing as a problem, but this short article shows McGavran's thinking as to why he often overstates his case.

Actually, McGavran had a spirit of graciousness toward his critics that was not always recognized. Church growth thought was not received well in Latin America and had been harshly criticized, beginning with Edward F. Murphy's (b. 1929) 1969 paper at the Latin America Congress on Evangelism in Bogota. Wagner's book on Latin American theology and the publica-

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[44] Donald McGavran, "How I Work," *The Opinion* X, no. 5 (February 16, 1971): 1–2.

tion of *Latin American Church Growth* in Spanish resulted in strong reaction to the church growth viewpoint by Rene Padilla, Samuel Escobar, Washington Padilla, and Pedro Arana. Wagner reported the anti-church growth feelings to Donald in June 1971, and in response, he suggests that the critics of church growth be dealt with kindly:

> I suggest, therefore, that we bend over backward to be kindly and generous to those who are now reacting vigorously to "church growth thinking." They will see the light—if God gives them to see the light; but it will take time. The truth will triumph. Let us give them that time and go on ploughing corn. Let us publish books which describe churches in honest, truthful detail. Let us analyze causes for growth and non-growth. Let us remember that the task is indeed great and complex and ours is only one part of the whole. Let us ask God to forgive our sins—and push resolutely forward as if we had not sinned. There is much ground to be gained and there are many adversaries to be overcome, and the day is far spent.[45]

The polemical tone of McGavran's writing flowed from his commitment to the Great Commission, rather than from a dislike of his adversaries. He believed passionately in the cause of Christ.

Donald had been working for several months to get Peter Wagner on the faculty. After the faculty voted to invite Wagner, he wrote to Donald, accepting the formal invitation. "It was quite thrilling to see that the unanimous recommendation has gone to the seminary administration that I be invited to join the faculty in the summer of 1971," Wagner replied.[46] Given the significant reputation Wagner had in Latin American Missions, as well as his published books and articles, the Faculty Senate of Fuller agreed to his incoming status as associate professor of Latin American affairs.[47]

The Wagner family arrived in Pasadena on August 6, 1971, and stayed with the McGavrans until they were able to move into their new house. Donald and Mary turned over the entire house, three bedrooms and a bathroom, to them, and everyone ate in two shifts. Peter and Doris Wagner later were shocked to learn that Donald and Mary had been sleeping on the floor to make room for the Wagner family.

A new era began in September 1971, when Arthur Glasser took over as dean of the SWM-ICG. An announcement was released in July that Donald would now be named dean emeritus and senior professor, with Arthur Glasser becoming dean and associate professor. In the June graduation ceremony, Donald was given a DLitt, only the fourth such degree awarded by the school. Also noteworthy at the spring graduation was the first doctor

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[45] Donald McGavran to Peter Wagner, Ralph Winter, Arthur Glasser, and Vergil Gerber, July 9, 1971.

[46] Peter Wagner to Donald McGavran, January 26, 1971.

[47] Donald McGavran to Peter and Doris Wagner, March 15, 1971.

of missiology degree conferred upon an SWM-ICG student, Alan R. Gates of the Conservative Baptist Foreign Missionary Society. Five graduates received an MA in missiology and eight received the MA in missions.

In the fall, McGavran taught principles and procedures in church growth in conjunction with Roy E. Shearer, a teaching associate in mission and church growth. Because McGavran was in the Philippines and Singapore during November and December, Shearer covered the remainder of the class. The course began on September 28 and ended on December 6. The outline of the course was as follows:

Introductory Session
The Complex Faithfulness Which Is Church Growth
God's Will and Church Growth
Today's Task, Opportunity and Imperative in Missions
A Universal Fog
Facts Needed
Discovering Reasons for Church Growth
Sources to Search for Causes of Growth
Helps and Hindrances to Understanding
Revival and Church Growth.

The course required the reading of fourteen hundred pages in *Church Growth and the Word of God* (Tippett), *Wildfire: The Growth of the Church in Korea* (Shearer), *Church and Mission in Modern Africa* (Adrian Hastings), and *Latin American Church Growth* (Read, Monterrosos, and Johnson). It also required students to conduct research on their own fields of ministry.

Beginning with fifteen graduate students, over the years, the School of World Mission grew to become one of the most influential schools of missiology in the world. By fall 1971, the school had "a faculty of six, a student body of more than eighty missionaries and nationals, from forty-one separate countries."[48] Some 250 missionaries attended the school in its first seven years, with sixty-four receiving degrees. In his role as dean, McGavran's understanding of church growth continued to expand as he collaborated with colleagues like Alan Tippett, J. Edwin Orr, Charles H. Kraft, Ralph Winter, Peter Wagner, and Arthur Glasser. Along with these leaders, a significant vehicle for communicating church growth thought was the William Carey Library, a publishing house devoted to producing books about Great Commission missions.

McGavran made an extensive four-month trip to Japan, the Philippines, Thailand, West Java, India, Pakistan, Ethiopia, and England from November 1971 to March 1972, during his sabbatical leave from the School of World Mission. As usual, he conducted several church growth conferences and

[48] Daniel Fuller, *Give the Winds a Mighty Voice: The Story of Charles E. Fuller* (Waco: Word Books, 1972), 233–234.

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seminars, as well as helped to establish a new School of Church Growth at Union Biblical Seminary in Yeotmal, India. Over fifteen hundred pastors attended a total of fourteen seminars in twelve different countries. The trip cheered Donald as he saw the impact of church growth teaching around the world; he felt a fresh breeze of evangelism and mission blowing around the globe, with much of it instigated by SWM-ICG. He declared, "Today, church growth is a hot, current emphasis in the church, not only in the United States, but around the world."[49]

Critics of church growth theory began to speak out intensely in 1972. Peter Wagner wrote to Donald about two disturbing events. The first involved articles against the church growth viewpoint written by Orlando Costas and Osvaldo Mottesi. Wagner wrote, "If these papers are typical of their position, Dean, there is no question that they are moving theologically with the Geneva line, and this can only cause a dilution of their evangelistic desire and involvement." Wagner's second concern reflected the decision of the Latin American Mission to move the department of Evangelism in Depth into the Latin American Seminary, rather than into the Department of Evangelism. Since Evangelism in Depth was to be under the direction of the seminary administration, Wagner suggested, "One does not need to have the gift of prophecy to see that this arrangement will soon neutralize the vision that Kenneth Strachan had when Evangelism in Depth was started back in 1960. This is most regrettable. The Lord will have to raise up something new and more vital in the days to come for Latin American, I am afraid."[50]

On January 25, 1972, McGavran responded to Wagner's two concerns in a letter that revealed his classical theological position:

> I am grieved to hear that EID is going to be a department of the LAM Seminary switching to humanization as the one hope of the world. However unless we seminary professors keep on believing that—
>
> the soul is eternal, the body transient,
> the soul can be eternally lost or saved,
> salvation depends on belief in "JC according to the Scriptures,"
> membership in His Body is the outcome of such belief
> and the Bible is the infallible Word which judges men rather than being judged by men,
>
> unless, in short, a straightforward biblical position is maintained (no symbolic meanings, no going behind the words to fanciful meanings) the pressures of the day will shove seminary after seminary over to the Uppsala position. SWM-ICG will be subject to the same pressures.[51]

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[49] Donald McGavran lecture at the Faculty and Staff Retreat, Northwest Christian College, Eugene, OR, September 2, 1972.

[50] Peter Wagner to Donald McGavran, January 18, 1972.

[51] Donald McGavran to Peter Wagner, January 25, 1972.

While McGavran strongly felt that a Christian society was something everyone wanted, he continued to believe such was accomplishable only through the efforts of redeemed men and women. Peter Beyerhaus emphasized church growth's commitment to biblical authority in McGavran's introduction to an article in November 1972. He wrote, "Church Growth is not primarily a matter of statistics, methods, or church or mission policies; but rather of deep convictions. It becomes possible only when Christians who know Christ go out driven by belief in the unshakeable authority of the Bible."[52]

John K. Branner published an interview with McGavran in the spring issue of *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* titled, "McGavran Speaks on Roland Allen." In the article, McGavran stated that he had never met Roland Allen and had begun reading him only after the publication of *Bridges of God*. While admitting that some of Allen's principles could be found in church growth thought, he noted the big difference that Allen had never understood the concept of people movements. Church growth thinking had not grown out of Allen's principles on the expansion of the church but from McGavran's studies with Pickett in the 1930s that culminated in the publication of *Church Growth and Group Conversion*.[53]

One of the challenges that Donald and the SWM-ICG undertook was to contend with the World Council of Churches (WCC) over the meaning of "mission." Early in 1968, as the WCC prepared to convene its fourth assembly in Uppsala, Sweden, its Commission on World Mission and Evangelism published a *Renewal in Mission*, a document describing the plan for missions and evangelism in the 1970s. Having read it thoroughly, the faculty of SWM-ICG "were alarmed to see that it contained no plans for evangelism and interpreted 'mission' solely as horizontal reconciliation of man with man."[54] The WCC document separated mission from the Great Commission, conversion evangelism, and church planting. To draw attention to this change in direction, Donald wrote, "Will Uppsala Betray the Two Billion?" in the May 1968 issue of *Church Growth Bulletin*.

The article created a storm, as the WCC leaders viewed it as an attack upon them personally. "Actually, it was a plea," Donald expressed, "for them to turn from excessive concern with humanization and to lay at least equal stress on proclaiming Christ as divine and only Savior and persuading men to become his disciples and responsible members of his church."[55]

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[52] Peter Beyerhaus, "Shaken Foundations and Church Growth," *Church Growth Bulletin* 9, no. 2, (1972): 267.

[53] John K. Branner, "McGavran Speaks on Roland Allen," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 8, no. 3 (1972): 165–174.

[54] Donald McGavran, "Yes, Uppsala Betrayed the Two Billion: Now What?" *Christianity Today*, June 23, 1972, 16.

[55] Ibid., 17.

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Thanks to John Stott and others, the final document released following Uppsala was edited to include a few words about the Great Commission. Donald and the rest of the SWM-ICG faculty were not impressed, feeling that the WCC was just masking the magnitude of change in its theory and theology of missions. Uppsala, according to Donald, had hijacked the Great Commission by redefining the locus of mission from evangelism to advocacy of justice and assistance; it stressed horizontal reconciliation among humanity over vertical reconciliation between God and mankind. Uppsala had betrayed the two billion who had yet to believe in Jesus Christ and serve him in a church. No matter how much the leaders of the WCC thought Donald was attacking them personally, the reality is that his campaigning was not against them or the WCC, per se, but against what he and the other members of his faculty believed to be the wrong direction, a faulty missiology, and the bankrupt theology of the WCC.

The battle between these two entities continued throughout Donald's life. *Eye of the Storm: The Great Debate in Mission*, of which Donald served as editor, was released in February 1972. It presented in detail the differing ecumenical and evangelical points of view. An article appeared in *Asian Challenge* in July 1972 that was extremely critical of McGavran and the church growth viewpoint. "The Place of the Western Missionary in Asia" referred to McGavran's ideas as "very destructive" and "very dangerous." The author stressed misunderstandings of the church growth position by saying, "Glorifying God does not include starting churches and obtaining large numbers of nominal converts at the expense of all else." He stated, "If numbers are the only criterion of success, then it would seem that it pays to preach heresy!"[56] McGavran's approach to the article was "I counsel ignoring it. This sort of misjudging's of the c. g. position and of what I have been saying is commonplace. The truth will swamp it—given time."[57]

One of the key thoughts in Donald's mind as he developed the faculty of the SWM-ICG was to round out his program and widen his platform in order to more effectively respond to critics. The critics had always considered church growth thought to be unbiblical, with criticism coming heavily from the Reformed branches of the church, including a couple of the theologians at FTS. Tippett provided significant research on the biblical basis of church growth in the early years of the movement. After several years, he expressed his thinking in *Church Growth and the Word of God*, which was published in 1970. The book went through several printings, selling some fifteen thousand copies, which demonstrates it met a need. Eventually, it was translated into Mandarin, Koran, Japanese, Malayalm, Hindustani, Indonesian, and Spanish. In particular, the work caused critical evangelicals

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[56] Bernard T. Adeney, "The Place of the Western Missionary in Asia," *Asian Challenge*, July 1972, 50–51.

[57] Donald McGavran to Peter Wagner, September 23, 1972.

to take a serious look at church growth thought. Glasser assumed the heavy theological lifting once he was established at the school, but Tippett and the entire faculty continued to address the theology of church growth in their lectures.

Donald and Mary McGavran celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary on August 29, and the SWM professors honored them with a card shower sent to their vacation address in Eugene, Oregon. Unknown to Donald and Mary, a Festschrift to honor Donald was in development during 1972, and negotiations for publication were ongoing between Ralph Winter, Harper & Row, and Wm. B. Eerdmans. By July, Eerdmans had agreed to publish it and have it ready for release in January 1973 at an SWM-ICG event commemorating Donald's seventy-fifth birthday. Tippett worked overtime throughout the fall to meet the December 30 editorial deadline. Edwin Orr completed the typesetting on his own machine in his home, a stage accomplished in such haste to meet the publisher's deadline that numerous typographical errors resulted. The project was extremely difficult to keep a secret since the entire manuscript was assembled in the office next door to Donald's.

Although the book was a tribute to his friend and colleague, Tippett had a hidden editorial agenda in designing the chapter outlines. A couple of rival theologians from other institutions had criticized Donald a good deal because of his supposedly one-track mind. Some were known to say, for instance, that Donald had only one string on his violin, and that was all he played. Tippett felt such criticism was no less than professional jealousy, so he decided to use the Festschrift to challenge it. Thus, the book covered a wide sweep of Christian mission, scattering twenty-five articles across five different fields of mission. Although each writer had freedom to develop his chapter, each chapter arises out of some dimension of mission already found in Donald's writings. By using this structure for the various chapters, Tippett felt he was saying to the reader, "Now, say that McGavran's writing is narrow if you dare!"[58] The 447-page Festschrift, *God, Man, and Church Growth,* included essays from twenty-six of McGavran's students and professional colleagues. Wagner volunteered to secure letters and telegrams from mission executives who might want to provide special recognition for McGavran on his birthday.

The big event scheduled for January 23, 1973, was a dinner commemorating Donald's birthday. Secret plans had been underway for more than a year to host the birthday party and present the Festschrift. Faculty members, SWM-ICG students, and former students from the early days in Eugene, Oregon, were invited to attend. International students were requested to wear national dress as appropriate. Persons too far away to attend were invited to send testimonials to be bound in a book of memories. The birthday party was billed as a promotional event, and McGavran was asked to

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[58] Tippett, *No Continuing City*, 441.

write a paper on "Five Expectations for Fuller's School of Missions in the Years Ahead." At the SWM celebration for Donald's birthday, Wagner presented the book of letters, President Hubbard awarded the Festschrift, and Dean Glasser shared thoughts from the SWM faculty. Some 267 people attended the dinner celebration, and more than 300 friends and associates from around the world wrote letters of congratulations. Each person present received a copy of *God, Man, and Church Growth*. The 1972–73 SWM class announced the establishment of an annual Donald A. McGavran Award in Church Growth to the SWM graduate who made the most significant research in church growth overseas.[59] Even so, at seventy-five years old, Donald could not have imaged how his theories of evangelism were to spread across the world in the coming years.

About the Author

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[59] Later this annual award was expanded to include the graduate who contributed significant research toward understanding church growth, whether it was overseas or domestic.

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A CLOTHESLINE THEOLOGY FOR THE WORLD: HOW A VALUE-DRIVEN GRAND NARRATIVE OF SCRIPTURE CAN FRAME THE GOSPEL[1]

Tom Steffen

Abstract

This article attempts to answer the question, why is it important to view Scripture as a single grand narrative? Too many of us are specialist in fragmentation when it comes to Scripture. We therefore continue to perpetuate a fragmented understanding of Scripture, and her Author. To grasp a more comprehensive picture of the face of God we must be able to move beyond the individual pieces of clothing placed on the clothesline, whether linear or circular, and learn to value how they all tie together to form a comprehensive wardrobe that brings honor to the Wearer.

As a checker of the New Testament for the Antipolo-Amduntug Ifugao of the Philippines, spearheaded by SIL's Dick and Lou Hohulin, our co-workers, SIL provided me with exegetical helps to help assist in the translation task. Each volume succinctly summarized ideas and terms presented in commentaries written by renowned theologians. Each book or letter of the New Testament was covered verse by verse. These aids sped up the Bible translation process and cut costs, as purchase of all these commentaries by each translator was no longer necessary.

[1] An earlier version of this article was presented at the Honor-Shame Conference held at Wheaton College on June 19–21, 2017.

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However, a major glitch occurred. The reader ended up with a very fragmented understanding of each verse, which became amplified with each chapter and compounded with the entire document. This resulted in a disjointed document. It had depth, but depth divorced from a unified whole. It was not good for discovering author intent.

Time passed, and I received a new batch of exegetical helps. These were very different from the previous generation. Gone was the incremental, fragmented approach. A unified, thematic approach replaced the disjointed one. Each book or letter was scripted around the perceived theme of the entire document and divided into segments to show how each section and associated terms within it tied back to the overall theme. Like the previous set of exegetical helps, it had depth, but this time it was tied to a unified whole. It treated the text as a literary document that deserved its own rightful distinctions. A holistic hermeneutic had replaced a fragmented one.

In a graduate class on education taught by Judy Lingenfelter at Biola, I observed something not only interesting, but also instructive. She took a child's puzzle composed of six to eight pieces and quickly scattered them indiscriminately on a table. She then called on a nearby student, who by happenstance was Asian, to put it back together. I summarize his response: "I can't, because I didn't see the complete picture on the box cover before you spread the pieces on the table."

Whether a written document or a child's puzzle, the whole is often lost to both those from the West and those of different cultures socialized under Western teachers. Parts receive the focus of attention (and award in the academy), often resulting in the loss of the whole. Westerners tend to be parts specialists or fragmentists. This is not without implications for understanding and teaching Scripture or presenting the gospel that derives from the same.

Most from the West have never heard a single sermon that covers the entire Old or New Testament. Fewer yet have heard one of the entire Bible. Most have never heard a book or letter covered in a single sermon or lesson. Westerners tend not to be people of the Book. Rather, they are people of the New Testament who feast on parts.

Most sermons originate from the New Testament, the last third of the Bible. Most are topical, bunny hopping from one verse to another and paying little attention to context, much like the first exegetical helps I first received. A possible reason exists for the West's penchant for the New Testament. A recent study by Rick Brannan of Logos's LAB blog "examined more than 830,00 verses across more than 300 works" and showed that "only 9 of the top 100 most-cited Bible passages in systematic theology come from the Old Testament—with Genesis accounting for 8 of them. (Isaiah is the

ninth)."[2] Many textbooks on systematic theology keep their readers turned pastor-teachers focused on the New Testament.

Most of us have been asked, "What is your favorite Bible verse?" Fewer have been asked, "What is your favorite book of the Bible?" Most of us have memorized Bible verses; few have memorized entire books or letters,[3] and fewer still the entire New Testament.

Most of us have learned the Bible from cherry pickers, snackers, Scripture surgeons, or fragmentists who believe real theology derives primarily from the New Testament. Since we tend to teach as we were taught (Bible bits learned through systematic theology), we create more of the same, even if the audience prefers to see the cover picture of the puzzle before attempting to put the individual pieces back into a meaningful whole—the one the author had in mind. Is it any wonder why a grand narrative,[4] the big picture, the metanarrative of the Scripture story is so foreign to pastors and people in the pews? Cross-cultural Christian workers and those they serve

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[2] Caleb Lindgren, "Sorry, Old Testament: Most Theologians Don't Use You," *Christianity Today: News & Reporting*, June 13, 2017, christianitytoday.com. *Christianity Today* raised this question, asking experts to comment. The following is part of what Kevin Vanhoozer, professor of systematic theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, wrote: "I hope that any biblically literate theologian knows, first, where to find the most important biblical statements pertaining to various doctrines (the content matters); second, how to read individual biblical statements in their larger literary contexts attend to the distinct contributions of larger forms of biblical discourse (the larger context matters); third, that all the sentences and books of the Bible are elements in a unified drama of redemption, of which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts (the whole counsel of God matters)." Craig Keener of Asbury Theological Seminary adds, "Much of Scripture is missing in part because much of Scripture's message is missing when theology starts with merely tradition's categories." Michael Bird of Ridley College noted, "The lesson I'm taking from this is that systematic theologians need to spend more time in biblical theology—in particular, in a biblical theology of the Old Testament." John Stackhouse of Crandall University states, "Since the overall shape of Scripture is a story—and how often Paul himself refers to the narrative of the Bible—it is remarkable that references to actual biblical events rank so low." Michael Allen of Reformed Theological Seminary claims, "we cannot be Christ-centered without being canonical in our approach." William Dyrness of Fuller Theological Seminary responds, "This collection of data is not representative of the Majority-World church and other minority groups, whose voices are mostly ignored, or a least underrepresented in such collections."

[3] In my training with New Tribes Mission (now ETHNOS360), I memorized four New Testament letters.

[4] Defining the post-modern age as "incredulity toward metanarratives" in *The Postmodern Condition,* Jean-Francois Lyotard is credited with popularizing the term "metanarrative."

at home and abroad? Those reaching post-modernists and post-truthers? In the West's penchant for fragmentation, have we made the Bible one of the worst-taught books in the world? Is it time for some course corrections? Is it time to change the conversation? Is it time to provide a clothesline (linear or circular) for all of the individual pieces of clothing that comprise the wardrobe?

The grand tour question for this article is, why is it important to view Scripture as a grand narrative? Sub-questions include: why do we assume that the Bible is a grab bag of stories? characters? symbols? rituals? themes? Why is the grand narrative of Scripture given so little attention? Why does the West (and those who have studied under her) have such a fragmented understanding of Scripture? How did we manage to untell two-thirds of the Bible? Why does the New Testament receive the most favored nation status in the West? Why does the North American church tend to understand the usefulness of the Old Testament solely for children? Was the New Testament ever intended to introduce Jesus to the world? Why do all four Gospels reference Israel before telling the Jesus story? Does the grand narrative of Scripture have anything to say about evangelism or discipleship? What necessary parts of the gospel story have been left on the cutting room floor?

To begin to answer the above questions, Part 1 of this article will define a grand narrative in relation to Scripture, provide reasons for the necessity of such, offer ways to identify it, and conclude with some of the assumptions that drive it. Part 2 investigates how the grand narrative of Scripture frames the gospel. After listening to some negative voices of locals and expatriates from various parts of the world concerning Western evangelism, it suggests possible changes to help put the "good" back into the "good news." It concludes by presenting the grand narrative of the Scripture story from four different value systems—legal, relational, control, and hygienic—offers a grand narrative that integrates all four, and provides two checklists to evaluate the composer's comprehensiveness.

META WHAT?

One of the first assignments in some of my classes is to write the theme (grand narrative/metanarrative) of the Bible in two to three sentences. When hearing this, the looks on the faces of students are always interesting. Some, no doubt, are thinking, doesn't the professor know that there are 66 books in the Bible, and he wants us to distill all that into a few sentences? The response of one seminary student is as follows:

> Why is it necessary in the first place to find a metanarrative in Scripture? Wouldn't it be enough to say, "The Psalms teach us one thing, the prophets teach us a different thing, and the Gospels another, and the Epistles another?" They could all be inspired and yet non-connected, couldn't they?

This seminary student took another route, but he ended up with the same result—a fragmented Bible:

> I have been a Christian for twelve years, I have read my Bible from cover to cover, I have studied the Bible formally in Bible college and informally in many small group Bible studies. However, I have never, in all of my time as a Christian studying the Bible, heard of a method for teaching through God's story in a chronological way so that it is easier to understand. The only exceptions to this reality in my life were the Old and New Testament survey classes that I have taken. Despite the way that those classes attempted to teach somewhat chronologically, the classes were often more structured around different genres of the content of different books of the Bible, and the survey courses never actually intended to teach Scripture chronologically.

Taught by Westerners, this young, married, Middle Eastern Indian seminarian smartly knew, seemingly unlike his sages, that the pieces had to be placed into a unified whole to make sense. "For me, I began my life with Christ with a vague understanding of Truth, and then spent the next fifteen years picking through sermons and books, trying to get the pieces put together into the right places."

A cross-cultural worker in China conveys a similar story:

> I will never forget my second year in China when I was working with about four girls on Bible study tools/practices. I met with one of them for lunch (the oldest in the group and therefore the de facto leader) and asked her what she thought would be helpful to study in our next session (as I wanted it to meet their needs). She said, "I want to learn the Bible." Upon further conversation, I discovered she wanted to understand the metanarrative of the Bible, how it all fits together. I was able to explain on a chart the timeline of all the Bible stories and how they fit together that way, but had no practice with or concept of a metanarrative in Scripture before she asked me that question, despite sixteen years of Christian schooling, each year with a Bible/theology class. I am still working on my understanding of the metanarrative of Scripture, or rather a clear retelling of it.

Before answering why it is necessary to find a grand narrative in the first place, I will first define it.

Defining a Grand Narrative in Relation to Scripture

A number of equally valid terms can be substituted for grand narrative. Some of these include: "overarching tale," "world-plot," "cosmic plot," "arch-narrative," "God story," "metanarrative," "guiding narrative," "Great Story," "theodrama," and "divine drama." For the purpose of this article in relation to Scripture, I will define a grand narrative as a single, succinct,

all-encompassing, summary of all (whole) the individual (parts) stories, symbols, and rituals within Scripture, giving each its meaning and validity. I will use grand narrative and metanarrative interchangeably.

A grand narrative serves as a totalizing framework[5] for all of the individual pieces, tying them into and expressing them as a unified whole. In the case of metanarrative, it is the narrative of narratives.[6] It (meta) transcends all other narratives. It answers the question, what is this Book all about? In relation to Scripture, it unpacks "the purpose of God in all its dimension" (Ac 20:27, VOICE). Moreover, it transcends *all* other metanarratives! It is *the* grand narrative of all grand narratives!

The Need for a Grand Narrative of Scripture

Reflecting on how I initially learned the Bible, I realized that the 66 pieces of the puzzle were virtually scattered over the tabletop by my dedicated, faithful Bible teachers, Sunday school teachers, and pastors. I was never shown the complete picture on the box top. Theologian David Wells tells us why this could have happened:

> . . . the fragmenting of knowledge within the seminary curriculum. Subjects and fields develop their own literatures, working assumptions, vocabularies, technical terms, criteria for what is true and false, and canons of what literature and what views should be common knowledge among those working in the subjects. The result of this is a profound increase in knowledge but often an equally profound loss in understanding what it all means, how the knowledge in one field should inform that in another. This is the bane of every seminarian's existence. The dissociated fields—biblical studies, theology, church history, homiletics, ethics, pastoral psychology, missiology—become a rain of hard pellets relentlessly bombarding those who are on the pilgrimage to graduation. Students are left more or less defenseless as they run this gauntlet, supplied little help in their efforts to determine how to relate the fields one to another. In the end, the only warrant for their having to endure the onslaughts is that somehow and someday it will come together in a church.[7]

If the picture on the puzzle box top were to emerge, it would mostly likely be up to me to put it together. Can 66 books written by multiple authors in different geographical locations over centuries actually produce a unified

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[5] See Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Mission: Christian Witness in a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2003), 87.

[6] Christopher Wright asserts that "The Bible presents itself to us fundamentally as a narrative, a historical narrative at one level, but a grand metanarrative at another." *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 63.

[7] David F. Wells, *No Place for Truth: Or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 224–5.

story? If not, it is unnecessary to discover the grand narrative that ties it all together. If so, a grand narrative is discoverable. Philip Yancey concludes that it is definitely possible to discern a single story:

> I find it remarkable that this diverse collection of manuscripts written over a period of a millennium by several dozen authors possesses as much unity as it does. To appreciate this feat, imagine a book begun 500 years before Columbus and just now completed. The Bible's striking unity is one strong sign that God directed its composition. By using a variety of authors and cultural situations, God developed a complete record of what he wants us to know; amazingly, the parts fit together in such a way that a single story does emerge.[8]

D. A. Carson concurs:

> The Bible as a whole document tells a story, and, properly used, that story can serve as a metanarrative that shapes our grasp of the entire Christian faith. In my view, it is increasingly important to spell this out to Christians and to non-Christians, as part of our proclamation of the gospel. The ignorance of basic Scripture is so disturbing in our day that Christian preaching that does not seek to remedy the lack is simply irresponsible.[9]

While definitely an untidy landscape of hills, valleys, deserts, bodies of water, lush fields, and forests, it is possible for a grand narrative to emerge. The 66 pieces of the puzzle can come together in a picture that closely resembles that which the Creator designed.[10]

Fragmentation can easily result in the loss of the big picture. For Fodor and LePore, that loss has enormous negative consequences. They argue that the whole is greater than the parts and, in reality, determines the vary nature of the individual parts. In fact, it is impossible to understand the parts in isolation from the whole. They also argue that the parts are intricately interrelated.[11]

Both the parts and the whole (grand narrative) are necessary for true meaning to prevail. Flannery O'Connor reminds us, "the whole story is the meaning."[12] Even so, the individual parts give way to and enhance the bigger

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[8] Philip Yancey, *The Bible Jesus Read: Why the Old Testament Matters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 21.

[9] D. A. Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 84.

[10] Two early influential authors who concentrated on the metanarrative of Scripture include Graham Scroggie's *The Unfolding Drama of Redemption: The Bible as A Whole, Vols. 1–3* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976); and Daniel Fuller's *The Unity of the Bible: Unfolding God's Plan for Humanity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992).

[11] Jerry Fodor and Ernest LePore, *Holism: A Shopper's Guide* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1992).

[12] Flannery O'Connor, *Mystery and Manners: Occasional Prose* (NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1969), 73.

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picture revealed in the grand narrative. To lose the grand narrative is to lose the meaning that the totalizing framework is designed to provide and protect. T. Desmond Alexander captures this concept well when he concludes, "Each book contributes something special to the meta-story and, in turn, the meta-story offers a framework within which each book may be best interpreted. In this regard, the longstanding principle of interpreting Scripture by Scripture makes considerable practical sense."[13] Part of our hermeneutic must be to analyze the big story, the grand narrative, as well as the individual stories, because "meanings emerge from literary *wholes*."[14]

However, if the grand narrative is lost, consequences result. Such a loss opens the door to the possibility of multiple interpretations. Dean Flemming, focusing on the gospel story, cautions:

> We should not seek the heart of the gospel that we are trying to contextualize in any core of doctrines or in a set of timeless propositions that can be abstracted from Scripture. The danger is that when it comes to actually defining a gospel core (and what is *not* the core), it is hard to avoid remaking the gospel in line with our own cultural and doctrinal biases.[15]

Michael Goheen discusses domestication possibilities in relation to the sweep of Scripture: "If the story of the Bible is fragmented into bits (historical-critical, devotional, homiletic, systematic-theological, moral) it can easily be domesticated by the reigning story of culture."[16] Jackson Wu posits a possible domestication outcome:

> Lacking a framework inherent to the Bible, one inadvertently imposes a structure onto the narrative. Thus, many Western missionaries will naturally select and organize stories in ways that tacitly reflect Western culture. Even though they are using a "storying" methodology, their narrative becomes a "Trojan horse" for their systematic theology.[17]

Bifurcators, beware!

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[13] T. Desmond Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2008), 10.

[14] Leland Ryken, *Words of Delight: A Literary Introduction to the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 82.

[15] Dean Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 301.

[16] Michael W. Goheen, "The Urgency of Reading the Bible as One Story in the 21st Century," Public lecture presented at Regent College, Vancouver, B.C., (November 2, 2006), 9.

[17] Jackson Wu, "Rewriting the Gospel for Oral Cultures: Why Honor and Shame Are Essential to the Gospel Story," in *Beyond Literate Western Contexts: Honor & Shame and Assessment of Orality Preference*, eds., Samuel E. Chiang and Grant Lovejoy (Hong Kong: Capstone Enterprisers Ltd., 2015), 70.

A second reason for the necessity of a metanarrative is that a certain segment of the population prefers a more global way of learning. In *The Adult Learner: The Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resource Development,* Malcolm Knowles, et al. develop a Whole-Part-Whole learning theory geared towards Western adult learners. The authors offer an andragogical learning template for instructional programs and lessons that follows the "rhythm of learning"—identifying the interrelationship of the whole to all the parts.[18] While geared for Westerners, this learning template, with certain adaptations, has deep implications well beyond adult learners in the West.

Field-dependent learners compose a significant number of learners around the globe and not just adults. Field-dependent learners[19] prefer a more global, holistic, and visual perspective of what is being discussed. They have an internal need to know the big picture *first.* Without such, they tend to impose their own sense of order, placing the parts into a culturally meaningful whole. They also "prefer less structured learning environments such as discussion or discovery."[20] Field-dependent learners prefer learning by discovery within previously identified soft boundaries.

Lastly, why is awareness of the grand narrative of Scripture important? "Because one's understanding of the sweep of Scripture is the heart hermeneutic that interprets every other part that is heard, read, or seen."[21] This is true whether one has articulated the grand narrative or not.

> The Psalmist reminds us, "The entirety of Your word is truth" (Ps 119:160, VOICE).
>
> We must remember that the New Testament builds upon the Old Testament, rather than merely adding to it. The four Gospels find their roots embedded deeply in the Old Testament. The Epistles find their framework in Acts, a natural outgrowth of the Gospels. Revelation builds on everything that precedes it, bringing a unified finality to the entire cannon. . . . The Jeweler has set the individual diamonds into a finished product—an eye-catching tennis bracelet with a hefty price tag. This raises an interesting question: can one really understand the parts without understanding the whole?[22]

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[18] Malcolm Knowles, et al., *The Adult Learner: The Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resource Development* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2015).

[19] H.A. Witkin and D.R. Goodenough, "Cognitive Styles: Essence and Origins, Field Dependence and Field Independence," *Psychological Issues* 14 (51), 1981.

[20] B. Wooldridge, "Increasing the Effectiveness of University/College Instruction: Integrating the Results of Learning Style Research into Course Design and Delivery," in *The Importance of Learning Styles: Understanding the Implications for Learning, Course Design, and Education*, eds., R. R. Sims and S. J. Sims (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1995), 52.

[21] Tom Steffan, "Saving the Locals from Our Theologies," unpublished paper, 2017, 28.

[22] Tom Steffan, *Reconnecting God's Story to Ministry: Cross-cultural Storytelling at Home and Abroad* (Waynesboro, GA: Authentic Media/InterVarsity Press, 2005), 93–94.

For a more complete understanding of the Author and his Word, our hermeneutic must encompass the sweep of Genesis through Revelation,[23] not just the individual parts.

I summarize this section with a quote from the *Christian Education Journal:*

> Like a thesis statement in an article or book, the metanarrative of Scripture serves as a succinct summary alerting the reader/listener of what is to come (often mysteriously) in more explicit detail. While few have ever attempted to write this out in a few sentences, intuitively it defines everything one reads or hears from Scripture. Writing it out and constantly revising it will enable the Christian worker to better understand the unified nature of Scripture. The metanarrative of Scripture fights a fragmented and false understanding of the Sacred Storybook.[24]

WAYS TO HELP IDENTIFY THE GRAND NARRATIVE OF SCRIPTURE

When you enter an all-you-can-eat buffet, which foods do you choose first or automatically skip over? How do you place them on your plate? segregated parts? overlapping piles? all mixed together? In what order do you eat them? What is your buffet culture philosophy? What assumptions drive your samplings and selections? Are you a vegan? carnivore? Do you have a sweet tooth?

Before going to a buffet, we may discuss the types of food offered at different locations—Italian, Brazilian, Chinese, and Japanese. We do not usually, however, sit down to review our sampling, selection, and stacking philosophy and procedures. This does not mean that we do not have them. Allow me to make an assumption. Everyone has a foundational sampling, selection, and stacking philosophy, as well as a plan, whether articulated or not. Moving the discussion from the buffet to the Bible, Jackson Wu raises some pertinent questions:

> Certainly, many missiologists rightly stress the need to tell the "grand story" of the Bible; yet, what framework are people using to shape that overarching narrative? What implicit theology underlies our story selection? On what basis have we chosen one story thread and not another?[25]

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[23] Tom Steffan, "Pedagogical Conversions: From Propositions to Story and Symbol," *Missiology: An International Review* 38 no. 2 (2010): 153–54.

[24] Tom Steffan, "Discoveries Made While Reconnecting God's Story to Scripture and Service," *Christian Education Journal* Series 3, 14(1) (2017): 178–79.

[25] Wu, "Rewriting the Gospel," 74.

The seven-mile Emmaus road trip is instructive in discovering the grand narrative of the sacred storybook. Roy Gingrich makes this astute observation about that eventful two-and-a-half hour walk down review lane:

> It cannot mean just a few scattered predictions about the Messiah. It means the Old Testament as a whole, encompassing all three of the major divisions of the Old Testament that the Jews traditionally recognized. . . . The Old Testament as a whole, through its promises, its symbols, and its pictures of salvation, looks forward to the actual accomplishment of salvation that took place once for all in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.[26]

To discover the grand narrative of Scripture, it will be necessary to consider "The Old Testament as a whole"[27] (the Emmaus road discussion), as well as a sweep of the entire New Testament. This assumes that to understand the Scripture story, it is necessary to consider it as a literary document, or, as Aristotle determined, one that has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Following are possible ways to help accomplish this.

Compare the Bookends

T. Desmond Alexander rightly suggests, "a story's conclusion provides a good guide to the themes and ideas dominant throughout."[28] We can go further. Any well-written book or movie has strong ties between the

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[26] Roy E. Gingrich, *Old Testament Survey* (Memphis, TN: Riverside Printing, 2001), 4.

[27] J. Daniel Hays contends: "The prophets are powerful and inspiring. Their criticism of sin and injustice is harsh, scathing, and unyielding. Yet their words to the faithful are gentle and encouraging. Furthermore, in the prophets we are able to engage with God himself, for he is a major character throughout the prophetic material. God speaks and acts. He grieves, hurts, explodes in anger, comforts, loves, rebukes, and restores. God reveals much about himself through the prophets. We see his transcendence—that is, his 'otherness.' He is sovereign over all the world and in total control of history. Isaiah will ask, Who can comprehend God or his ways? Yet we are also shown God's immanence—his presence with us and his 'connectedness' to his people on earth.

"Likewise, the prophets have a lot to say about people. In the prophets, we see a story unfold that recounts how the people of Israel (and their neighbors) responded to God and his revelation to them. We see a tragic story of rebellion against God, followed by terrible consequences. At the same time, the prophets show us God's great capacity for forgiveness reflected in his constant call for repentance and renewal of the hearts of his wayward people. Although most of the people will reject God's call for repentance, the prophets will also tell us their own personal stories—how they encountered God and then proclaimed his word valiantly and faithfully in dangerous and hostile situations." *The Message of the Prophets: A Survey of the Prophetic and Apocalyptic Books of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 22.

[28] Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 10.

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prologue and the epilogue. The Bible is no exception. Major matching themes, symbols, and rituals can be identified in Genesis 1–3 (prologue of the Garden) and Revelations 21–22 (epilogue of the New Jerusalem) (see Table 1). Identifying these will aid in discovering the grand narrative of the Bible in that they bracket the in-between chapters and characters into a unified whole, giving them meaning, legitimacy, aura, and authority.

Identify the Controlling Stories and Characters

The Bible contains hundreds of stories, possibly eight hundred,[29] depending on how they are separated. Gabriel Fackre defines story as "an account of characters and events in a plot moving over time and space through conflict toward resolution."[30]

Is the Bible just a grab bag of stories? Of course not! Jennifer Jagerson astutely asks:

> Is it possible to teach a paradigmatic story from each book of the Bible that makes clear to the oral learner what the big picture of the book is about? Might these paradigmatic stories be used to knit together the larger picture of God's overarching historical work to help insure a strong understanding of the meta-narrative?[31]

TABLE 1

Comparing the Bible's Epilogue and Prologue in Search of a Grand Narrative

GENESIS 1–3	REVELATION 21–22
1:1 "In the beginning God"	21:21:6 "I am the Alpha and Omega"
1:2 Earth chaotic	22:3 Earth orderly
1:26–28 Rule over my creation	22:5 Reign forever
1:28 "Be fruitful and multiply"	21:24 "People of all the nations"
2:9 Tree of Life in Garden	22:2 Tree of life on banks of rivers
3:3 Death	21:4 No death
3:8–10 Walk with God interrupted	21:3 Walk with God resumed
3:15 Satan's initial triumph	20:10; 22:3 Lamb's ultimate triumph
3:17 Ground cursed	22:3 No more curse
3:23 Banished from the Garden	21:2–3 Welcomed to new City
3:24 Withdraws from God's face	22:4–5 Will see God's face
Others	Others

[29] Personal correspondence with Grant Lovejoy, July 2, 2009.

[30] Gabriel Fackre, *The Christian Story (Vol 2): Authority: Scripture in the Church for the World (Pastoral Systematics)* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984), 5.

[31] Jennifer Jagerson, "Hermeneutics and the Methods of Oral Bible Storytelling for the Evangelization and Discipleship of Oral Learners," *Great Commission Research Journal* 4 (2013): 260.

A controlling story is "a story that is collectively recognized as promoting a significant aspect of culture that divides insiders from outsiders."[32] What are the controlling stories that serve as turning points to advance the storyline—the grand narrative? Some of these would include: creation, the fall, the flood, Abrahamic covenant, building the temple, and Jesus' arrival.

Is the Bible just a grab bag of characters? Of course not! God has purposely chosen certain characters to advance the plotline of the specific narrative and the metanarrative. Who within the controlling stories are the controlling characters that drive the plotline of the specific story? How do they advance the mystery of the grand narrative? How do the characters make him the honored hero?[33]

Glenn correctly posits, "If I can't tell you who Moses, Paul, Abraham, Jesus, and David are, and in what order they appear in the Bible's drama, I can't possibly know much about what's really going on there."[34] It is time we become proficient in identifying the controlling characters (spiritual and human) that drive the individual stories and advance the grand narrative. These could include Lucifer, Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, David, Jesus, Peter, Paul. Identifying the controlling stories and controlling characters of Scripture and their sequence provides another means to help define the grand narrative of the Scripture story that makes God the honored hero.

Identify the Controlling Symbols and Rituals

Is the Bible a grab bag of symbols and rituals? Of course not! Just as there are controlling stories and characters that help advance and define the grand narrative, controlling symbols and controlling rituals do the same. Symbols such as trees, doors, covenants, light, darkness, temples, rainbows, ark, dove, altars, blood, water, wind, circumcision, clothing, sheep, soap, oil, temple, and a host of others can be traced across the rugged landscape of Scripture, giving meaning to, and being defined by, the grand narrative. The same is true of controlling rituals such as washings, offerings, communal meals,

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[32] Tom Steffan, *Worldview-based Storying: The Integration of Symbol, Story, and Ritual in the Orality Movement* (Rainmaker, 2018).

[33] Charles Koller believes, "the Bible was not given to reveal the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but to reveal the hand of God in the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; not as a revelation of Mary and Martha and Lazarus, but as a revelation of the *Savior* of Mary and Martha and Lazarus." *How to Preach Without Notes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 32. Fee and Stuart rightly conclude, "Old Testament narratives are not just stories about people who lived in Old Testament times. They are first and foremost stories about what God did to and through those people. . . . God is the hero of the story. . . . God is the supreme 'protagonist' or leading decisive character in all narratives." *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993), 81.

[34] Glenn R. Paauw, *Saving the Bible from Ourselves: Learning to Read & Live the Bible Well* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2016), 13.

assembling, and baptisms. What are the controlling symbols and controlling rituals within Scripture? Identifying these will help bring clarity to the grand narrative of Scripture.

Survey the Summary Verses

Good authors know that readers require periodic summaries. That includes the authors of Scripture. Richard Bauckham notes, "Scripture does not and could not summarize its story from a standpoint outside the story, which is unfinished. The summaries are themselves part of the story and even contribute to the story's own development,"[35] and we could add, to the development of a grand narrative of Scripture as well. Kevin Vanhoozer summarizes, "The rule of faith was not an invention of the church, but a 'construal' of Scripture as a unified narrative . . . nothing less than a summary of Scripture's own storyline."[36]

Some of the Old Testament summary statements could include: Exodus 3:15–17, 4:29–31, 6:6–9, 15; Deuteronomy 1:6–3:29, 6:10–25, 26:5–9, 32:7–43; Joshua 24:2–15; 1 Samuel 12:6–13; 1 Chronicles 16:14–22; Job 38; Psalms 76, 78, 105, 106:6–12, 136; Jeremiah 2:1–19; and Nehemiah 9:5–37. New Testament summary statements could include the genealogies in Matthew and Luke; Luke 24:27; Acts 7, 13; Romans 5–8 (exile in small pieces), 9–10; and Hebrews 11. How do these summary statements help build and refine the grand narrative of the Scripture story?

Determine the Chapter Breakdowns or Acts of the Bible

A grand narrative of Scripture assumes that chapters or acts connect the dots (the Bible bits) from Genesis through Revelation. It assumes that all stories are embedded in other stories.[37] N. T. Wright understands the embedded nature of the Scripture story when he writes:

> Everything Paul says about Jesus belongs *within one or more of the other stories,* of the story of the creator and the cosmos, of the story of God and humankind and/or the story of God and Israel . . . there really is, in one sense, a Pauline "story of Jesus," but it is always the story of how Jesus *enables the other stories* to proceed to their appointed resolution.[38]

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[35] Richard Bauckham, "Reading Scripture as a Coherent Story," in *The Art of Reading Scripture*, eds., Ellen F. Davis and Richard. B. Hays (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003), 42.

[36] Kevin J. Vanhooser, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical Linguistic Approach to Christian Doctrine* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2005), 204, 206.

[37] Story also assumes the embeddedness of a cultural context (e.g., political, economical, religious, and geography, all of these, or others).

[38] N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God,* Book 1, Parts I and II (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2013), 517.

How do various authors perceive the chapters or acts of Scripture?[39] Some see a two-chapter book—the Old Testament and the New Testament. Others, like Arthur Glasser, propose a three-chapter book—Primeval History (Ge 1–11); Abraham and Israel (Ge 11–Ac 1); and Holy Spirit, Church, and Consumption (Ac 2–Rev 22).[40] Numerous others, including Trevin Wax, prefer a four-chapter book: Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Consumption.[41] William Dyrness assigns the drama five acts: Creation, Exodus, Exile, Jesus Christ, and Consummation.[42] Bartholomew and Goheen identify six acts: Creation, Rebellion, Redemption, Jesus Christ, the Church, and Restoration.[43] Moreau et. al offer a seven-act drama: Creation and Fall, Calling a People through Abraham, Rescuing and Separating a People, Maintaining God's Holiness, Save a People: Jesus the Messiah, Gathering a People: The Church, and Renewing All Creation: The Consummation.[44] The titles of these chapters or acts not only help discover how the authors perceive the grand narrative of the Scripture story, but they also identify the hero[45] of the book. Some of the headers will be found in the individual stories as well.

What are the assumptions behind identifying a grand narrative of the Scripture story? At least the following could be included:

1. History belongs to God.
2. God is the hero of history.
3. History is story shaped.
4. History is eschatological.
5. Scripture belongs to God.
6. God is the hero of Scripture.
7. Scripture is story shaped.
8. Scripture is eschatological.

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39 What are the favorite numbers of different cultures? Why do Americans like threes? First nations like fours, but no fourth floor is found on the elevators in Jakarta? Chinese like eights? What are the implications for the use of numbers in sermons? evangelism? curriculum breakdowns?

40 Arthur F. Glasser, *Announcing the Kingdom: The Story of God's Mission in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 29–30.

41 Trevin Wax, *Counterfeit Gospels: Rediscovering the Good News in a World of False Hope* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2011).

42 William A. Dyrness, *Let the Earth Rejoice: A Biblical Theology of Holistic Mission* (Pasadena, CA: Fuller Seminary Press, 1983).

43 Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 12–13.

44 A. Scott Moreau, et al., *Introducing World Missions: A Biblical, Historical, and Practical Survey* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 29.

45 Duvall and Hayes correctly assert, "If we miss God in the story, then we have missed the story." *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-on Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 349.

9. Chosen characters advance the storyline.
10. The gospel is embedded in God's total story.
11. We find our story of significance in (his) story.
12. It provides the hermeneutic to interpret Scripture.
13. It exposes heresy.
14. It challenges every worldview and theology.
15. It provides a framework for authentic local-global theology.
16. It offers softness and pliability for various faith traditions.
17. God is defined by what he does.
18. Others?

Whether a buffet or the Bible, unarticulated assumptions prevail in most of our eating and meaning-making practices. It is time to articulate them so that they can be better leveraged. It is difficult to leverage what we have not acknowledged or articulated.

THE ROLE OF THE GRAND NARRATIVE IN THE GOSPEL FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Christ followers from the West tend to favor theological fragments conveyed through abstract concepts often summarized in three points. This has frequently translated into a gospel presentation composed of abstract principles and ideas presented through culturally preferred numbers.

The "good news" communicated has also been strongly oriented toward a value system that biases legal language. This configuration can cause the majority of the world at home[46] and abroad to have a difficult time understanding the gospel, much less communicating it to others. The "good news" fails to magically come across as "good news." Rather, it often comes across as Western, foreign, or bad news.

Hear what some of the local voices and expatriates are saying in regards to Western evangelism and discipleship. For example, a Japanese church leader asked a missionary, "Why did Jesus have to die?" After the standard explanation—to pay for our sins—his response was, "To be honest, I don't find that explanation satisfactory."[47]

One voice from India declares: "It is rather alarming that nearly all teaching and preaching on atonement in Indian churches uses exclusively the language of medieval Roman law courts even though that setting is foreign to every Indian Christian's experience."[48]

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[46] See Andy Crouch, "The Return of Shame," *Christianity Today* 59 (2005): 32–41.

[47] Joel B. Green and Mark D. Baker, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament & Contemporary Contexts* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2000), 153.

[48] Steven R. Benson, "By One Man's Obedience Many Will Be Made Righteous: Christian Understanding of the Atonement in the Context of Asian Religious Pluralism," *Asia Journal of Theology* 9 (1995): 101–22.

An Indian student wrote this on her final exam for a class on honor and shame taught by Werner Mischke:

> Most of the missionaries who came to India in the past tried to teach people based on Western cultural values. This made a deep wound and separation in the society between East and West. Christians and Bible are considered completely foreign. We [Christians] are also following the same tradition and never looked at the Bible with our own cultural thinking. . . . So the effective contextualization of the gospel became a failure and India is still largely unreached.[49]

Tite Tiénou calls for a Christian message that is de-Westernized:

> If Christianity is de-Westernized, Christians in Africa, Asia, and Latin America will be able to defend themselves when accused of being agents of Westernization and puppets in the hands of foreigners whose intention is the destruction of local cultures and religions.[50]

Soong-Chan Rah drills deeper:

> It is the arrogance of Western, white captivity to assume that one's own cultural point of view is the be all and end all of the gospel story. Every seat has its advantages and disadvantages, and it is imperative for the entire global community of believers to learn from one another in order to more fully understand the depth of the character of God.[51]

Two other Indians offer some insightful advice, "You [Western Christians] are presenting Jesus with a knife and fork, but the gospel has to be eaten with fingers here." As one Brahman surmised, "We have not rejected Jesus Christ; you have not presented him in a way we can understand."[52]

These chilling and challenging comments demand change from our short- and long-termers taking the gospel abroad and those who train them. Why? Because, "If you mess up the message, you mess up the movement."[53] If we do mess up the message, expect to see nominalism, syncretism, split-level Christianity, legalism, and other "isms." Evangelism and ongoing discipleship are intimately tied together. Foundations matter! So, what must change? What can help minimize such communication noise?

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[49] Werner Mischke, August 31, 2015, wernermischke.org.

[50] Tite Tiénou, "Christianity Theology in an Era of World Christianity," in *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity*, eds., Craig Ott and Harold A. Netland (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 42.

[51] Soong-Chan Rah, T*he Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 110.

[52] Jeremy Weber, "Incredible Indian Christianity: A Special Report on World's Most Vibrant Christward Movement," *Christianity Today* 60 (9): 47–48.

[53] Tom Steffan, *The Facilitator Era: Beyond Pioneer Church Multiplication* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 132.

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What changes will help make the "good news" actually come across as "good news," not just abroad, but at home as well, to different ethnic groups? to post-modern and post-truth generations?

Change Our Perception of the Bible

The answers to the above questions begin with one's view of the Bible. Rather than perceiving the Bible as a fragmented self-help book, or a private devotional catalog, or a segmented encyclopedia, or a magic book of multiple tricks, or a book of lists of rules, or a splintered moral manual, or a topical theological textbook (common among those formally trained in the Bible and those they teach), we must perceive the Bible as a unified sacred storybook—the Scripture story. Perceiving the Bible as the Scripture story

> allows its readers and listeners to grasp the big picture, receive a more complete picture of God, expand traditional theological categories of convenience, respect the literary genres of the Storybook, move beyond argument-based evangelism, utilize the entire Storybook in evangelism, wed evangelism and follow-up, and embolden faith stories.[54]

The Old Testament matters. The New Testament matters. Unified, they do what neither can do on its own—capture the mystery of the grand narrative of the Scripture story.

A story, including the Scripture story, has a beginning, a middle, and an end. This requires a grand narrative, a metanarrative that bundles the multiple pieces into a unified whole, thereby projecting while protecting the Author's message.

Determine the Predominate Genre of Scripture

While the genres in Scripture are numerous, if limited to three—propositions, narrative, poetry—which is predominate? In *Reconnecting God's Story to Ministry*, I overestimated the percentage of narrative, assigning it 75 percent.[55] Poetry received 15 percent, with 10 percent going to propositions. After further research,[56] I revised the percentages as follows: narrative (55–

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[54] Steffan, *Reconnecting God's Story*, 90.

[55] Ibid., 36

[56] For example, Millard Erickson, *The Evangelical Left*, makes this observation as to the role of narrative in Scripture: "Indeed if one does a comparative analysis of the content of the Bible, the New Testament books that seem to deal most explicitly with narrative constitute only 56 to 62 percent of the content, depending upon whether one treats Revelation as narrative. In the Old Testament, the narrative books (Genesis-Job) constitute 57 percent of the material. It can, of course, be argued that the prophetic books contain considerable narrative, which they surely do, or even that they represent interpretation of the narrative and that the narrative is an interpreted narrative." *The Evangelical Left: Encountering Post-conservative Evangelical Theology* (Carlisle, UK: STL, 1997), 58.

65 percentage), poetry (25–35 percent), and propositions (10 percent).[57] Eugene Peterson persuasively posits, "The Holy Spirit's literary genre of choice is story."[58]

Perceive How the Grand Narrative of Scripture Frames the Gospel

Many Western Christians believe that the gospel, the good news, began in the New Testament. After all, Jesus did go "into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God" (Mk 1:14, NIV). Reductionism reigns.

Scot McKnight offers a reason for "the near total ignorance of many Christians today of the Old Testament story. One reason why so many Christians today do not know the Old Testament is because their 'gospel' doesn't even need it."[59] Such understanding (or lack thereof) means that the need for a metanarrative encompassing both Testaments will be absent. "It's like we began in the middle of the book, rather than the beginning, expecting them to know the introductory chapters."[60] Interestingly, however, the gospel is discussed or implied multiple times in both Testaments (see Ps 96:2; 106:7–47; Isa 40:9; 52:7; 61:1; Ac 13:32, 33; 14:15; Ro 1:1–4; Gal 3:8; 1Co 15:3–4). Reductionism of gospel to the New Testament must be challenged. Not all parts of the Old Testament drama should end up on the cutting room floor.

Jesus' overview of the Hebrew Scriptures to the two despondent disciples on the Emmaus road demonstrates the powerful role of the Old Testament in framing the gospel: "Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms" (Lk 24:44, NIV). The story, of course, continued into the New Testament, tying both Testaments into a unified book driven by chapters and characters that advance the mysterious storyline in search of a satisfactory solution.

A question that requires debate and specific answers is, how does one's grand narrative or metanarrative of the Scripture story frame the gospel? The answer is central because the grand narrative of the Scripture story, not just the New Testament, frames the gospel.

Since many field-dependent people prefer hearing/seeing the big picture before the parts, possibly one of the best initial verbal presentations of the gospel for this audience is the grand narrative. As McKnight rightly concludes, "Any real gospeling has to lay out the story of Scripture if it wants to put back the 'good' into the good news," because "without that story there

[57] Steffan, "Pedagogical Conversions," 150.

[58] Eugene H. Peterson, *Leap Over a Wall: Earthy Spirituality for Everyday Christians* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1997), 3.

[59] Scot McKnight, *The King Jesus Gospel: The Original Good News Revised* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 44.

[60] Tom Steffen, *Business as Usual in the Missions Enterprise?* (La Habra, CA: Center for Organizational & Ministry Development, 1999), 79.

is no gospel."[61] Should they need more time to digest its "good" implications, they now have a big-picture framework in place. Any additional gospel presentations from others (articles of clothing) will now have a clothesline (linear or circular, depending upon pedagogical need)[62] upon which to hang them.

Give Narrative Theology a Place at the Table

I often ask students if they have taken classes in systematic theology. Every hand goes up. biblical theology? Fewer hands go up. historical theology? A few hands show, maybe. natural theology? It was a part of systematics. narrative theology? It is virtually unknown! How can that be, if narrative is the predominant genre of Scripture? Why does systematic theology (pulling treads out of a weaving) reign as queen of the sciences in the seminaries taught by surgeon specialists? N. T. Wright advances this answer:

> What happened with the Enlightenment is the denarrativization of the Bible. And then within postmodernity, people tried to pay attention to the narrative without paying attention to the fact that it's a true story. . . . The overarching story of who Jesus was, the story of God and Israel and the coming of Jesus, has to have a historical purchase on reality.[63]

In relation to theology, the Enlightenment was instrumental in replacing narrative with philosophy,[64] events with ideas, and characters with concepts. Paauw posits:

> The abandonment of story in the modernist attempt to make sense of the Bible is one of the biggest mistakes God's people have made with the Scriptures in the entire history of the church. . . . It is precisely the narrative character of the Bible that allows us to make an authentic connection between these ancient writings and our own lives.[65]

Sadly, if story has little or no focus, certainly *less focus still* will be on the grand narrative of the Scripture story. Nevertheless, hope is possible. In

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[61] McKnight, *The King Jesus Gospel*, 85, 36.

[62] A perspective missionary asked this thought-provoking question, "Don't we need to teach people to think linearly so that they can understand Scripture?" This would be a great discussion question. How will this pedagogical preference affect cyclic or spiral thinkers?

[63] N. T. Wright, interview by Tim Stafford, "Mere Mission," *Christianity Today*, 2007, 40.

[64] Bruce Bradshaw notes, "According to Jacques Ellul, 'all errors in Christian thought' began when Christianity shifted the center of theology from history to philosophy." *Change Across Cultures: A Narrative Approach to Social Transformation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 22.

[65] Paauw, *Saving the Bible from Ourselves*, 106.

Shame and Guilt, Hannes Wiher captures one possible reason for the *reentry* of narrative theology:

> The analytic, conceptual, guilt-oriented thought patterns of the Enlightenment made the narrative disappear, and their failure made it reappear again. The development of narrative theology has to do with the rediscovery of shame orientation in theology.[66]

Gabriel Fackre defines narrative theology as "discourse about God in the setting of story."[67] If the predominant genre of the sacred storybook is narrative, and it is, evangelicals must give narrative theology its rightful role in the hermeneutic process.[68] We must learn to treat the Bible as literature composed of various genres, as did the revised SIL exegetical helps that listened to the entire document. We must acknowledge the sequence of the theologies before assigning the superiority of one over the others. In reality, they are all integrated, even if their formation has a sequence.

The Bible did not arrive as a book composed of Western systematic theology. Rather, systematic theology evolved over time from the multiple narratives that composed her as Western theologians teased out the answers to *their* questions. This often resulted in philosophical ideas being separated from characters and events—what I call The Great Bifurcation. This means that most people who were taught Western systematic theology will have to learn how to restory, renarrate, redrama, reevent, recharacter, resymbol, reritual, remetaphor (narraphor, symbophor, rituaphor),[69] and remystify theology laundered of her earthiness so that abstract, philosophical concepts can be placed within concrete characters and events.

Narrative theology, which focuses on the entire text that allows the flow of the various acts and actions within them to determine the theologies included by the author, can help reunite The Great Bifurcation. Narrative theology seeks to discern the theologies included by the author in the entire text. In contrast to systematic theology, which seeks to answer the theologian's questions, narrative theology attempts to discover the answers to the biblical author's questions.

While both the whole and the parts are necessary and should be valued, the start point is not theological treads (parts), rather, it is story (the weaving). The metaphor can be changed to, "Story is the ring that provides a setting for the precious gems of propositions."[70]

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[66] Hannes Wiher, *Shame and Guilt: A Key to Cross-cultural Ministry* (Hamburg, Germany: Culture and Science Publication, 2003), 333.

[67] Gabriel Fackre, "Narrative Theology: An Overview," *Interpretation* 37, 1983, 343.

[68] In reviving narrative theology (for some in the evangelical world), I am not including the aspect that denies the historicity of the biblical narrative.

[69] Steffan, *Worldview-based Storying.*

[70] Ibid.

Consider Character Theology

What if other theologies could paint different perspectives of the face of God? What could "character theology" add to the existing theologies? With more than 2900 characters in Scripture, how could (do) they teach abstract doctrine? Ruth Tucker advocates pushing personalities to the front page:

> For many publishers and preachers and ordinary people, the Bible is largely a manual of propositions. The colorful personalities pushing their way out of its pages are seen as secondary—if that. But any attempt to turn this incredible chronicle into a theological dissertation destroys the very essence of its message. We learn how to live and how to die by putting ourselves into the narrative. Indeed, we recognize these characters by looking in the mirror.[71]

Allow me to elaborate on character theology:

> By character theology I mean utilizing some of the more than 2900 human characters in the Bible, including groups, such as the Pharisees or Sadducees, along with those associated with the spirit world, such as the Holy Spirit, Satan, angels, and demons, to teach abstract doctrines, morals, and ethics. Character theology relies on earthy, concrete characters to frame abstract truths and concepts, thereby giving ideas a home. It does so even as it retains God as the center of the story, and the individual story's place within the broader sweep of Scripture. . . . For example, rather than teach the abstract doctrine of justification by faith, let the earthy lives of Abraham and David define this abstract doctrine (Romans 4). Or, review the life of Moses to teach the doctrine of adoption. . . . Dogma without spiritual and human characters defining it is on the fast track to coldness. Bringing Bible characters out of the closet will heat up the conversation.[72]

Character theology, which should precede concept studies, provides listeners and readers a concrete way to redraw the face of God.

In relation to connecting the cumulative characters to the biblical metanarrative, I wrote, "We have to study not only the spiders, or the Bible characters; it is equally important to study the web, or the meta-narrative . . . because God has chosen to weave his grand story with the smaller stories of particular people."[73] Telling their stories is a part of telling *the* story; they make the invisible metanarrative visible. If character theology is tied to whole-part-whole learning theory for field-dependent learners, a powerful pedagogy to redraw the face of God can result for many.

[71] Ruth A. Tucker, *The Biographical Bible: Exploring the Biblical Narrative from Adam and Eve to John of Patmos* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013), 2.

[72] Steffan, *Worldview-based Storying.*

[73] Steffan, *The Facilitator Era*, 148.

Character theology has the potential to paint a different picture of the face of God through the numerous good and evil characters and the fence setters in between, portrayed on the pages of the Scripture story. That is because, as John Goldingjay contends, the "story-shapedness of Scripture corresponds to the story-shapedness of human experience."[74] The lives of Bible characters speak to lives of all peoples as they contain slices of life—family feuds, sickness, sexual sins, warfare, barrenness, birth, curses, death, power abuse, persecution, poverty, execution, employment, intimacy, and finances.[75] A cast of biblical characters makes it easy for listeners and viewers to identify with their choices, the resulting consequences, the implications they have for abstract doctrines, and the role it plays in delineating the grand narrative of the Scripture story. Bible characters provide a rich reservoir from which to draw a more complete and accurate picture of the face of God.

Discern and Develop Value Systems

When residing among the Ifugao of the Philippines, I intuitively presented the verbal gospel (in the dialect) predominately from my preferred value system, expressed through the *legal language* of guilt and innocence (known as G/I).[76] Sadly, that is not uncommon for most Western evangelists. As I unceremoniously discovered, "suitcase theology" has its limitations.

Imagine if I showed you a PowerPoint slide that pictured well-known Western evangelism models, such as the Four Spiritual Laws, The Roman Road, Evangelism Explosion, Chronological Bible Storying (Firm Foundations), and Simply the Story, and asked the question, what do these models all have in common? How would you respond? The answer is that they are all based on legal language—guilt and innocence (G/I).[77] Nothing is wrong with that, of course, unless G/I is not one of your preferred value systems. Timothy Tennent tells us why such can happen:

> Since Western systematic theology has been almost exclusively written by theologians from cultures framed primarily by the values of guilt and innocence, there has been a corresponding failure to fully appreciate the importance of the pivotal values of honor and shame in understanding Scripture and the doctrine of sin. Even with the publication of important works such as *Biblical Social Values and Their Meaning* and *The New Testament World,* systematic

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[74] John Goldingay, "Biblical Story and the Way It Shapes Our Story," *The Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 27 (1997): 6.

[75] Rob Bell states it this way: "We have to embrace the Bible as the wild, uncensored, passionate account it is of people experiencing the living God. . . . We cannot tame it." *Velvet Elvis: Repainting the Christian Faith.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 63.

[76] Because of their animistic background, I also included fear/power.

[77] The same is true of Western discipleship models.

> theologies have remained largely unchanged by this research. In fact, a survey of all of the leading textbooks used in teaching systematic theology across the major theological traditions reveals that although the indexes are filled with references to guilt, the word "shame" appears in the index of only one of these textbooks.[78]

To be relevant at home and abroad, Western evangelism must move beyond the sole value system of G/I.

Increase the current value systems. Ever since Eugene Nida identified the three reactions to sin as fear-based, shame-based, and guilt-based in his classic *Customs and Cultures,*[79] most authors have followed suit. The trilogy, with slight variations, dominates the past and present literature. The three prominent value systems in use today in the missions world include: (1) guilt/innocence (legal language), (2) fear/power (control language), and (3) shame/honor (relational language). Could there be a fourth, or even additional, value system?

I have added a fourth value system to the trilogy based on hygienic language—pollution/purity (P/P). Following is some of my rationale for doing so:

> Werner Mischke addresses purity/pollution (P/P) in *The Global Gospel* as one of the sub-dynamics of the honor/shame value system as does Georges. When considering its dominance in both the Old and New Testaments, and various cultures around the world, I wonder if P/P represents a fourth value system—another possible "first among equals"? It seems one would expect to find this value system in those religions tied to Abraham—Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and other religions, such as Hinduism, Shintoism, and aspects of animism among First Nations tribes. Trauma victims, e.g., those sold into sexual slavery, could also be included.[80]

It is interesting to note that during the early years of the modern day Orality Movement,[81] the definition of orality rarely expanded beyond story, and the expectation was that when speaking, one would only tell stories without using PowerPoint or other aids. Forget about propositions. Oral-preferenced people do not use propositions. Today, however, those within the movement have greatly enlarged the definition to include song, the arts, symbols, rituals,

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[78] Timothy Tennent, "Anthropology: Human Identity in Shame-Based Cultures of the Far East," in *Theology in the Context of World Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 91–92.

[79] Eugene Nida, *Customs and Cultures: Anthropology for Christian Missions* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1975), 150.

[80] Steffen, *Worldview-based Storying*.

[81] Ibid.

drama, and so forth.[82] Even the definitions of orality have changed, and Walter Ong, the key theorist, has been challenged. Those within the honor and shame movement may find themselves on a similar learning curve in relation to the number of value systems and other aspects—is it guilt/innocence or guilt/justice? Time and insight may reveal the necessity to expand the value systems beyond the trilogy initially introduced by Nida.

Check your radar screen for shame and honor. The value system of shame and honor began to appear on the radar screens of evangelicals in the West serving cross-culturally around the year 2000. Presently, articles and books continue to roll off the presses. Activities proliferate. For example, in 2014, Andy Crouch, then with *Christianity Today,* attended an orality consultation convened by the International Orality Network (ION) that focused on honor and shame.[83] Riding with him from the airport to Houston Baptist University in a driving rain, I asked why he was attending this consultation focused strongly on cross-cultural contexts. His response was that he was here to "eavesdrop on this missions conversation." A year later, here is a summary quote from his article. Notice the slight Americanized twist on honor and shame:

> So instead of evolving into a traditional honor-shame culture, large parts of our culture are starting to look something like a postmodern fame-shame culture. Like honor, fame is a public estimation of worth, a powerful currency of status. But fame is bestowed by a broad audience, with only the loosest of bonds to those they acclaim. . . . Some of the most powerful artifacts of contemporary culture—especially youth culture—are preoccupied with the dynamics of fame and shame.[84]

In *Shame Interrupted,* Edward Welch generalizes about Scripture and shame. While the Bible is about more than shame, Welch captures the critical necessity to slow walk shame through the narrative ark of the Scripture story:

> The Bible, it turns out, is all about shame and its remedy. Why else would it be introduced at the very beginning?" . . . Since shame is so painful, we could be tempted to race to the end of the story and hope to be done with it quickly. But shame rarely responds to quick fixes.

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[82] See Michael Matthews, *A Novel Approach: The Significance of Story in the Hermeneutic of Reality* (TellWell, 2017); Steffen, *Worldview-based Storying*; and Robert Strauss, *Introducing Story-Strategic Methods: Twelve Steps toward Effective Engagement* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2017).

[83] See Chiang and Lovejoy, eds., *Beyond Literate Western Contexts: Honor & Shame and Assessment of Orality Preference* (Capstone Enterprises Ltd., Hong Kong: International Orality Network, 2015).

[84] Andy Crouch, "The Return of Shame," *Christianity Today* 59, 2005, 38.

> Better to walk through the biblical story than run through it. There is much to be learned from shame's long history. . . . Scripture is giving Jesus' credentials to you. He is a commoner and an outcast who knows you and identifies with you, so you can identify with him. He is also the King who takes you to the heights of honor and privilege.[85]

In 2013, the Cook School of Intercultural Studies at Biola University offered its first graduate course on honor and shame, now titled Honor and Shame in Scripture and Service. Distinguished dissertations on the topic have resulted from scholar-practitioners, two of which presented in part at conferences are by Patty Toland ("Redeeming and Strengthening Honor and Shame Practices in Church Relations") and Lynn Thigpen ("Redeeming the Poverty-Shame-Limited Education Cycle through Gracing").

Discern the value system percentages. Most people (cultures) have one or two value systems that they prefer. For the animistic Ifugao of the Philippines, fear/power (F/P) and shame/honor (S/H) dominate. Guilt/innocence (G/I) and pollution/purity (P/P) have little influence on their daily lives. That does not mean that the last two values systems are inferior or unimportant. Rather, it means that the Ifugao place most value on two—F/P and S/H. It also means that my initial evangelism only focused on one of their preferred values (F/P) and one of mine (G/I). Communication noise naturally resulted. To help alleviate such noise, Christian workers should ask two questions, what percentage should I assign to each of the four value systems of the host culture[86] or to my culture?

Examples of Grand Narratives of the Scripture Story

At this point, I would like to offer four possible grand narratives, each driven by a specific value system. Students in my various classes or consultations wrote these. Before doing so, here are several emphases that a grand narrative can include.

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[85] Edward T. Welch, *Shame Interrupted: How God Lifts the Pain of Worthlessness and Rejection* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2012), 41, 45, 113.

[86] How dominant is the value system of honor and shame in Scripture in comparison to the West's favorite—guilt/innocence? Timothy Tennet makes this observation: "a survey of all of the leading textbooks used in teaching systematic theology across the major theological traditions reveals that although the indexes are filled with references to guilt, the word 'shame' appears in the index of only one of these textbooks. This omission continues to persist despite the fact that the term guilt and its various derivatives occur 145 times in the Old Testament and 10 times in the New Testament, whereas the term shame and its derivatives occur nearly 300 times in the Old Testament and 45 times in the New Testament." "Anthropology: Human Identity," 92. Hannes Wiher came up with different statistics from both Testaments. He found that shame and honor had a total of 968, while guilt and justice had 1350. *Shame and Guilt*, 214–215.

Each value system has its preferred **terms for God** (and Satan has his counterfeits). The *legal language* of guilt and innocence assigns God names, such as Just, Holy, Lawgiver, Judge, Truth, and Merciful. The *control language* of fear and power assign him names, such as King, Master, Victor, Liberator, Almighty, Prince of Peace, and Consuming Fire. The *relational language* of shame and honor prefers names such as Father, Faithful, Wonderful Counselor, Shepherd, and Jealous One. The *hygienic language* of pollution and purity favors names for God such as Purifier, Refiner, Holy, and Physician.

Each value system has its preferred **role for Jesus** as well (and Satan has his counterfeits). The *legal language* of guilt and innocence assigns Jesus' role as substitute. The *control language* of fear and power allocates Jesus' role as victor. The *relational language* of shame and honor calls for a mediator, while the *hygienic language* of pollution and purity prefers the role of purifier. As you read the grand narratives below, each focused on a single value system, keep "terminology" and "roles" in mind (see Appendix A for a more expanded overview).

Guilt/Innocence

The theme of the Bible is the all-powerful, loving God pursuing a relationship with sinful, broken mankind. God, who is holy and perfect in every way, reaches out to remove the punishment and guilt of sin, restoring and lifting up mankind into a position of harmony with himself.

Fear/Power

The theme of the Bible is the kingdom of God. It pronounces amnesty for repentant rebels, judgment and death for his enemies, and instruction and rewards for those rightly related to the King.

Shame/Honor

The Bible is the story of God, the Patron, creating humans, his clients, in his image to share his honor and glory, and the way he responded to rebellion and dishonoring from his clients by initiating a redemption plan to restore humans back into his image and glory through the means of a mediator, his Son, Jesus Christ.

Pollution/Purity

In the beginning, God created the world perfectly free from any impurities, defilements, or pollution. Through wrong choices, uncleanness and impurity entered the world and entered the lives of every human. All people became dirty, defiled, and unclean. Because of this, humans could no longer have a relationship with God who is totally pure and without defect. God, however,

> provided a way for us to be restored to him, to become clean again in his sight. He did this by sending his Son, the Lord Jesus. Jesus was also perfect and completely pure, and through his death and resurrection, all of our impurities could be cleared away. By putting our faith in Jesus, and asking him to clear away all our impure thoughts and unclean behavior, we can become clean again and have a right and proper relationship with God. This eternal relationship will last forever when we live with God in his glory, and all of his creation is made new and pure again.

While it is instructive to differentiate the four value systems for discussion purposes, like the four above, we must never forget how integrated they are within our daily conversations, our music,[87] and the Scripture story.[88] For example, all four can be found in 2 Timothy 1:3–13, Hebrews 1:1–8, and Peter 1:21–22. It is evident that the texts of Bible authors flow smoothly from one value system to another.

A diamond with four cuts. The four value systems can be likened to four cuts that a professional diamond cutter makes on a diamond. Each precise cut adds new value to the diamond, accentuating beauty formerly unseen but always present.

I will now attempt to offer a diamond with four cuts—a grand narrative that integrates the four value systems. Due to the humanness of this non-professional diamond cutter, it will not be expected to be the finished product. It may even necessitate further cuts. For sure, it will require extended polishing. Here is my current attempt of stating the grand narrative of the Scripture story that honors the hero of the Scripture story:

> Counterfeit tried to usurp the Patron-Father's authority and honor but is ultimately defeated. Even so, Counterfeit managed to influence his highest creation, people, to do the same. They became haughty, disloyal, unclean, and guilty. This required the Patron-Father to reestablish his rightful rule and honor over *all* his cre-

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[87] Can you spot the four value systems in the first stanza of Lauren Daigle's "How Can It Be":

> "I am guilty
> Ashamed of what I've done, what I've become
> These hands are dirty
> I dare not lift them up to the Holy one."

Track 2 on *How Can It Be*, Centricity Music, released April 2015.

[88] The same percentages could be assigned to various books of the Bible. In a PowerPoint presentation of the descriptors of Jesus in the Gospels, Joel Butler, after calculating each gospel, estimates that the cumulative breakdown to be: G/I – 2%; F/P – 37%; S/H 45%; P/P 16%. "Jesus in the Gospels," unpublished document, 2017.

ation (spiritual/human/material). He did so through initiating the mediator work of Jesus who restored broken relationships through defeating the spiritual powers and paying the penalty for sin. Justice through grace resulted. Those from the nations who chose to follow Jesus demonstrate their collective loyalty and obedience as worshiping co-laborers who experience suffering and refreshing rest as they impatiently await the final restoration of the world.

Evaluating the grand narrative. Having a checklist to evaluate a grand narrative of the Scripture story will help creative composers to adjust their attempts as they strive towards accuracy and attractiveness for their audience.[89] With that in mind, I have created two checklists to analyze one's grand narrative of the Scripture story. The first checklist covers the story components of the grand story. Who is the protagonist? the antagonist? What is the issue God must deal with first? What is the issue that people face? What is the resolution to solve both issues? What choices can people make? What are the consequences of such choices? Should any other categories be included.

As a value system, shame and honor never stand alone in a culture. Rather, they are intrinsically tied to other values systems, as seen above, and to a number of other cultural institutions (e.g., economics, politics, social structure, religion, and the arts). A second checklist, therefore, is required.

Four value systems. The checklist begins with a search for the four value systems—G/I, F/P, S/H, and P/P. As noted above, every culture has all four, but rarely, if ever, does it give equal fondness to all four. Some, like the Deni of Brazil, value only one (F/P) while others, like the Ifugao of the Philippines, prefer two (F/P and S/H). Others may value three. I am not aware of any that favors all four equally.

Collectivism. Tied strongly to relational-based shame and honor, the next consideration pertains to collectivism. While Westerners tend to place great emphasis on the individual, Scripture awards it to groups (two or more), e.g., extended families, the church, the elect, the Pharisees, and so forth.

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[89] James Dunn shows the strengths of what postmoderns perceive as weaknesses to having a grand narrative, which is applicable for a grand narrative of Scripture: "The problem being that the single grand narrative effectively brackets out a good deal of the data, privileges some of the data as more conducive to the story the historian wants to tell, and orders the selected data into a narrative sequence which validates the view put forward by the modern historian." *The Oral Gospel Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2013), 203.

Limited good. The concept of limited good comes in multiple versions and is as relative today as it was during Bible times. It is premised on the idea that only so much of a certain good (tangible or intangible) exists, and it cannot be multiplied. For example, if only four apples are available, and someone has three, the rest of us are being cheated. It is a zero-sum game that requires redistribution, because "Someone's advantage is someone else's disadvantage."[90] The rich get richer, and the poor get poorer. Envy is never far from the concept of limited good. Interestingly, God's offer of grace and mercy is never limited.

Patron and client. Another inclusion, again tied closely to relational-based shame and honor, is patron and client. Both of these roles dominate Scripture on the human and spiritual levels. Patron refers to a person or spirit who has the tangible or intangible means (networks, advice, money, or power to bless or protect) to aid someone in need. On the bottom end of this hierarchy, clients look to the patron to supply their needs whether short- or long-term. As an African proverb states, "The hand that receives is always under the hand that gives." While either can initiate the relationship, both usually know the social risks involved.

Reciprocity. The bidirectional obligation between patron and client demands reciprocity even in this "lopsided friendship." The Dictionary of Socio-Rhetorical Terms defines reciprocity as "an implicit, non-legal contractual obligation, unenforceable by any authority apart from one's sense of honor and shame."[91] A Chinese proverb captures the patron's perspective, "I shower blessings to those who submit to me and do all I can to subvert those who resist."

When the client is unable to return the gift in kind, he or she can still offer something to the patron—praise in public. "Honor is the currency of the powerless; it is what clients short on material goods can offer to patrons."[92] A fair return, not an equal return, is expected. Praising the patron in public will often do, as it demonstrates the client's allegiance and loyalty.

Word and works go together. The Bible is never content with addressing only soul or spiritual issues. At creation, souls were given bodies and a beautiful garden in which to reside. Someday, they will receive new bodies and live in a new environment. The same is true for all Christ followers. We are commanded to multiply those who honor God globally (see Hab

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[90] George M. Foster, *Tzintzuntzan: Mexican Peasants in a Changing World* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1996), 124.

[91] http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/SRI/defns/.

[92] Marilyn McCord Adams, *Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), 126.

2:14 for the end results) and are stewards of the world (Ge 1:28) in which we live. In *Total Truth,* Nancy Pearcey weds multiplying and subduing to the grand narrative, "The promise of Christianity is the joy and power of an integrated life, transformed on every level by the Holy Spirit, so that our whole being participates in the great drama of God's plan of redemption."[93] Whole nations require whole churches. Whole churches require the whole gospel for the whole community and the whole person. The Great Commission and the Great Commandment go hand in glove.

Missio Dei. The last category I include, often missed by theologians and consequently pastors, is *missio Dei*.[94] The Great Commission did not begin in the Gospels. Rather, it began early in Genesis, predominately with Abraham where we begin to see God's great concern for the nations. Actually, Genesis 3:15 lays the foundation for good news as it introduces the antagonist and the necessary warfare that must take place before the protagonist triumphs in total victory. The gospel we find in the New Testament finds its roots sunken deeply in the Old Testament. If we are to grasp *missio Dei,* argue Bruce Ashford and David Nelson, we must capture its connection to the grand narrative:

> In order to build a biblical-theological framework for understanding God's mission, the church's mission, and the church's mission to the nation, one must first understand the unified biblical narrative, including its four major plot movements—creation, fall, redemption, and restoration.[95]

WRAP UP

It is important to view Scripture as a single grand narrative, because the grand narrative—the metanarrative—paints a comprehensive picture of the face of God beyond that of the individual parts. Whether a linear clothesline (like the Emmaus road discussion) or circular, the clothesline keeps the individual pieces in place even as it reveals the wide range of the wardrobe. While each piece of clothing has value, the summative value of all the pieces of clothing supersedes that of any one of the individual pieces of clothing. The whole is greater than the parts. This means that if we are to

[93] Nancy R. Pearcey, *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 95.

[94] Kevin Vanhoozer points out that of the 100 top verses included in Western systematic theology textbooks, Matthew 28:19 was included. However, was it included because of the Great Commission or the Trinity? Lindgren, "Sorry, Old Testament."

[95] Bruce Riley Ashford and David P. Nelson, "The Story of Mission: The Grand Biblical Narrative," in *Theology and Practice of Mission: God, the Church, and the Nations*, ed., Bruce Riley Ashford (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2011), 6.

grasp a bigger, broader, more comprehensive picture of the face of God, we must not only know and value the individual pieces of clothing, but more importantly, we must also know and value how they all tie together to form a comprehensive wardrobe that brings honor to the Wearer.

Failure to comprehend the Scripture story as a book composed of multiple chapters (or acts) and characters that moves mysteriously to completion opens the door to multiple interpretations. Our cultures, framed by rival grand narratives, often substitute our own understanding of the content and characters and sometimes even the context. Why is a metanarrative needed? Because "The metanarrative of Scripture fights a fragmented and false understanding of the Sacred Storybook."[96] All those adhering to rival grand narratives must, and someday will (Php 2:9–10), submit to the grand narrative of the Scripture story. How well do you know the hermeneutic that interprets the individual events *and* the grand narrative? Can you articulate the grand narrative of the Scripture story in a few sentences?

The Scripture story centers on relationships. More precisely, it centers on restored relationships designed to reinstate his rightful honor and universal kingdom among the nations (Rev 21:26–27). While written decades ago, it remains true today, "Because the seeds of destruction are inherent in any presentation of the gospel message, church planters must accurately present the foundational cornerstone of the household of God."[97] Sadly, too much of the gospel, especially segments from the Old Testament that strongly depict God's interaction with humanity negatively (cursing) and positively (blessing), thereby defining him, has been left scattered on the cutting room floor. Far too often, we have made the gospel a mininarrative that is ripe for cultural reduction and reinterpretation.

In a postmodern world that argues that no one story is superior, we must be patently clear as to the meaning of the single and superior gospel story. The restoration of relationships between the Creator and the created requires the hermeneutic of the grand narrative of the Scripture story. Does your evangelism include an Emmaus road hermeneutic?

The value system of shame and honor is framed in relationships (spiritual, human, and material), a major theme in the grand narrative of the Scripture story. This message speaks with clarity and conviction to tribal peoples in the deepest jungles, to urbanite Millennials in the most modern of cities in the world, to international students who study at our universities. After restoring his lost honor through the client, Jesus, the Friend of Friends, offers unlimitedly through the mediator-patron (Jesus) a gift, one that these client groups so desperately long for because of inherited and practiced sin

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[96] Steffan, "Discoveries Made While Reconnecting," 179.

[97] Tom Steffan, *Passing the Baton: Church Planting That Empowers* (La Habra, CA: Center for Organizational and Ministry Development, 1997), 134.

(defaming the Patron)—complete acceptance, full inclusion, real community, genuine worth, and transcendence.

In return, through the wooing of the Holy Spirit, faith responders change allegiance, evidence loyalty, participate in a faith community, and offer him public praise collectively and privately. This holistic message from the Creator-Redeemer is especially meaningful to these audiences when communicated through the grand narrative of the Scripture story that includes the other value system(s) that they appreciate. The clothes hanging on the linear or circular clothesline now define the wide-ranging scope of the wardrobe owner. The gospel becomes good news because the chapters and characters honor the Hero of the Scripture story, and they discover themselves and a new community within that unparalleled story.

To gain a more comprehensive picture of the face of God and his story, we need to see him through at least these four cuts of the diamond—G/I, F/P, S/H, and P/P. To present a gospel message that hits not just the heads but also the hearts of our audience, we must present the good news through the sweep of Scripture in the percentages that they place on the various value systems. Ongoing discipleship, which should follow seamlessly for the new faith followers, should eventually add those value systems not previously given much attention. This will help to paint a more complete picture of the face of God, gaining him more deserving honor and devotion.

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APPENDIX A[98]

FOUR VALUE FRAMES OF THE GOSPEL

GOSPEL FRAMES	GUILT/ INNOCENCE	SHAME/ HONOR	FEAR/ POWER	POLLUTION/ PURITY
LANGUAGE	Moral Law	Moral Code	Moral Custom	Moral Values
NAMES FOR GOD	Just One Righteous Judge	King Jealous-lover Patron	Victor Deliverer Lord	Cleanser Pure One
NAMES FOR SATAN	Liar Accuser	Challenger Debater	Adversary Prowling Lion	Dirty One
GOD'S ISSUE	Justice challenged	Lost face	Power usurped	Holiness polluted
PEOPLE'S ISSUE	Broke God's law	Dishonored patron	Usurped God's power	Polluted community code
SIN	Broken law	Broken relationship	Challenged power	Polluted community code
RESULTS	Separation from a holy God	Estrangement Humiliation Identity loss	Controlled Possessed	Contamination
COSTS	Punishment	Abandonment	Domination	Separation
ARENA	Private-Public	Public-Private	Public-Private	Public-Private
PLAYERS	Self-Society	Society-Self	Society-Self	Society-Self stoned him to death.
FOCUS	Internal behavior	Public action	Internal emotion	Internal action

[98] This material is extracted from my forthcoming book titled: *Worldview-based Storying: The Integration of Symbol, Story, and Ritual.*

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APPENDIX A (continued)

FOUR VALUE FRAMES OF THE GOSPEL

GOSPEL FRAMES	GUILT/ INNO-CENCE	SHAME/ HONOR	FEAR/ POWER	POLLU-TION/ PURITY
EMOTION	Regret	Unworthy	Powerless	Dirty
OUTCOME	Restitu-tion	Relation-ship	Control	Accep-tance
ACTION	Confess Correct Fix Apologize	Beat self Hide Retaliate Suicide	Appease Manipu-late Placate	Appease Manipu-late Placate
INTER-VENER	Substitute	Mediator	Victor	Purifier
RESULT	Forgive-ness Pardon Obedience	Loyalty Inclusion Reaf-firma-tion	Freedom Peace	Purified Spotless Innocent

About the Author

Dr. Tom Steffen is emeritus professor of intercultural studies at the Cook School of Intercultural Studies, Biola University. He specializes in church multiplication, orality, honor and shame, and business as mission. He and his family spent 15 years in the Philippines in church planting and consulting. Semi-retired, he continues to teach courses, advise dissertations, and publish. His latest books include: *The Facilitator Era: Beyond Pioneer Church Multiplication* and *Worldview-based Storying: The Integration of Symbol, Story, and Ritual.*

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BOOK REVIEWS

Allison, Gregg and Brad House. *MultiChurch: Exploring the Future of Multisite*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017. 240 pp. $11.79.

Reviewed by Dustin Slaton, campus pastor of Green Acres Baptist Church–South Campus in Tyler, Texas, and a PhD student in church vitalization at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Ft. Worth, Texas.

As the multisite church phenomenon continues to transition from a growing trend to an established reality, the landscape of what multisite churches look like and how they function continues to be in flux. Critics of multisite churches have pointed out many issues with the practice, questioning ecclesiological foundations of multisite churches and accusing such churches of turning pastors into idols.[1] Some of these criticisms are warranted concerns, while some are generalizations, with negative practices of certain churches being applied to the full range of the multisite landscape.

Into this discussion, Gregg Allison and Brad House have presented their co-authored book, *MultiChurch: Exploring the Future of Multisite*. They are

[1] For a thorough list of the criticisms of multisite churches, see Thomas White, "Nine Reasons I Don't Like Multi-Site Churches," *9Marks Journal* 6, no. 3 February 26, 2010: 49–51, or Jonathan Leeman, "Twenty-Two Problems with Multi-Site Churches," *9Marks*, October 1, 2014, https://www.9marks.org/article/twenty-two-problems-with-multi-site-churches/.

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uniquely positioned to write on the multisite church because of their combined experiences. House was an upper-level leader at Mars Hill Church in Seattle, Washington, before that church went through much turmoil and eventually rolled off each of its campuses into autonomous churches. Allison is a professor of Christian theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, and has been a consistent proponent in the area of multisite theology. Both men are now part of the pastoral leadership of Sojourn Community Church in Louisville, Kentucky, a multisite church with four locations in Louisville and Southern Indiana.

MultiChurch gives a positive treatment of the multisite church as it enters young adulthood and presents the most thorough positive treatment of the theological implications of multisite to date. The book is divided into three sections: Scouting, Orienteering, and Setting Out.

Scouting. In the first section, Allison and House "provide perspective by examining biblical, historical, and contemporary developments within the multisite movement" (18). The reader will surely take note that "biblical" is listed among the developments. Allison and House trace the origins of multisite beyond the twentieth century, all the way back to the first century. They see the multisite ministry as less of a new development and truly a "renewal of early church methodology" (31). The authors cite many examples from New Testament descriptions of the church's practices and notes in the greetings of Paul's letters. However, their arguments are supported by too much speculation. In one paragraph, in particular, their wording reveals the speculative nature of their evidence by using "may," "informed speculation," "we can imagine," and "perhaps" (33). Allison and House's strongest argument is based on the descriptions of the church's meetings in Acts 2:46 and 5:42, but they do not expand on this as much as they could in this section. While this line of argumentation warrants more depth, overall, their positive assessment of the biblical warrants for multisite churches is strong.

MultiChurch includes a well-formed multisite argument on the nature of *ekklesia*. The understanding of *ekklesia* is the most common theological criticism leveled at multisite churches; thus, Allison and House must address it. Their argument shows that the nature of *ekklesia* has enough wiggle room to allow a church to meet in multiple locations and remain one church.

One of the most useful parts of the first section is the chart that describes the landscape of church interconnectedness from single churches, to the various forms of multisite churches, and ending with loosely networked churches (48–49). The following pages provide clear and succinct descriptions of the benefits and downfalls of each type of church structure. The authors, proponents of multisite ministry, are nevertheless honest about the pitfalls associated with each form, and even go on to specifically address the criticisms leveled against multisite churches. In each area, they provide red-flag warnings to multisite churches, pointing out potential problem areas in the practice. They also provide a way forward for each one. All of this is lead-

ing to the middle section of the book, wherein they present their preferred multisite organizational structure, dubbed "multichurch."

Orienteering. The center section addresses five specific organizational elements of multisite churches and makes suggestions for each one. The first of these concerns the general organization of the church. This section tells what the church will look like once it is finished being set up as a multichurch.

The next issue to be addressed is polity within the church. Allison is unapologetically a plural-elder Congregationalist, with emphasis on the elders.[2] *MultiChurch* advocates for a strong church leadership structure that is comprised of various levels of elders and other leadership staff. The structure has redundant levels of leadership; the purpose of which is to ensure that the central leadership does not overpower the various campuses. The description in the chapter may make readers wonder if they could even establish such a cumbersome structure at their church and whether the structure is necessary. Allison and House are merely describing the structure they employ at Sojourn Community Church, which leaves one to wonder if there might be a better way, especially for smaller churches with smaller staffs and fewer elders.

The third topic addresses the ministries of the church. Throughout the book, it is clear that House and Allison are not advocating for campuses that are a copy of the original campus. This is one of the strongest points of their argument for multichurch. The goal of each campus is to contextualize the vision and mission of the church for its neighborhood/community. The benefit is that each church has the opportunity (responsibility) to dream and implement how it will carry out ministry, and the other churches are there to resource them as they can, acting as partners to help them refine their ministries. This solid chapter should drive the ministry mindset. One of the strong, legitimate criticisms of multisite churches is the franchising of ministries in various contexts, even if the context does not warrant the similar style. In contextualizing the church to meet the local culture, the campus can connect with its neighborhood in a more relevant way.

The fourth issue addressed in *MultiChurch* is money. This chapter bursts some of the myths about how money is used and managed in multisite churches, and it gives some suggestions for how multisite churches should handle finances. Staying with the overall theme of *MultiChurch,* each local campus assumes primary responsibility for how its funds are used. The goal of the central leadership is to be as little of a burden to the church as possible and to facilitate the money management, especially those funds which are to be used throughout the campuses.

The final topic is the area of membership—a gray area in the realm of multisite churches. Critics often question how membership is handled and

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[2] See Gregg Allison, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), and Gregg R. Allison and John S. Feinberg, *Sojourners and Strangers: The Doctrine of the Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012).

how church discipline is facilitated in a way that is consistent across all campuses. Allison and House position the process of membership at the discretion of the local congregation, so long as it follows the theological understandings of the whole church. Thus, each congregation must develop its own process for welcoming and initiating new believers and members into the body. They must also communicate to the other campuses when disciplinary action has been taken against a member so that the campuses can be consistent in their handling of that member.

Setting Out. The final section of the book is a how-to guide for making the transition to multichurch. It gives systematic instructions on preparing, planning, implementing, and even continuing the process once it is established.

What is "multichurch?" The answer to that question comes partly in the introduction: "A multichurch is a local community of maturing Christians who multiply their influence by launching, developing, and resourcing multiple congregations to reach its city with the gospel of Jesus Christ" (17). The heart of the book is the form of church structure and polity that Sojourn Community Church has chosen, which Allison and House believe is the best structure for multisite churches: multichurch. In defining the multichurch structure, they state, "The *multichurch model* features one church that expresses itself in multiple *churches* that have a form of polity that provides the responsibility and authority to make decisions about budget, contextualization of ministries, and more" (50). They then offer two varieties of the multichurch model: the cooperative model and the collective model. The cooperative model "brings together multiple interdependent churches as one church," while the collective model "is a collection of independent churches collaborating as one church" (65).

What makes this different from the typical model of multisite church is the location of authority. In multichurches, the bulk of authority lies in the individual campuses or churches, rather than with the central church leadership. This means that instead of being a top-down type of authority, there is a bottom-up direction of authority. The different levels of the central leadership councils are primarily composed of leaders from the various campuses, while there are still a few who are not linked to one specific campus. Obviously, there is much more to be said about this structure, but this review cannot go into greater depth.

With multichurch, the linkage between the churches is primarily for administrative and visionary reasons. The churches/campuses themselves are left to determine how to carry out the vision in their individual contexts. Some of the benefits, therefore, are the shared administrative costs, unified leadership, shared vision, and availability of ministry expertise (i.e., if one church excels in counseling, other churches can use it as a resource).

The question churches must ask themselves, especially churches that are not already multisite, is, "Is it worth the hassle?" The primary benefit that is found in multichurch, which is not found in a network of churches, is the

shared administrative costs and the unified leadership, although it could be argued that unified leadership is still achievable outside a multichurch setting. The elaborate structure necessary, according to Allison and House, is a large undertaking, with many moving parts. Why would a healthy single campus church want to embark on that journey when most of the benefits can be attained through a quality network?

For churches that are already multisite, the transition makes much more sense, especially if the church has a desire to become more contextualized and provide a more incarnational ministry in its neighborhood. The looser affiliation and bottom-up authority structure free the churches to carry out the gospel vision in their own way without the micromanagement of a central authority that might be more concerned with unified form or branding than contextual ministry. Even so, it seems like many churches will inevitably make the full transition to autonomous, networked churches rather than remain in a multichurch structure. These loose connections of the collective model will begin to lose their hold. Allison and House themselves admit this possibility when they write, "A weakness of this model is that its success is largely dependent on avoiding conflict between the local church leaders. The minimal level of expected collaboration and contribution to the collective . . . is such that each church could easily spin off from the collective as an independent church" (72).

In *MultiChurch*, Gregg Allison and Brad House have offered a great resource to advocates of the multisite movement, especially those looking for an ecclesiological "okay" for multisite. They have also provided some reasoned answers for moving past some of the questionable practices currently being carried out in multisite churches. Even more so, they have provided some thoughtful considerations for the next iteration of multisite church ministry. Multisite may never be completely dethroned, but as more churches reconsider the appropriateness of a cloned multisite strategy, multichurch may lead the way to a more thoughtful and theologically refined form of multisite.

Davis, Charles. *Making Disciples Across Cultures: Missional Principles for a Diverse World.* Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2015. 236 pp. $18.00.

Reviewed by Kenneth Nehrbass. Kenneth earned a BA in classical civilization from the University of California, Irvine, an MDiv from Anderson School of Theology, and a PhD in intercultural studies from Biola University. He is an associate professor of intercultural studies in the graduate programs at Cook School of Intercultural Studies at Biola University.

The field of intercultural studies has provided missionaries with some tools for describing cultural differences (e.g., power distance, event-versus-time orientation, collectivism-versus-individualism, high-versus-low context speech, etc.). Moreover, evangelical schools of intercultural studies typically equip students

with the tools to study culture for the ultimate purpose of fulfilling the Great Commission. What is remarkable is that so few missiologists have explicitly shown how the vanguard concepts of intercultural studies can influence evangelism and disciple making. Charles Davis's *Making Disciples Across Cultures: Missional Principles for a Diverse World* makes a unique and long overdue contribution to missiology by connecting theories within intercultural studies to the most important work the church has to accomplish: making disciples.

Some missiologists have written on cultural value orientations, drawing on Edward Hall's work from the Foreign Service Institute, the GLOBE study, and Geert Hofstede's study of more than 160,000 IBM employees around the world. Some authors have shown the usefulness of understanding these cultural variables for effective cross-cultural leadership (cf. Sherwood Lingenfelter and Duane Elmer), for multicultural team building (cf. Roembke Liann and Sheryl Silzer), and especially for crossing cultures without experiencing culture shock (cf. David Livermore). However, few have attempted to show how theoretical concepts from Hall and Hofstede and others influence "best practices" for discipleship. Fewer have evaluated the various cultural value orientations in light of Scripture. Davis's book looks at ten polar cultural value orientations, and it explores how Scripture calls us to live in the balance between these poles. For example, how can the church balance its call to minister to its own (individualism) and change the world (collectivism)? In what way is the church a lifeboat, and how is it a battering ram? In what way is discipleship a task, and how is it a process? How much of discipleship is related to knowledge, and how much is related to action or experience? Throughout the book, Davis uses the metaphor of sliders on a sound-mixing console to show how certain practices related to discipleship may need to be deemphasized in a given culture, whereas other practices should be enhanced. For instance, Westerners may need to tone down the myopic emphasis on discipleship-as-propositional-truth, and they may need to turn up the volume on the movement of the Holy Spirit.

Davis's ontology is woven throughout the text. He takes it as a given that God, Satan, angels, and demons inhabit this world, exhibiting their influence on humankind. He regularly suggests a balance between seeing and feeling—between the seen and the unseen. Western models of discipleship that ignore the spiritual world are handicapped, but models that spiritualize and allegorize everything are also insufficient.

Discipleship is a lifelong process; it is not just "making a decision," being baptized, or joining a church. Davis is skeptical of one-size-fits-all evangelism techniques. Furthermore, he argues that just as discipleship must be tailored to a cultural context, it often must be personalized for the individual. Ironically, Davis claims that the principles in his book are universals for all cultures.

At times, especially in chapters 11 and 12, Davis conflates discipleship with the life of the church. For instance, he explores the way we would balance the institutional organization of a church with the need for flexibility.

This conflation is not necessarily bad and may be intentional, because the local church is often the locus for discipleship.

Davis's discussion of truth and justice (chapter 3) leans toward holism as he argues for a balance between word and deed, propositions and actions, and personal and social transformation. This posture will be acceptable to many evangelical readers, but it will stretch prioritists.

The book often touches on theoretical concepts that are extensively discussed in theology and missiology; yet, to remain accessible at a popular level, Davis does not introduce the readers to the vast background of literature on these subjects. For example, he does not take much time to reteach concepts that are now well known in missiology, such as the homogeneous unit principle, honor and shame cultures, or cultural value orientations. Additionally, his discussions on balancing private and public faith are born out of centuries' worth of scholarship on Christianity and politics. Scholars would want to connect the discussion to Augustine, Abraham Kuyper, John Howard Yoder, and Miroslav Volf; yet, this is not the book for introducing higher-level theory. However, this is not to say that theoretical literature is absent in the book. Davis reveals his doctoral level missiological training at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School as he interacts with missiologists like Alan Tippett, Paul Hiebert, and Jim Plueddemann throughout the book.

Much of the book draws on Davis's extensive experience overseas, as a youth in Pakistan, as a missionary in Venezuela, and as the international director of TEAM. Davis's reliance on personal experience and anecdote makes the book readable at a popular level; but the lack of empirical research will leave missiologists a bit unsatisfied. For example, how are churches in places like sub-Saharan Africa heeding Davis' call to balance the visible and invisible? What problems do churches in India run into when they balance individualism and collectivism in their discipleship efforts? Who are these disciple makers that balance justice and propositional truth? How do their communities receive them? Davis's model comes across as more prescriptive than descriptive, and it is now up to missiologists to see how the model plays out in actual discipleship contexts.

DeYmaz, Mark. *Disruption: Repurposing the Church to Redeem the Community*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2017. 224 pp. $16.99.

Reviewed by Joey Chen. He has a passion for what God is doing in cities and is currently lead pastor at Sunset Church in San Francisco, California. He is also working on a DMin at Talbot School of Theology. He earned his MDiv from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and BA from Cedarville University.

The growing disparity between the diversity of Silicon Valley and the lack of diversity represented in technology companies has brought criticisms that companies have systemic cultures that discriminate against minorities and

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women. When the 2016 Oscars nominated only white actors and actresses in top categories, it sparked the viral social media response #OscarsSoWhite. As much as our country champions diversity, it often fails to embrace it relationally and institutionally.

Martin Luther King Jr. is famous for observing that Sunday worship is one of the most segregated hours in America, and segregation continues in the twenty-first century. The lack of diversity in the church is a problem that must be faced, not for political reasons, but for gospel reasons. Mark DeYmaz seeks to unsettle the church's status quo on issues of race and culture in his book, *Disruption*. DeYmaz is concerned about the church's lack of diversity and hopes his book will be a "practical guide that will help you rethink church and repurpose it to advance spiritual, social, and financial redemption in your community for the sake of the Gospel" (xxxiii). DeYmaz challenges leaders to prioritize diversity and cultural engagement for Jesus' sake.

DeYmaz's concept of disruption comes from a *Harvard Business Review* article titled, "Disruptive Technologies: Catching the Wave" by Joseph L. Bower and Clayton M. Christensen (13). Summarizing the article, he notes that "disruption" is future-oriented, while "sustaining" is focused on the present. When companies prioritize sustaining technology, it "leads to stagnation, marginalization, irrelevance, and decline" (6). He sees that the church often functions similarly because its use of resources often reflects a concern with the present while neglecting the future. The disruptive strategy that he suggests is based on three approaches illustrated by a three-legged stool (21). The legs of the stool are spiritual, social, and financial; these legs are the subjects of chapters three to five.

Before unpacking the three legs of the stool, DeYmaz wants to disrupt three assumptions regarding the gospel, our neighbors, and how to measure success. DeYmaz is unconvincing in his exegesis that Paul has two gospels, a point that will be addressed later in this review. He suggests that there is a gospel of salvation *and* a gospel of Gentile inclusion that is separate and often ignored (37). Most helpful is his challenge to common metrics of success. When considering a multiethnic and economically diverse church, he says, "a more significant metric is diversity and subsequent breadth of influence" (44). While not wholly against numbers, dollars, and buildings as metrics, he challenges the assumption that these metrics should be used universally.

The spiritual leg is discussed in chapter three. After recounting the successes of the multiethnic movement as evidence that the future of the church is multiethnic (50–54), he quickly reminds the reader that the motivation for becoming multiethnic and economically diverse must be God's Word. Turning to Scripture, DeYmaz presents a biblical argument that the church was not homogenous but multiethnic, based on Jesus' high priestly prayer (Jn 17:20–23), Luke's description of the church in Acts (Ac 11:19–27 and

13:1–3), and Paul's description of the church in Ephesus. The chapter ends with recommended resources to encourage multiethnic ministry.

The social leg of the stool is an exhortation for the church to start a nonprofit parallel to the church to engage the community for justice, mercy, compassion, and hope (79). On the opposite end, DeYmaz suggests that the financial side of disruption should be the creation of for-profit businesses (109). His creativity is evident, but a reasoned explanation is lacking, except for a quote from Rick Warren that "we just can't keep begging people for money" (124).

After spending an entire chapter on testimonies of other pastors who are models of disruption, he calls for the churches to be peacemakers (ironically titling the chapter "disrupting peace"). The final chapter is helpful in giving a perspective that those in power can leverage their positions for peace and the good of others (174–175). Also helpful are the guiding principles for those seeking to pursue peace in and through their churches.

DeYmaz's effort is commendable because the church must consider its witness in an increasingly diverse world. He is creative and passionate about his ideas, and the testimony of God's work in his church is encouraging and inspiring. The greatest strength of DeYmaz's book is its practicality. This is evident in his examples, testimonials, and efforts to give practical steps in each chapter. He is winsome and writes in an approachable manner.

My assessment, however, is that DeYmaz fails to achieve his goal of "disruption" because of a biblical error and unpersuasive suggestions. Discussing the assumption of the gospel (34–37), he points to Romans 16:25 to suggest that "my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ" is a reference to a second gospel or "the gospel of Gentile inclusion in an otherwise 'only for Jews' gospel of Jesus Christ, local church, and kingdom of God" (37). Against DeYmaz, the *kai* (translated in English as *and*) does not indicate a separate gospel. The *kai* is epexegetic, which means that it is used to explain further what he means by "my gospel."

The gospel of salvation includes the Jews, and the church often neglects this inclusion. However, to suggest that Paul has two gospels is an error that is unbiblical and unhelpful. Paul speaks harshly to the Galatians who turned to another gospel and states clearly that there is no different gospel (Gal 1:6–7). While DeYmaz is not suggesting a gospel that is apart from the grace of God in the finished work of Jesus, this kind of exegetical error is hard to overlook.

Another glaring issue is how few his suggestions are for social and financial involvement. Giving only one suggestion for social involvement, DeYmaz states that the purpose of starting a 501(c)(3) umbrella nonprofit is to "address the social, physical, and material needs of people living in an under-resourced, specifically defined community" (79). DeYmaz believes this is the best strategy for social engagement because "local churches have limited capacity, and causes like these are often (mistakenly) seen as outside

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the scope of its spiritual mission" (82–83). If it were a mistake to see it as outside of the church's scope, one would expect to see examples of how to make it a priority within the church.

What is missing is a discussion of how to increase involvement or ways to reprioritize resources within established churches. Starting a nonprofit may bring unwanted disruption and distraction for many pastors and churches.

When it comes to disrupting economics, his suggestion is to start a "for-profit business enterprise to stimulate economic recovery, create points of destination, and help fund mission" (109). Encouraging economic involvement by starting a for-profit business must be defended, and the only defense given is how it worked for Mosaic Church and a few others. He is creative to rethink how churches can use their buildings, but to suggest that the main way for a church to be involved economically is to start a business is dangerous and not applicable for many pastors.

In both the social and financial suggestions for disruption, DeYmaz encourages the church to start parallel entities. These suggestions may lead to mission drift. DeYmaz does emphasize that transformation is crucial (170), but his practical advice may unintentionally lead many to confuse the mission of the church in exchange for cultural involvement. Cultural involvement and transformation are not at odds, but the process requires discernment.

A pattern that is seen in DeYmaz's book is to use his church as justification for his principles. One should praise God for the work that is going on in Mosaic, but to use only his church as a defense is insufficient. What is needed is an effort to help the reader contextualize the principles so that they are transferable to many contexts. Chapter six is dedicated to others who have succeeded, but the chapter seems self-serving rather than helpful. To add to the tone of self-congratulation, the end of every chapter is an "in their own words" section that highlights others' praise for Mosaic. Much of the book feels like an extension of the endorsements rather than an expansion of his ideas.

DeYmaz's love for the church and reaching others is evident in his writing. The book is creative and approachable because of its style and tone. However, it is not a book I would recommend for leaders who are looking for a thoughtful treatment of how the church can pursue diversity or how to help the church deal with issues of race or culture.

While DeYmaz's goal is to disrupt the church and church leaders, the kind of disruption that may come from applying his principles may be damaging for the uncritical reader. I agree with DeYmaz that the church must address issues of race and culture and that pastors need to be awakened to the future because we are "not framing the questions, shaping the narrative, or influencing the conversation" (xxix); but he does not successfully help the reader become ready for the future. Those readers looking for disruption of the status quo ought to look elsewhere. Start by carefully studying God's

Word, seeking the Spirit in prayer, and learning from the field of missiology for a more careful treatment of how the church should address diversity and engage the culture for the sake of the gospel.

Mulder, Mark, Aida Ramos, and Gerardo Marti. *Latino Protestants in America: Growing and Diverse.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017. 218 pp. $37.98 hardcover.

Reviewed by Benjamin D. Espinoza, BA in Biblical and Theological Studies, Cedarville University; MA in Christian Education, Asbury Theological Seminary; and current PhD student in Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Education, Michigan State University. Benjamin is also pursuing a certificate in Chicano and Latino Studies at MSU.

By 2050, more than one-third of the population in the United States will be Latino. The April 4, 2013, issue of *Time* covered "The Latino Reformation," a reference to the exponential growth of Latino Protestantism in the United States. Moreover, while Latinos tend to be Catholic, by 2030, the majority of Latinos will be Protestant. What is behind this marked shift, and what traits characterize this growing and diverse population? Aided by data from the Lilly-endowed Latino Protestant Congregations (LPC) project, Mark Mulder, Aida Ramos, and Gerardo Marti seek to present a multifaceted picture of the scope, shape, and feel of Latino Protestantism in the United States. The authors recognize the fluidity of both Latino identity and Latino religion and therefore are careful to avoid generalizations about this population. They highlight that while the Latino population has surged in the United States in recent years, Latinos have been present in this nation since its founding. In chapter 2, they describe both indigenous and migration patterns, beginning with white settlers in Mexican lands and the explicit racism that ensued. The authors provide a strong picture of how Mexican Protestantism began to take shape due to the presence of white missionaries in Texas and the Southwest.

Today, Latinos occupy a diverse and growing share of Protestants in the United States. The authors describe how Latino Catholics are migrating to Protestantism for numerous reasons, such as theological preference, freedom to worship expressively, and "as a means of gaining power, challenging the status quo, or rechanneling political anxieties into religion to cope with political discord" (55). Among Latino Protestants, Pentecostalism is popular and continues to grow, as does a willingness to worship in predominantly white churches. Some of the churches that Mulder and others highlight worship in significantly different ways, speak both English and Spanish, and embrace diverse leadership structures. Moreover, the majority of Latino Protestants attend smaller congregations with bi-vocational leaders, lay volunteers, daily ministry services, and a high degree of "relational intimacy" (85).

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Politically, Latino Protestants are more likely to identify as Republican than their Catholic counterparts, but they also endorse a larger role for government in alleviating social and economic barriers for low-income people. For instance, Latino Protestants retain conservative positions on abortion and same-sex marriage while also endorsing progressive tax structures and immigration reform. Interestingly, a little over one-third of mainline Latino Protestants agreed that religion plays a "very important" role in influencing political positions, while nearly two-thirds of Latino evangelicals affirmed the same. This speaks to the political diversity of Latino Protestants, signifying that in the coming years of explosive growth, Latino Protestants will continue to be a diverse voting bloc.

The authors effectively demonstrate the diverse nature of Latino Protestantism from religious, social, political, and ecclesial perspectives. Their assertions regarding the current state of Latino Protestantism are driven by rich findings from the LPC project and a diverse array of data collection methods. From a research perspective, Mulder and others provide a strong example of how to capture the essence of an oft-misunderstood and growing population. They present their findings in an engaging and readable fashion, ensuring that the work will reach a popular audience interested in the phenomenon of Latino Protestantism.

This book also functions as a prophetic call to white evangelicals to listen to the concerns of their Latino counterparts. As Mulder and others emphasize, Latino Protestantism refuses to be confined to the categories of conservative versus liberal, English only versus Spanish only, and mainline versus evangelical. The tapestry of Latino Protestantism reminds white evangelicals that there are numerous ways of being Christian in the world. Moreover, evangelicalism as a whole must reckon with the growth of Latino evangelicalism. Latino evangelicalism challenges broader evangelicalism to move beyond social and political allegiances that push people away from hearing the good news of the gospel. Latino evangelicalism celebrates its diversity while remaining focused on the good news of the gospel.

As the landscape of evangelicalism shifts, those of us in the academy have a responsibility to reimagine theological education. Will we continue training men and women to minister in predominantly white, upper-middle-class contexts, or will we equip them with the ability to construct culturally responsible ministry practices? *Latino Protestants in America* implicitly makes the case that theological educators can no longer avoid the shifting demographics of evangelicalism; evangelicalism must embrace Latinos as crucial members of the movement.

The authors have conducted in-depth research that demands a response to the growing population of Latino Protestants here in the United States. *Latino Protestants in America* will be a useful text for Christian educators, leaders, pastors, missionaries, and laypeople.

Nehrbass, Kenneth. *God's Image and Global Cultures*. Eugene, OR: Cascade (Imprint of Wipf and Stock), 2016. 250 pp. $30 Paperback.

Reviewed by Mike Morris. Mike holds the BS, MDiv, DMin, and PhD degrees. He is an associate professor of missiology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Kenneth Nehrbass served as a pastor in Indiana before becoming a Wycliffe translator in Vanuatu, where he worked from 2002 to 2012. He is now an assistant professor at the Cook School of Intercultural Studies at Biola University. His cross-cultural experience comes across nicely in this well-researched book that thoroughly examines the relationship between Christians and culture. Christians continue to wrestle to understand this relationship. Rod Dreher's *The Benedict Option*, which advocates some degree of withdrawal of Christians from the predominant US culture, was published in 2017. Nehrbass approaches the relationship between Christians and culture differently than does Dreher, but he shares his global perspective.

Nehrbass frequently refers to cross-culturally competent Christians as "world changers" in their various cultures. For example, he says, "World Changers capitalize on the affective power of symbols and use them to empower people to glorify God and enjoy him" (165). In the final chapter, he lists the competencies needed to be a World Changer (212–213). This terminology is inspiring, and hopefully, it will motivate readers to achieve the necessary competencies.

The globalization chapter contains some valuable insights. Nehrbass explained, "The phenomenon of increased migration raises questions for world changers about how people should acculturate" (9). He mentioned a double standard: "When it is *us* living among *them*, our acculturation is voluntary, measured, and temporary (i.e., adjustment). When *they* are living among *us*, we expect acculturation to be permanent and unfettered (i.e., assimilation)" (12). Migration is one of the primary concerns of the relatively new field known as World Christian Studies. In a later chapter, Nehrbass mentioned Andrew Walls, the recognized leader of the new field (80). A discussion of the indigenizing and pilgrim principles (as described by Walls) would be a useful addition to the book.

An important point is made about sinful and neutral aspects of cultures. Nehrbass states, "So while we can say with certainty that God is not responsible for the sinful parts of culture (e.g., widow emollition), we cannot say with certainty that God created the good parts of culture, since so many 'good' patterns are objectively neutral. Eating cows, for instance, is seen as wrong in some cultures and good in others" (65). This point, when understood, can help newly arrived missionaries use good judgment in the host culture and understand their ethnocentrism.

Nehrbass elucidates a present reality that is not widely understood: "Therefore, in addition to being highly integrated, we have discovered that

cultures are dynamic or adaptive. . . . However, due to high rates of migration and urbanization, even ethnic groups that were previously isolated are becoming quite heterogeneous" (47–48). This new reality has huge implications for contextualization. General cultural characteristics can still be described for various people groups, but an increasing variety of cultural characteristics within people groups must be recognized. Nehrbass correctly distinguishes between generalizations and stereotypes (116).

A long chapter is devoted to the general characteristics that distinguish one culture from another culture (174–207). These contrasts include individualism/collectivism, task/event, monochronic/polychronic, ordered/flexible, vulnerable/non-vulnerable, short-term/long-term, fate/responsibility, deductive/inductive, planned/spontaneous, hierarchy/equality, ascribed/achieved, tough/tender, and competitive/cooperative. This section is extremely helpful to students who are studying cross-cultural ministry.

Not surprisingly, Nehrbass evaluates the categories outlined in H. Richard Niebuhr's influential *Christ and Culture* (126–133). He points out problems with Niebuhr's taxonomy, including its lack of "a consistent definition of Christ," "its failure to incorporate the approaches of the majority world church," and Niebuhr's "low view of Scripture" (129–130). Nehrbass draws a contrast between "an emphasis on heaven against earth (two kingdoms) and a holistic heaven-and-earth emphasis" (135). Nehrbass favors the holistic emphasis. He says, "An emphasis on two competing kingdoms will cause us to see pleasure, even sexuality within marriage, as ungodly. It will cause us to feel ambivalent about our employment, since the only truly legitimate occupations would be church work and missions. . . . We will emphasize evangelism over social action, since heaven 'matters more' than earth" (135). The conflict between prioritism and holism was well described by David Hesselgrave in his *Paradigms in Conflict* (2005). This reviewer emphasizes evangelism over social action and thus favors prioritism while respectfully disagreeing with Nehrbass on this point.

The cited works and the general academic quality of this book were impressive. Nehrbass utilized tables that are exceptional aids to understanding. The reflection and review questions at the ends of chapters are excellent discussion starters in classroom settings. This book is a valuable contribution to the field of cross-cultural ministry.

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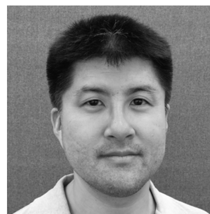

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The Great Commission Research Network is a worldwide and professional association of Christian leaders whose ministry activities are based on the basic and key principles of church growth as originally developed by the late Donald McGavran. Founded by renowned missiologists George G. Hunter III and C. Peter Wagner, the GreatCommissionResearch.net (formally the American Society for Church Growth) has expanded into an affiliation of church leaders who share research, examine case studies, dialogue with cutting-edge leaders, and network with fellow church professionals who are committed to helping local churches expand the kingdom through disciple-making

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