

## **Missional Renaissance Notes for Nov 19, 2009 for the Interim Pastor Group**

By Charlie Gross

***The following are the highlights that I made in the book, *Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the Church*, by Reggie McNeal.***

***Use this as a “cliff’s notes” version and I will try to bring some order to the discussion on Thursday, Nov 19, 2009.***

To think and to live missionally means seeing all life as a way to be engaged with the mission of God in the world.

Going missional will require that you make three shifts, both in your thinking and in your behavior: • From internal to external in terms of ministry focus • From program development to people development in terms of core activity • From church-based to kingdom-based in terms of leadership agenda

The typical church scorecard (how many, how often, how much) doesn’t mesh with a missional view of what the church should be monitoring

We must develop a scorecard that supports the other side of the shifts: externally focused ministry, people development efforts, and a kingdom-oriented leadership agenda.

The head of a homeless shelter in the Deep South has shifted his strategy from a food-and-counseling model to a coaching-and-employment model. Rather than relying on the “mouths fed and beds occupied” scorecard, he is insisting on new metrics to measure the life progress of the people he serves. His staff of “life coaches” are throwing themselves into people development, not just delivery of a ministry service.

Christianity in today’s culture. The perception of outsiders will change only when Christians strive to represent the heart of God in every relationship and situation.”

**Missional Shift 1: From an Internal to an External Ministry Focus.** The church must shift from an internal to an external focus in its ministry.

Externally focused ministry leaders take their cues from the environment around them in terms of needs and opportunities. They look for ways to bless and to serve the communities where they are located. Much of their calendar space, financial resources, and organizational energy is spent on people who are not a part of their organization.

**Missional Shift 2: From Program Development to People Development.** The confluence of these two cultural trends calls for the second shift of the missional church: from a focus on programs to a focus on people and their development as the core activity of the community of faith.

The answer is that achieving abundant life will require intentional personal development.

We must change our ideas of what it means to develop a disciple, shifting the emphasis from studying Jesus and all things spiritual in an environment protected from the world to following Jesus into the world to join him in his redemptive mission.

Second, the shift from pursuing institutional goals and objectives to measuring the impact of ministry on people's quality of life calls for a dramatically new scorecard.

The movement founded by Jesus was largely a marketplace phenomenon, an organic connection among people who were experiencing a way of life together. The early days of the movement focused on simple teachings of Jesus, with particular attention to living lives of sacrifice and service to one another and to one's neighbor.

Jesus invaded all areas of life. Church was not an event or a place; it was a way of life. It must become a way of life again. Enter the missional church.

**Missional Shift 3: From Church-Based to Kingdom-Based Leadership** Today's spiritual realities call for the third shift of the missional renaissance, from church-based to kingdom-based leadership. The spirituality the world needs must be robust enough to engage people where they live, work, and play.

For these leaders, church has moved from being internally occupied to externally focused, from primarily concentrating on its institutional maintenance to developing an incarnational influence. These leaders find themselves thinking of kingdom impact more than church growth.

Missional followers of Jesus don't belong to a church. They are the church. Wherever they are, the church is present. Church is not something outside of themselves that they go to or join or support; it's something they are. The missional church is not a what but a who.

Because God is on mission, the people of God are too. God is a sending God. Just as he sent his Son and his Holy Spirit to the world, he is sending his people into the world. All sendings share the same redemptive mission. The notion of "sentness" lies at the heart of the missional church because it reveals the heart of God.

"A missional church is a church that is shaped by participating in God's mission, which is to set things right in a broken, sinful world, to redeem it, and to restore it to what God has always intended for the world."<sup>3</sup>

The missional church . . . will be an anticline of the existing traditional model. [First,] rather than being attractational, it will be incarnational. It will leave its own religious zones and live comfortably with non-church-goers, seeping into the host culture like salt and light. It will be an infiltrating, transformational community.

wherever missional followers of Jesus are, the church is there—at home, at work, at school, in the neighborhood, at the ballpark, in the dance studio, in the homeless shelter, at the airport—wherever

The missional life shows up in every endeavor, because the church has been sent by God into the world to reflect his heart for the world. This is what it means to be on mission with God, partnering with God. It is not a mission that is pursued as something added to daily life, something outside the normal range of activity, a quest to do something beyond your life's assignments.

God was continuing in Jesus what he had been up to all along—working out his redemptive mission in the world.

For Pharisees like Nicodemus, the kingdom of God was seen as a reward intended for the benefit of God's people, not as a gift to the world. Church-centric thinking often still mirrors this same myopic and distorted view of God's missional heart.

For God, it always counts when people love their neighbors, no matter who is doing it. The kingdom of God plays out with every act of compassion.

Jesus went about practicing the abundant life in full view of everyone. His kind of living substituted service for self-aggrandizement and trumped self-absorption by paying attention to others' needs. Jesus proved that this approach to life paves the way to abundance. Missional followers of Jesus adopt his example to live lives that are full-filled, not just filled full.

The missional movement understands that both truth and love must be present to reflect the whole heart of God for people.

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. 1 Peter 3:15b This verse is a favorite among missional Jesus followers because it anticipates the dynamic that occurs when the people of God act like the people of God not because of our sermons but because of our service to them. The act of blessing people frequently leads them to inquire something along the lines of "Why are you doing this?" Having your motives questioned is music to the ears of someone prepared for it. "I am a follower of Jesus, and I am blessing you because that's what he came to do."

supreme missional activity of God centers on his activity in Jesus, an unexpected Incarnation to demonstrate both full divine commitment to humanity and full human potential when lived completely connected with God. God is still on mission. Through every human experience, his Spirit seeks to draw people out of hiding and into relationship with him.

missional Jesus followers are engaged in all aspects of human experience—political, social, economic, cultural, physical, psychological, and spiritual—to work for those things that enhance life and to oppose those things that steal life.

The biblical record often observes that when the people of God mistakenly think they are God’s only or primary concern, they become callous to the very people God is wooing.

church’s vision is to love God and love others in profound ways. They were willing to stake the “evidence of this vision” as being “seen through our demonstrated acts of service.”

In a church-centric world, our responsibility is to bring people out of the streets into the church. A kingdom-oriented approach seeks to leverage the gospel into people’s lives right where they live, work, and play. The church is wherever followers of Jesus are. People don’t go to church; they are the church. They don’t bring people to church; they bring the church to people.

Instead of having an evangelism strategy, I urge congregations and people to develop a blessing strategy. This advice is based on God’s covenant with Abraham in Genesis 12 where he makes the point of what it means to be the people of God. I usually challenge them to “bless three people this week.”

What happens when God’s people decide to live out their covenant to bless those around them? Pretty amazing stuff.

“How can I ask God to bless you?” (That question was not random on his part. At the conference where he and I met, we had talked about using these words to open up spiritual conversations because they reflect the heart of God and the heart of the follower of Jesus.)

To practice the blessing life, you will need to believe God, not just believe in God. There’s a huge difference between the two.

Incarnational approaches focus on the church “being there”—at home, in the street, in the marketplace, at school, in the neighborhood—in the places where people live their lives. Incarnational believers search for ways to connect not just to each other but to the world beyond the church. They look for ways to help people discover and live out their faith in the spaces they already occupy.

now we need to learn how to connect to the community. Whatever needs are prevalent in your community, the impact is showing up in your public schools. That’s why adopting a school—asking how you can help—is the quickest way I know to become connected to the community beyond your church.

Moving from a member to a missionary culture means making heroes of Jesus followers who are using their life assignments as missionary posts to bless people.

Church is simple at the cigar bar: life is the issue; God is the conversation. Several of the cigar bar participants have become viral Jesus followers, infecting others with their newfound spiritual connections.

values the impact of the movement beyond church walls. Our acts of service and love, not our oratorical brilliance and institutional success, will intrigue people with our message. Jesus followers live the truth; they don't just study it.

Storytelling and corporate celebrating will shift from focusing on church program activity and successes to celebrating the lives of missionary followers of Jesus in their efforts away from the institutional settings. One pastor making this journey has determined to interview people every week during his sermon to talk about their challenges and successes.

The missional church, as you might guess, has an allergic reaction to the reach-and-assimilate social reengineering of people. The missional emphasis involves connecting with people where they live and deploying them as kingdom agents in their natural settings and established relational networks.

At this church, service as worship replaces the traditional worship services every fourth Sunday.

central element is the sharing of God's immediate intervention and demonstration in the lives of those present. Worship is seen as the extension of normal routines,

Michael Frost, another Aussie and incarnational church thought leader, has chronicled his own journey into experiencing missional community.<sup>5</sup>

community make five promises to each other in covenant: to be authentic, to serve a cause greater than themselves, to create community, to be generous and practice hospitality, and to work righteously as a way of being sent by God into the world. These promises are made to each other in the community; the proof is in their conduct of life beyond the community.

For instance, a congregation may determine to help ministry constituents learn how to serve the community. One metric to check progress would be the number of people engaged in service; another would be the hours of community service rendered per month.

Learning to see God, to hear him, is the real object of prayer. Its major objective is not to inform him or bend him to our purposes. The result of praying is to attenuate us to God's will and God's work going on all around us. If we ask God to show us what he sees, he will! And it will change us.

For example, each member of the staff at one church was instructed to go to a coffee shop, sit on a park bench, or stand in a mall parking lot and pray a simple prayer: “Lord, help me see what you see.” They were to listen for an hour to the voice of God and then reconvene to share what they had heard.

**simply ask people, “Is there a special prayer I can pray for you today?” or “Is there some special way I can ask God to bless you today?”**

One church determined to pray for every waiter and waitress in town as congregants frequented local restaurants. Their simple question to these servers was, “In a moment, when I ask a blessing for my food, how can I ask God to bless you?”

The major thrust of the recrafting of this part of the scorecard is to shift from supporting a member culture to developing a missionary culture. A member culture focuses on church work, church real estate, church programming, and members’ concerns. A missionary culture, on the other hand, focuses on the community and its needs, on ministry opportunities outside of the church.

The externally focused missional congregation has a very different view of community engagement. It is central, not a sideline.

Planning needs to begin with the community calendar—“When is the country fair?” “When do teachers go back to the classrooms?” “When does Shakespeare in the Park premier?”—if the church wants to have a significant presence at those community events.

Help church members see their existing community involvement, including the work they do for a living, as primary opportunities for ministry. You will do this by increasing the amount of time you spend celebrating people’s everyday ministry in your gatherings.

North America is the largest English-speaking mission field in the world. We can no longer think and act like club members; we must think and act like missionaries.

Develop and conduct a community ministries capital drive just as you’ve done for facilities construction in the past. One pastor’s first building campaign was to raise over \$100,000 in pledges to jump-start three community ministry initiatives targeting homelessness, hunger, and AIDS.

Add a community component to any capital stewardship drive you conduct. One church tithed its capital campaign results to the local food bank.

A new metric of this externally based scorecard has to do with the number of grants received as well as the dollar amount.

Establish one or more 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations targeting community ministry opportunities.

Invite community leaders into your budgeting process.

Create a foundation that can receive bequests and manage investments for long-term income stream development.

Create your own venture capital funds as part of your church budgeting. Then take applications for grants and loans from people who have ideas on how to use the money to improve community service.

how could we leverage sdop funds to develop coaches for the community? or give grants for this.

Simply put, the church in North America has focused on developing programs, not developing people. It is time for this to change.

Loving God and loving our neighbors cannot be fulfilled at church. Being salt and light can not be experienced in a faith huddle. Engaging the kingdom of darkness requires storming it, not habitually retreating into a refuge.

Just as people are taking greater roles in choosing their educational pursuits, designing their workplaces, and managing their health care, they feel increasingly qualified to craft their own spiritual quests. However, the fact that people are no longer willing to let others, including and especially the church, script their spiritual journey doesn't mean that they are unwilling to be coached.

Spiritual leaders, pay attention! Of course we know what people should do with their lives. After all, God has told us to tell them, and we get paid to do it. But what if we actually begin to see ourselves as responsible for creating a culture where people get to participate in customizing their spiritual journeys based on their spiritual appetites and ambitions?

Another congregation is creating online spiritual and life coaching, offering people suggestions of specific resources to consult and church programs to participate in that specifically target their stated life objectives and spiritual needs.

Their effectiveness is generally rated on their delivery prowess, not on the level or scope of transformed living among their listeners. This approach fails to reckon with how people develop.

Intentional debriefing should be part of our routine gatherings, whether in worship experiences or in small group encounters. You may have to fight your physical and programmatic architecture to pull this off. People lined up in pews have to be given

specific permission and instruction (“Turn around and tell someone close to you the best thing that happened to you this week”).

“What was the biggest challenge you faced this week?” or “What worries you most these days?” or “What about this past week is a cause for celebration?”

we have to be even more intentional to create pockets of white space even inside our activities for people to connect for this all-important function of getting help in debriefing their lives. Let me give you just a couple of examples of what I am talking about. After we preach a sermon, we should ask people to declare to one or two people seated around them what they will take away from the message. Or perhaps we ask them to state one or two things they will do with what they’ve just heard or one or two things they will do differently based on the truth that has just been shared with them.

What part of this experience or insights from this experience can you transfer into the rest of your life? How will your life be different from this experience?” The practice of life debriefing will also have the spiritual benefit of helping people see that God is active in their lives every day in every sphere. This is fundamental to helping people live more intentional and more missional lives.

The program-driven system favors a culture that creates church customers, not followers of Jesus. It makes people who can spout off all the right answers but live unaccountable to the truth.

one church seriously pursuing a people development culture is training a cadre of spiritual coaches equipped to help people identify their life growth agendas, specifically focusing on behavior.

most of us learn by doing and debriefing rather than through training divorced from deployment. Jesus deployed his disciples long before they were “ready.” He knew that the fastest way to develop them was to engage them in real ministry encounters. He then debriefed their experiences so that they could learn from those experiences.

the scorecard that would be in place to celebrate a people development culture, including but not limited to the following: • Relationships that people are intentionally cultivating • People released into service • Personal life development • Money spent on people rather than buildings and administration • Life turf (home, work, school, community, and so on) • Life-centered growth • Staff engaged in coaching people for their personal development

Tracking the number of staff hours spent in personal coaching.

when I coach people. I help them think through their lives in four areas: self-awareness, skill development, resource management, and personal growth.

To change a culture, you have to change the conversations. This is true in businesses, in politics, in a family, and in a spiritual context.

Are you communicating an externally focused ministry and a commitment to people development? Monitoring and shaping conversations is never more important than when we are leading a significant or directional change.

What do you enjoy doing?

Where do you see God at work right now?

What would you like to see God do in your life over the next six to twelve months? How can we help?

How would you like to serve other people? How can we help?

How can we pray for you?

Church leaders became captured by the institutionalization of the church. Hierarchies of leaders developed with their efforts primarily focused on the church. This rise of a clergy class eventually turned the mission inward as the agenda of the kingdom of God yielded to ecclesiastical concerns.

Missional congregational pastors now pastor the community, not just the church. They deliberately develop relationships outside their traditional church role,

kingdom leaders look for any way they can to gain entrance to people's lives to "infect" them with God's love for them. They may try airborne techniques (preaching, teaching), but they are not limited to these. They will look for human contact (caring, coaching) and even brokenness (mercy, compassion) as opportunities to demonstrate the kingdom.

**the missional movement yearns for journalists who can tell us what God is up to today.**

How did Jesus train leaders for the movement? He used the deploy-and-debrief method. This approach allowed him to take some pretty unpromising and in some cases mercurial candidates and turn them into movement leaders.

The training entities, including seminaries, who take leadership development seriously will increasingly insist and provide for a

As the process unfolds, learners will be given more and more opportunity to shape their own learning path. They will not pursue their learning as privatized consumers but rather will be tethered to the school through a life and ministry coach (who may live near them, trained by the institution for this role). The learners will also be engaged in peer mentoring as part of their developmental path, debriefing their learning and experiences with other similarly tasked learning leaders.

***Degrees and certifications won't be mechanically passed out to people who successfully complete classroom assignments but awarded to those who prove their ability to lead by demonstrating actual competency and the requisite health and emotional intelligence to serve as spiritual leaders. Credentialing will certify a proven leader, not just a wannabe.***

At the congregational level, leader development efforts will focus on creating a leadership community designed to help people become more effective at exercising their leadership gifts in the marketplace and other community sectors.

Here are a few significant roles the traditional church can play in the missional renaissance:

Churches can function as intake and deployment centers for missional followers of Jesus. Many current followers of Jesus are attending traditional churches.

The traditional church can serve as an umbrella organization for missional communities.

Clergy will be valued for the following functions:

Teaching – people still value good teaching and need theological perspective brought to their lives.

Life Coaching – people are increasingly intrigued and drawn toward help for their lives, not just through counseling but also in more proactive ways.

Missional strategies. Clergy are in a perfect position to serve as missional strategists, brokering ministry services between congregations and the community they are in.

The Third Shift in engaging the missional renaissance is by far the most personally challenging for many in church leadership. Moving from church-based leadership to kingdom-based leadership turns out to be a test of obedience, not just grasping a new idea. Are we giving the kind of leadership that turns people toward the mission of God? Do we have the courage to pursue the call to missional leadership even if our incomes are jeopardized? Are we willing to risk our leadership to lead God's people toward him? Are we content with assessing our ministry on how well we meet the expectations of those we lead, or is our greatest allegiance still reserved for following Jesus?

I found it helpful to approach leadership issues by thinking in 4 different areas: Paradigm issues (how the leader sees the world), microskill development (competencies the leader needs), resource management (what the leader has to work with), and personal growth (the leader as a person).

The way to shift leadership results is to change what leaders are doing and thinking about. Leaders have to live the change they seek. This is not easy; it requires ruthless self-management.

Once you commit to a specific result in any of the following 4 leadership areas, you have to figure out how to focus prayer, people (relationships), time, money, technology, and facilities (including your personal property) to achieve the results you want.

**Here are some possible missional metrics:**

Number of growing relationships with people who are not Jesus followers

Number of relationships with people who are not church people

Number of personal relationships with other community leaders

Intentional study plan that includes periodicals, books, blogs, web sites, and podcasts for cultural exegesis

Number of venues for intentional personal service in the community

Number of hours in personal service in the community each month

Number of life-coaching relationships

Regular commitment to debriefing your personal life with a coach or personal growth group

Number of stories of external missional experiences used in your speaking and writing

Broken relationships take a huge toll in soul strength. Practicing forgiveness and seeking reconciliation are key to ridding yourself of toxins that poison your spirit.

Many leaders of the missional movement will not be clergy. Credentialing for leadership through theological education will yield to credentialing through passion and personal leadership competencies.