

“Mission Ministry through the COVID Season”

with Dr. Ted Smith
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WESLEY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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Outline for our class session

Introductions

Scriptural reflection

John Wesley's view of primitive church

Missional Church

Reggie McNeal

Shift from Internal to External Ministry Focus

Mission Ministry during COVID-19

Closing Thoughts from Viktor Frankl



Introductions

- Thank you for the invitation
- Silver Spring, MD
- Born in Singapore
- GBGM missionary for 15 years in Nicaragua, Cuba, Mexico and along the Texas-Mexico border
- Taught previously at Pfeiffer, Perkins, and Austin Presbyterian Seminary







Theological Reflection

Acts 2:42-47

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. **43** Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. **44** All who believed were together and had all things in common; **45** they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds[a] to all, as any had need. **46** Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home[b] and ate their food with glad and generous[c] hearts, **47** praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

How is God missional in the primitive church?

- teaching and fellowship
- breaking of bread and prayers
- wonders and signs
- together and all things in common
- distribute according to need
- spent time together
- met in homes
- glad and generous hearts
- added new Christians



Wesley's understanding of the primitive church

- What is Methodism?
- “This is the religion of the primitive church, of the whole Church in the purest ages.”

Sermon 132 “On Laying the Foundation of the New Chapel”



God is a Sending God

Missio Dei is the Latin term for a missionary God or a sending God. This sending begins within the three persons of the Godhead.

Mission = send



Darrell Guder, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*

“This ecclesiocentric understanding of mission has been replaced during this century by a profoundly theocentric reconceptualization of Christian mission. We have come to see that mission is not merely an activity of the church. Rather, mission is the result of God’s initiative, rooted in God’s purposes to restore and heal creation. “Mission” means sending,” and it is the central biblical theme describing the purpose of God’s action in human history.”



Emil Brunner, *Word and the World*

“The Church exists by mission as fire exists by burning.”



Scott Jones, *The Evangelistic Love of God and Neighbor* (Abingdon, 2003)

“Finally, it should be noted that the reign of God is not coextensive with the church. God will save those whom God will save. God is seeking to recreate the world so that God’s purposes are accomplished. Hence, God is active in places where there are no Christians. Further, there are Christians who are actually working against God’s purposes. Thus, while the church is God’s chief instrument, it is not God’s only instrument.”



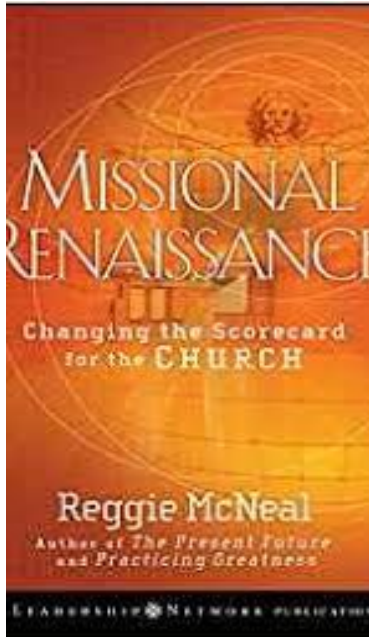
Prevenient Grace

We acknowledge God's prevenient grace, the divine love that surrounds all humanity and precedes any and all of our conscious impulses toward God. This grace prompts our first wish to please God, our first glimmer of understanding concerning God's will, and our "first slight transient conviction" of having sinned against God. This grace also awakens in us an earnest longing for deliverance from sin and death and moves us toward repentance and faith.

--The UM Book of Discipline



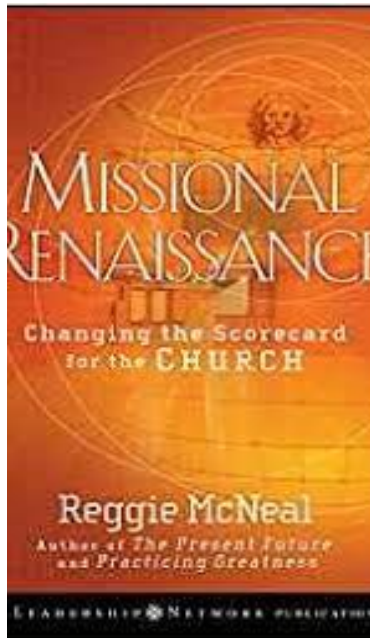
McNeal's definition of missional



(p. 24) The missional church is the people of God partnering with God in God's redemptive mission in the world.



McNeal's definition of missional

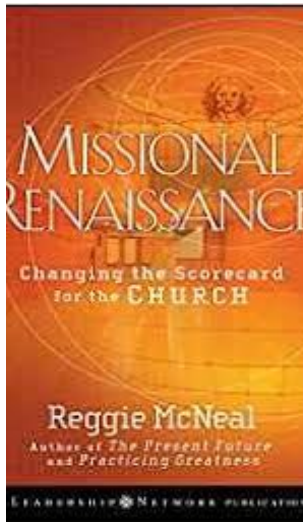


(p. 24) The missional church is the people of God partnering with God in God's redemptive mission in the world.

Q: What is important about this definition to you?



Three Major Shifts Needed:



Church of Today

Missional Church

Internal Ministry
Focus

External Ministry
Focus

Program
Development

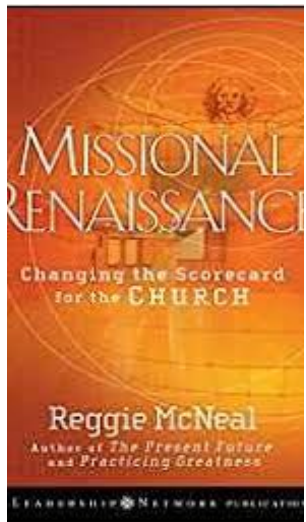
People Development

Church-based
leadership

Kingdom-based
leadership



“What gets rewarded gets done” (p. xvii)



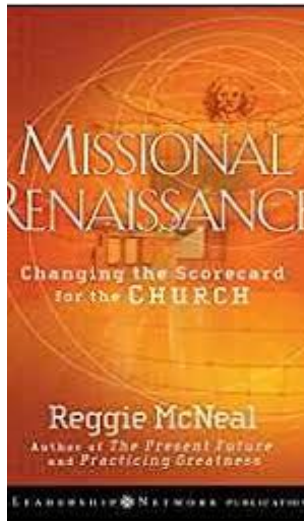
What does McNeal mean by that?

Is it true?

How do you see that being played out in the church?



Missional Shift I: Internal to External



Traditional Church: Internal

Church-centric:
people go to church

Church as
destination

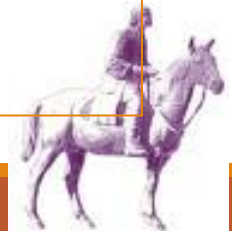
Church is the point

Missional Church: External

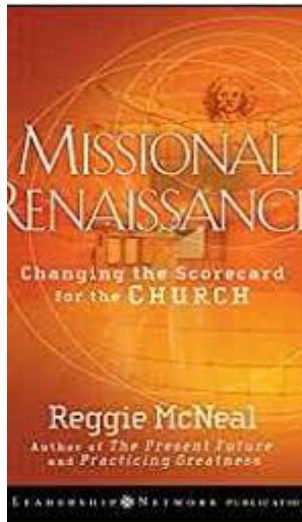
Kingdom-focused:
people are the church

Church as connector
to life

Being a blessing is the
point



Missional Shift I: Internal to External



Traditional Church: Internal

Attractional: marked by church attendance

Membership culture: prayers, presence, gifts

Proclamation of faith—based in tradition & scripture

Missional Church: External

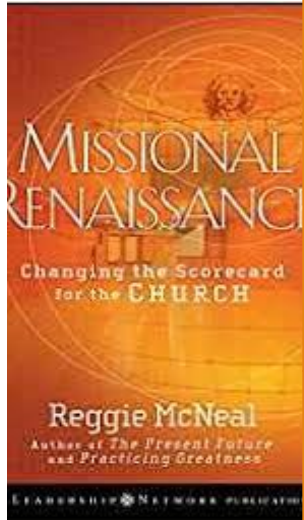
Incarnational: marked by “being there”

Missionary culture: posted in larger community

Demonstration of living a life of blessing others



Missional Shift I: Internal to External



Church of Today: Internal

Institutional—structure and culture

Reach and assimilate new member => become disciples

Worship services with fixed time and place

Missional Church: External

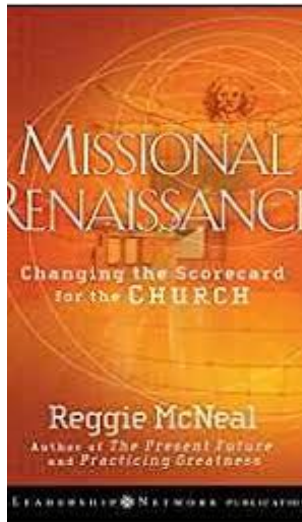
Organic—decentralized and synced with people

Connect and deploy missionaries and their outposts in the world

Service in community as worship



Missional Shift I: Internal to External



**Church of Today:
Internal**

Congregations

Church development models to change the church

**Missional Church:
External**

Missional communities

Church missional training to transform the world



Changing the Metrics

“What gets rewarded gets done.”

	Internal focus	Missional focus
Prayer	For members and internal programs	For and with community & its concerns
People	Leaders and laity focus on internal program	Leaders and laity engaged in mission in the community
Time	Time reserved and tracked for internal programming	Time required to be spent in and with community
Finances	Raised from and devoted to internal expenses	Solicit external support and direct funds to external activities
Facilities	Used for internal programs and church members' use	Community welcomed in; church activities moved out
Technology	Tech supports ministry activities	Tech creates ministry venues and supports external activities



What are the mission ministry opportunities during the COVID-19 pandemic?



What are the mission ministry opportunities during COVID-19?

- Food insecurity
- Anxiety
- Fear
- Grief
- Social isolation/loneliness
- Unemployment
- Support for medical personnel
- Care for the sick



How can a church be missional during COVID-19?



How can the church be more like the primitive church during COVID-19? According to the Book of Acts?

- teaching and fellowship
- breaking of bread and prayers
- wonders and signs
- together and all things in common
- distribute according to need
- spent time together
- meet in homes
- glad and generous hearts
- added new Christians



How can a church be missional during COVID-19?

- Go beyond the four walls of the church
- Serve the community
- Support health care workers
- Pastoral care for the lonely
- Care for vulnerable population
- Physical distancing vs. social distancing
- Ministry of presence (being vs. doing)
- Livestream worship



Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*

“Life is not primarily a quest for pleasure, as Freud believed, or a quest for power, as Alfred Adler taught, but a quest for meaning. The greatest task for any person is to find meaning in his or her life.”



Additional Resources

Lois Y. Barrett, et al., *Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004. ISBN#0-8028-2692-X.

Joseph W. Daniels and Christie Latona, *Connecting for Change: How to Engage People, Churches, and Partners to Inspire Hope in Your Community*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2019. ISBN 1-978-1-5018-7437-6.

Ogbu Kalu, Peter Vethanayagamony, Edmund Kee-Fook Chia (eds). *Mission After Christendom: Emergent Themes in Contemporary Mission*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010. ISBN: 9780664234652.

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David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, Orbis, 1992.

Carlos Cardoza-Orlandi, *Mission: An Essential Guide*, Abingdon, 2002.

Paul W. Chilcote, *Making Disciples in a World Parish: Global Perspectives on Mission & Evangelism*, Pickwick Publications, 2011.

Stephen Gunter and Elaine Robinson (eds.), *Considering the Great Commission: Evangelism and Mission in the Wesleyan Spirit*, Abingdon Press, 2005.

Grace Ji-Sun Kim, *Intercultural Ministry: Hope for a Changing World*, Judson Press, 2017.

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