
The Missional Church: Ecclesiological Discussion in the Gospel and Our Culture Network in North America

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The Gospel and Our Culture Network is a fast growing and significant movement in North America that is devoted to the task of fostering a missionary encounter with North American culture. This movement is devoted to theological, cultural, and ecclesiological reflection to accomplish this goal. This paper analyzes Missional Church, a book that reflects the missionary ecclesiology of the movement. After placing the GOCN and the ecclesiology of Missional Church in historical context and describing its centering metaphor of "alternative community," an appreciative critique is offered.

The Gospel and Our Culture Network (GOCN) is a fast-growing and significant movement in North America, made up of theological educators, pastors, denominational administrators, and local congregational leaders from a variety of confessional traditions devoted to the task of fostering a missionary encounter with North American culture. This movement is generated by both cultural and ecclesiastical changes. Culturally, rapid changes are taking place in North American culture from a modern to postmodern society. Ecclesiastically, the church finds itself in a new situation, dislocated from its former place of importance. What does it mean for a church increasingly on the margins of North American culture to encounter its postmodern culture in a missionary way? That is the question that drives this movement.

The work of GOCN over the past decade has been three-pronged. The first prong is cultural analysis: What are the religious foundations and societal practices of postmodern, North American culture? The second is theological reflection: What is the gospel to which the church is called to bear witness? The third is ecclesiological discussion: What kind of church is needed to present a faithful and relevant witness of the gospel to postmodern, North American culture?

It is the third prong—ecclesiological discussion—that is addressed in this paper. The development of a missionary ecclesiology for North America has been an important item on the GOCN agenda. In 1998 a book was published entitled *Missional*

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Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America (Guder 1998). This book arose out of a study and research project inaugurated by the GOCN. The book *Missional Church* represents what might be called an “official” ecclesiology of the GOCN movement. Coauthored by six leaders within the network, it represents an ecclesiology that has become increasingly influential within the GOCN movement. In this paper the ecclesiology of *Missional Church* will be briefly explored and critiqued.

Continuing the IMC Agenda: Structures of a Missionary Ecclesiology

Before taking up an analysis of that ecclesiology, it would be helpful to put the GOCN movement into the context of two historical stories that can help us understand it. First, GOCN can be understood as a movement that is returning to the agenda of the International Missionary Council (IMC) in the late 1950s, to work out the structures of a missionary ecclesiology. Second, GOCN can also be understood as a movement that is attempting to articulate a missionary ecclesiology in the context of a crumbling Christendom.

If the notion of a missionary church was to blossom, a number of foundational assumptions about mission, held in the Western churches at the beginning of the twentieth century, would need to change. Mission was considered to be exclusively an enterprise of Christian expansion that takes place from the West to the Third World. In the West the church was considered to be an institution that nobly supports such mission projects, and in the Third World it was regarded as a parallel institution alongside of mission, functioning as a container in which to place converts. This reduction and misunderstanding of mission leads to the following problems: mission and church are separated; the Western church supports missions as one of its worthy causes; the Third-World church stands alongside of the work of Western missions as a parallel organization; the world is divided between the Christian West, where there is no need for mission, and the pagan non-West, where mission takes place; the West is the home base for mission, and the non-West is the mission field; the world church is divided into older and younger churches, with the older Western churches taking the primary initiative for mission. If an understanding of the congregation as the fundamental unit of mission—wherever it is located—was to develop, then these assumptions would need to be revised.

During the period from 1938 until 1952, a missionary ecclesiology began to develop in the context of the IMC that would challenge each one of these assumptions. The Tambaram meeting of the IMC (1938) was a turning point in ecumenical thinking on mission; it was at Tambaram that a truly missionary ecclesiology began to develop. Hendrik Kraemer posed the question to the participants at Tambaram that would set the tone for that meeting and the whole development for the next quarter of a century: “The church and all Christians . . . are confronted with the question, What is the essential nature of the church, and what is its obligation to the world?” (Quoted in Stransky 1991:688). The church, which had been so long ignored or taken for granted in missionary discussion, preempted by missionary societies and councils, now came to center stage. The primary organ of mission, according to Scripture, was not the mission society, which had arisen to take up a task neglected by the church; the church itself was the divinely ordained community responsible for mission. The summons that opens the official report of Tambaram states, “World evan-

gelism . . . is inherent in the nature of the Church as the Body of Christ created by God to continue in the world the work which Jesus Christ began in His life and teaching, and consummated by His death and resurrection. This conception of the Church as the missionary to the world is given in the New Testament" (IMC 1939:35). The IMC historian William Richey Hogg says, "One point they [Tambaram Council] made pre-eminently clear: mission is not a segment of the church's life. On the contrary, the church exists to fulfill a divinely ordained mission" (Hogg 1952:298).

First steps in challenging the fundamental dichotomy between a sending church in the Christian West and missionary work in the pagan non-Western world were also taken; the division of the world between the Christian West and non-Christian Third World was subjected to critical scrutiny. A world war and the rise of totalitarian ideologies had shattered confidence that Europe was a Christian continent; the West now had to be viewed as a mission field. This loss of a supposed Christian cultural context had a profound effect on the relation of mission to the church. The church could no longer see itself simply as the religious arm of a Christian West. It had to define itself in terms of its mission to the world.

The phrase "partnership in obedience" emerged at the next IMC conference in Whitby (1947), and this gave expression to the further dismantling of the distinction between the older and younger churches. The use of these familiar terms—older and younger—was recognized to be "obsolete" because "for the most part the tasks which face the churches in all parts of the world are the same. Each church, older and younger . . . is to be a worthy partner in the task of evangelism" (Ranson 1948:174).

While these distinctions, typical of the colonial past, were being challenged, it did not issue in a consistent missionary ecclesiology. There were two primary reasons for this. First, there was no theological framework in which to relate these gains in a coherent and profitable way. Second, missionary and ecclesial structures continued to embody these older distinctions.

The first problem, the need for a coherent theological framework, was addressed at the IMC Willingen meeting (1952). The concept of the *missio Dei* emerged as an organizing structure that allowed the missiological insights of the past 25 years, as well as numerous theological and ecclesiological developments, to be coordinated in fruitful harmony. According to the *missio Dei* concept, mission is first of all the work of God in sending Jesus and the Spirit for the redemption of the world. The church is taken up into God's mission as the place and instrument of God's redeeming work. Willingen contributed the memorable statement "there is no participation in Christ without participation in His mission to the world. That by which the Church receives its existence is that by which it is also given its world-mission. 'As the Father has sent Me, even so send I you'" (Goodall 1953:190).

While the Willingen conference also voiced concerns about the missional and ecclesial structures that continued to embody a colonial view of mission, this concern was not taken up until the next decade. At the New Delhi assembly of the World Council of Churches (1961), the report of the Department of Evangelism stated, "The Committee is convinced that one of the main hindrances in the pursuit of the evangelistic calling of the Church lies in the traditional structure of the local congregation" (WCC 1962:189). A study project on "the missionary structure of the congregation" was authorized by the New Delhi assembly. The project was intended to find patterns, structures, and forms of ministry that would best serve the missionary call-

ing of the church. Unfortunately, the project was swept into the powerful tides of secularism that engulfed the WCC during the 1960s, a trend associated with the name Hans Hoekendijk, in which the church was pushed aside as an institution of marginal interest. The report failed to achieve its goal. As the South African missiologist David Bosch comments, the 1967 report entitled *The Church for Others and the Church for the World: A Quest for Structures for the Missionary Congregation* (WCC 1967) in the end “had precious little to say about the missionary structure of the congregation” (Bosch 1991:385).

The Gospel and Our Culture Network is a movement that has consciously picked up this task again, albeit with a very contextual focus in North America. What kind of structures would enable the church in North America to carry out its missionary calling? There is a conscious embrace of the *missio Dei* framework, in which the church is understood to play a central role in God’s mission (Guder 1998:77–109). The questions posed in the 1950s, jettisoned by a secularized interpretation of the *missio Dei* that sidelined the church, are taken up afresh. What structures, patterns, and forms of ministry are needed to enable the church to be faithful to its call to continue the mission of Christ?

Revising Our Ecclesiology after Christendom

A second historical narrative is important for understanding the GOCN—the rise and fall of Christendom. Contemporary thinking about the church as well as its current structures have been shaped by Christendom or the *corpus Christianum*. The church of Christendom was molded by changes that took place in the fourth century, when Constantine became a Christian and legalized the Christian faith. In 392 Theodosius made Christianity the religion of the empire. The church moved from a marginal position to a dominant institution in society; from being socially, politically, and intellectually inferior to being in a position of power and superiority; from being economically weak and poor to being in a position of immense wealth; from being an oppressed minority to being the oppressive majority; from being a *religio illicita* to becoming the only religion of the empire; from being resident aliens in a pagan environment to being an established church in a professedly Christian state. This could not help but have a dramatic impact on the church’s structures and self-understanding. Under the Christendom *symphonia* of church and state, the church lost its sense of being a distinct community embodying an alternative story. The prophetic-critical dimension of the church’s relation to its culture diminished. The church became part of the constellation of powers within the Christian state. It took its place alongside the political, economic, military, social, and intellectual powers within the empire. As the American missiologist Wilbert Shenk argues, the established church “surrendered the vital critical relationship to its culture that is indispensable to a sense of mission” (Shenk 1995:34).

For the writers of *Missional Church*, the term Christendom refers to “an official ecclesiastical status through legal establishment” that has been characteristic of European churches for centuries. A number of historical factors have converged to break down this historical or official Christendom; the church no longer holds an official or established place. However, many assumptions about the church and mission that were forged during this era continue to shape the church’s life to the present. The Christendom that is present in North America is not “official” but “functional”:

“Christendom” also describes the functional reality of what took place specifically in the North American setting. Various churches contributed to the formation of a dominant culture that bore the deep imprint of Christian values, language, and expectations regarding moral behaviors. Other terms like “Christian culture” or “churched culture” might be used to describe this Christian influence on the shape of the broader culture. (Guder 1998:48)

The problem with the post-Christendom church is that it continues to maintain many of the characteristics and attitudes of the Christendom church but at the same time has lost its place of formative power within culture. The GOCN can be understood as a movement that is attempting to revision ecclesiology in the context of this new situation.

The Ecclesiology of Missional Church: The Church as Alternative Community

In one of the last articles that David Bosch wrote, he distinguishes five traditions of the relationship of the church to civil authorities (Bosch 1993:89–95): Constantinian, pietist, reformist, liberationist, and anabaptist. The scope of these categories can be broadened to assess the relationship of the gospel and church, not only to civil authorities, but to the whole of culture. In this scheme, it is the anabaptist tradition—which Bosch calls elsewhere the alternative community and countercultural model (Bosch 1982)—that has been gaining ground and begun to function as the dominant model in the North American context among many who are calling for a missionary encounter with North American culture.

According to Bosch, the anabaptist model emphasizes that “the primary task of the church is simply to *be* the church, the *true* community of committed believers which, by its very existence and example, becomes a challenge to society and the state” (Bosch 1993:92). Mission is the planting and nourishing of ecclesial communities that embrace an alternative pattern of life. There are two important features that characterize this model. First, it emphasizes the *communal* dimensions of the missionary witness of the church. There is a reaction against reducing mission to the calling of individuals in culture, as characteristic of the reformist model. It stands against a neglect of the church as a community that embodies the life of the kingdom together. Second, the *critical* side of the church’s relationship to its culture dominates: “The church is understood to be an implicit or latent *critical factor* in society. . . . The church is critical of the status quo, indeed *very* critical of it” (1993:92). These two factors are combined in the designation “alternative community.” Bosch summarizes:

The church simply exists in society in such a way that people should become aware of the transitoriness, relativity, and fundamental inadequacy of *all* political programs and solutions. The believing community is a kind of antibody in society, in that it lives a life of radical discipleship as an “alternative community.” (1993:92)

These two important features have been developed in critical reaction to the impact of Christendom on the shape of the church: under the Christendom *symphonia*, the church lost its sense of being a distinct community embodying an alternative story. Both the communal and the critical dimensions of the church’s mission were eclipsed by its established position within culture. According to many authors within the North American scene who discuss ecclesiology from a missional standpoint, this

Christendom legacy continues to the present in the Western church (e.g., Hauerwas and Willimon 1989; Hall 1997; Shenk 1991; 1993; 1995; 1999:118–128; Hunsberger 1995).

In formulating an ecclesiology for North American culture, the book *Missional Church* adopts the centering metaphor of an alternative or contrast community (Guder 1998:9–10). While the six authors of the book come from Reformed, Methodist, Baptist, and Anabaptist traditions, they find a common commitment to the church as an alternative community: “The thrust of the gospel exposition in this book is to define a missionary people whose witness will prophetically challenge precisely those dominant [idolatrous] patterns [of culture] as the church accepts its vocation to be an alternative community” (Guder 1998:10). With this fundamental ecclesial designation, the authors of *Missional Church* want to highlight the need for a church that embodies the communal and critical dimensions of the Christian mission, over against the individualism and accommodation of Christendom.

While all three of these ecclesiological features are evident throughout the book—anti-Christendom, communal, and intercultural—chapter 5 develops these features most explicitly. This chapter concentrates on the relationship of the missionary church to its cultural context. The Christendom legacy continues to be present in the North American church. It is this legacy and the threat of a functional Christendom that forms the dark backdrop for the ecclesiological and missional formulations of this chapter (Guder 1998:18–76).

According to the authors of *Missional Church*, Christendom has crippled the church in two ways. First, it has produced a church that has accommodated itself to its culture and has not been sufficiently critical of the idolatrous currents that shape it. Then the church is unable to critique the powers that shape its culture:

Whenever the church has a vested interest in the status quo—politically, economically, socially—it can easily be captivated by the powers, the institutions, the spirits, and the authorities of the world. And whenever the church becomes captivated by the powers, it loses the ability to identify and name evil. (Guder 1998:113)

Second, the identification of the church with the culture leads to an individualist notion of mission. A functional Christendom finds the primary mission of the church in the activity of individual Christians within the culture. The authors criticize Niebuhr’s *Christ and Culture* as a primary exponent of the Christendom approach to the church’s relation to culture: “Niebuhr’s analysis has no real place for the church. His primary actor is the individual Christian, who must make choices concerning Christ and culture. By implication, the church is simply a collection of individual Christians” (Guder 1998:115).

The concern to recover the communal and critical dimensions of ecclesiology shapes the remainder of the book: cultivating communities of the Holy Spirit (Guder 1998:142–182), missional leadership (183–220), congregational structures (221–247), and ecumenical structures (248–268).

An Appreciative Critique of Missional Church

Much of the ecclesiology of *Missional Church* is attractive and compelling. The image of an “alternative community” is a timely one that has potential to galvanize

the church in North America in its missionary responsibility. The elaboration of functional Christendom for a missionary church is insightful and important. The emphases on the communal and critical dimensions of the church's calling in the world need to be heard in a church where individualism and conformity to the world is rampant. Much more could be said about the important ecclesiological insights of this book. However, there are other important ecclesiological emphases that have been neglected. I will unfold this neglect by referring to each of the three features characteristic of *Missional Church* (cf. Goheen 2000:403–414, 434–439).

The ecclesiology of *Missional Church* emphasizes the needed critical stance of the church toward its culture in reaction to the domestication of the church in the Christendom trajectory. There are two sides to the relation of the church to its culture. On the one hand, the church is part of the cultural community and called to play a positive role in its development, shaping that formation with the gospel. Both the creation mandate and the comprehensive scope of redemption in which Christ's lordship over all of human life is confessed, demand that the people of God be involved in cultural development. On the other hand, the church is called to an antithetical stance, critical of the idolatrous formation of human culture apart from Christ. Hendrik Kraemer has rightly maintained,

The deeper the consciousness of the tension and the urge to take this yoke upon itself are felt, the healthier the Church is. The more oblivious of this tension the Church is, the more well-established and at home in this world it feels, the more it is in deadly danger of being the salt that has lost its savour. (1956:36)

It is clear that the antithetical posture of the church was compromised by its established position in the Christendom arrangement; the tension between the gospel and idolatrous culture was slackened. Kraemer continues, "The symphonia, to use the official orthodox theological term, of faith and empire, of Church and State, . . . when put in the light of the prophetic message of Biblical revelation, is a surrender of the tension inherent and necessary in the relation of the Christian faith and world" (1956:36, 43).

At the same time the church was right to take responsibility for the formation of culture during the Christendom era. Lesslie Newbigin comments:

Much has been written about the harm done to the cause of the gospel when Constantine accepted baptism, and it is not difficult to expatiate on this theme. But could any other choice have been made? When the ancient classical world . . . ran out of spiritual fuel and turned to the church as the one society that could hold a dis-integrating world together, should the church have refused the appeal and washed its hands of responsibility for the political order? It could not do so if it was to be faithful to its origins in Israel and the ministry of Jesus. It is easy to see with hindsight how quickly the church fell into the temptations of worldly power. It is easy to point . . . to the glaring contradictions between the Jesus of the Gospels and his followers occupying the seats of power and wealth. And yet we have to ask, would God's purpose as it is revealed in Scripture have been better served if the church had refused all political responsibility, if there had never been a "Christian" Europe, if all the churches for the past two thousand years had lived as persecuted minorities . . . ? I find it hard to think so. (Newbigin 1986:100–101)

A difference between the British scholar Oliver O'Donovan and the American Stanley Hauerwas sheds light on this issue. O'Donovan believes that the Christendom idea must "be located correctly as an aspect of the church's understanding of mission" (O'Donovan 1996:212). The church may not withdraw from its mission even when there is success. "It was precisely the missionary imperative that compelled the Church to take the conversion of the Roman empire seriously and to seize the opportunities it offered" (1996:212). Yet mission in the Christendom context was fraught with danger, as O'Donovan explains:

The ambiguities of Christendom, meanwhile, arose from a loss of focus on the missionary context. Once the two societies of Church and nation came to be seen as a single society, it was more difficult to frame the Church-state partnership in terms of the coming kingdom. It could seem, by a kind of optical illusion, that there was no more mission to be done. The peril of the Christendom idea—precisely the same peril that attends upon the post-Christendom idea of the religiously neutral state—was that of negative collusion: the pretense that there was now no further challenge to be issued to the rulers in the name of the ruling Christ. (O'Donovan 1996:212–213)

According to O'Donovan, mission is the calling of the church to make the victory of Christ's universal lordship known. This will mean martyrdom when the state assumes absolute power. Yet martyrdom and perpetual protest is not the only form of witness. In fact, the church must be prepared to welcome the homage of the kings when it is offered to the Lord of the martyrs. When the church is offered cultural power because of the courage of the martyrs, the church must seize those opportunities to reshape civilizational practices and institutions (O'Donovan 1996:215).

O'Donovan's interpretation of Christendom leads him away from Stanley Hauerwas. Hauerwas critiques Christendom in much the same way as has been articulated above. O'Donovan acknowledges the force of Hauerwas's critique. While Christendom harbored danger and temptation—a danger that was unfortunately realized—the early church did not see this as a reason to refuse the triumph that Christ had won among the nations. It is "triumph of Christ among the nations [that] Hauerwas is not prepared to see" (O'Donovan 1996:216).

Hauerwas and the authors of *Missional Church* have offered a forceful critique of the dangers of a Christendom arrangement that can ease the tension between the church and the idolatry of its culture. This leads to accommodation and domestication that deeply compromises the church's mission. Against this cultural assimilation, the critical and antithetical stance of the church must be accented. However, mission involves stressing both sides of the church's one cultural task: solidarity and separation; affirmative involvement and critical challenge; cultural development and antithesis. The authors of *Missional Church* highlight the second in each of these pairs; they tend to label any attempt at exercising culturally formative power as "functional Christendom" (Guder 1998:116). Strong statements on the church as alternative community stress the prophetic task of the church to stand against the idolatrous twisting of cultural formation but offer little guidance for the positive participation of the church in cultural development. The urgent question for the mission of the church in the public life of culture is how it can be an alternative community that is critical of the idolatrous status quo without becoming a ghetto or parallel community that attempts to withdraw from culture.

The ecclesiology of *Missional Church* emphasizes the communal dimension of the church's mission. The calling of individual Christians in the world is neglected. On this point, a contrast between *Missional Church* and Lesslie Newbigin, to whom this book is indebted, is instructive. On the one hand, Newbigin stresses the communal expression of the church's mission: "The most important contribution which the Church can make to a new social order is to be itself a new social order" (Newbigin 1991:81). On the other hand, the calling of individual believers in culture is equally emphasized: the church "must equip its members for active and informed participation in the public life of society in such a way that the Christian faith shapes that participation" (Newbigin 1991:85). In fact, for Newbigin the mission of individual believers in the world of culture is the primary place where the church's missionary engagement takes place.

I do not believe that the role of the Church in a secular society is primarily exercised in the corporate action of the churches as organized bodies in the political or cultural fields. . . . On the contrary, I believe that it is [exercised] through the action of Christian lay people, playing their roles as citizens, workers, managers, legislators. (Newbigin 1977:127)

The "entire membership of the Church in their secular occupations are called to be signs of his lordship in every area of life" (Newbigin 1993:203). Newbigin points to the mission of a farmer as an example:

A farmer who farms his land but neglects to say his prayers will be certainly condemned by Christians as failing in his duty. But a farmer who says his prayers, and allows weeds, bad drainage, or soil erosion to spoil his land, is failing in his primary duty as a churchman. His primary ministry in the total life of the body of Christ is to care rightly for the land entrusted to him. If he fails there, he fails in his primary Christian task. (Newbigin 1952:186)

The New Testament understanding of the church supports Newbigin's emphasis. According to the New Testament scholar Herman Ridderbos, the word *ecclesia* is used in three different ways. The first refers to the new people of God in the totality of their lives as the reconstitution of humankind in Jesus Christ. As such, it comes to expression in the totality of its life and not only as it gathers for worship and fellowship. The second use of the word refers to local identifiable congregations. These congregations are organized as communities and are recognizable as a human community in a certain place. The third use of "church" points to a community gathered for certain "religious" activities—worship, prayer, sacraments, and so forth (Ridderbos 1975:328–330). It is the first of these definitions of the church—the new humankind—that the Evanston Assembly of the WCC (1954) employs in an attempt to redefine the church as the new humanity over against long-established patterns of ecclesial definition that reduce the church to a community gathered or organized as an institution: "The laity are not mere fragments of the church who are scattered about in the world and who come together again for worship, instruction, and specifically Christian fellowship on Sundays. They are the church's representatives, no matter where they are" (WCC 1954:161).

This contrast between *Missional Church* and Lesslie Newbigin comes to expres-

sion at other points in their respective ecclesiologies. For example, in Newbigin the importance of the mission of the believers in culture demands ecclesial structures that would equip them for their task. In an otherwise helpful discussion in *Missional Church*, there is no mention of ecclesial structures that would prepare the laity for their callings (Guder 1998:221–247). When Newbigin focused his ministry on training leadership in Madras, a constant refrain was finding ways to enable the “laity” in their callings. In *Missional Church* we find an excellent discussion of leadership but, again, no mention of the training of believers for their callings in public life (Guder 1998:183–220).

There is a need to continue to struggle with communal patterns of ecclesial life that will enable the church corporately to be a preview of the kingdom. However, this should not be done at the expense of the mission of God’s people in their various and scattered callings. This continues to be the primary point of missionary engagement in Western culture.

Finally, the discussion in *Missional Church* highlights the negative legacy of Christendom. Again, this is an urgent note that needs to be sounded. However, part of the legacy of Christendom is what O’Donovan calls the “obedience of the rulers,” the fruit of which remains in the West to the present day. Throughout the thousand-year period of Christendom, the gospel permeated and salted many aspects of the social, intellectual, political, moral, and economic life of European culture, and the West continues to live on the capital of that period. Newbigin interprets Christendom as “the first great attempt to translate the universal claim of Christ into political terms” (Newbigin 1980b:47). The result of this attempt was that “the Gospel was wrought into the very stuff of [Western Europe’s] social and personal life” (Newbigin 1953:1). Today “we still live largely on the spiritual capital which it generated” (Newbigin 1980a:6).

This positive legacy does not find expression in *Missional Church*. Revisioning the church in a new context will require drawing on the resources from the past. Much that is valuable from the Christendom period will not be taken up into the missional church of postmodernity if this positive legacy is ignored.

Conclusion

Missional Church is a pioneering effort and not a definitive ecclesiology. These authors have blazed a helpful trail for the recovery of a missionary church in North America. However, needed ecclesiological emphases have eclipsed other important dimensions of the biblical understanding of the missionary church. If the term “alternative community” could be applied to the church *as the new humankind*, then the image could be employed in working out the neglected dimensions of the church’s task. In other words, alternative community needs to be elaborated also in terms of the calling of believers in the task of cultural development. There is a need for fresh reflection on the mission of the church in a postmodern culture that will integrate the insights of contrasting traditions. Perhaps this will come, in the Protestant church at least, from a new model that creatively integrates the scriptural emphases of the Anabaptist and Reformed ecclesiologies while avoiding their corresponding weaknesses. Emphasis on both cultural development and antithesis, communal embodiment and individual callings, as found in these two traditions, may offer the rudiments of a faithful ecclesiology for Western culture in the twenty-first century.

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