

The Missional Church:

An Attempt to Combine the Great Commission with Unbiblical Ideas

By Joel Taylor

There are very disturbing ideas being promulgated in these modern times regarding the Church of Jesus Christ. It is being done not only by those on the proverbial religious fringe, but within mainstream protestant denominations; and not only that but by highly popular, and very public, so-called 'new calvinists' preachers and conference speakers.

I say disturbing, because those who are making such ideas popular seem to have a faulty understanding of the nature of the Church itself. That is not only disturbing – given their influence on the young, reformed and restless – but also dangerous. Dangerous because false. When it comes to Biblical truth and the proclamation thereof, *false is bad*.

Missional Falsehood

Missional. It is quite the buzzword these days. It is popular among 'the reformed'. In fact, it is *beyond* popular, it is almost considered biblically necessary. From Tim Keller, Mark Driscoll and a hosts of SBC wanna-be's to the Gospel Coalition, being *missional* is all the rage. It is also **unbiblical**, as presented, and I have no hesitation in saying so. In fact, I *must* say so, because those with whom influence rests are silent or participatory in it. They dare not risk their glorious theological careers.

For example, Tim Keller, from his recent lecture "[Contextual and Missional](#)" at Urban Plant Life Conference in London, spoke regarding the nature of a missional church – please read this quote carefully:

*A missional church gears absolutely every single part of its life—its worship, community, public discourse and preaching education—for the presence of non-believers from the culture surrounding it. A **missional church's***

congregation reflects the demographic make-up of the surrounding community—and therefore it gives non-Christian neighbors attractive and challenging glimpses of what they would look like as Christians. A **missional church's worship** is 'evangelistic' in the sense that it makes sense to non-believers in that culture, even while it challenges and shapes people with the gospel. A **missional church's people** are outwardly focused, so involved in the local community, and so alert for every opportunity to point people toward Christ, that evangelism happens naturally through relationships. Because of the attractiveness of its community, the contextual nature of its message, and humility of its people, a missional church will discover significant numbers of people always in the midst, 'incubating' and exploring Christianity. It must welcome them in hundreds of ways. It will do little to make them 'comfortable' but will do everything to make its gospel message understandable.

Wait a minute:

1) ***"A missional church gears absolutely every single part of its life—its worship, community, public discourse and preaching education—for the presence of non-believers from the culture surrounding it."***

First of all, the very phrase 'a missional church' clearly implies the existence of a non-missional one. Just so we are clear on this foundational truth, there is no such thing as a *non-missional* body of Christ. There is one Church, and it *is* missional. Any other 'church' or local fellowship who is not biblically missional is a false fellowship.

Secondly, the body of Christ, that is, a local fellowship made of believers, has never, is never, and will never be "*for the presence of non-believers from the culture surrounding it.*" Not in, as he says above, "*every single part of its life—its worship, community, public discourse and preaching education—for the presence of non-believers from the culture surrounding it.*" This is beyond biblical reasoning. Where in all of Scripture are we told that the church worship service is for the presence of unbelievers in any sense? Don't misunderstand me here, we are to work within the mandate of the Great Commission, but we are never given instruction, by command or precept, to exist for the presence of unbelievers within our worship services. Never. And "*public discourse and preaching education*" within the confines of the local fellowship is strictly for the equipping of the saints and the humbling of the same.

In a word, the meetings, the fellowshiping of the body of Christ is for the equipping of the saints, not the benefit of present unbelievers within a worship service.

2) *"A missional church's congregation reflects the demographic make-up of the surrounding community—and therefore it gives non-Christian neighbors attractive and challenging glimpses of what they would look like as Christians."*

This is confounding.

How is a **non-believer** "attracted" in any way to the life of a believer when they are dead in their sins and have no concept whatsoever of what the Gospel requires, and demands?

3) *A missional church's worship is 'evangelistic' in the sense that it makes sense to non-believers in that culture, even while it challenges and shapes people with the gospel.*

No, not at all.

A true fellowship of local believers is for the teaching and training of believers, not unbelievers. Absurd. The Church is for Christians only. NOTHING makes sense to an unbeliever regarding the Gospel, they are DEAD! They cannot understand anything, regardless of education. What was Tim thinking when he said this?

4) *A missional church's people are outwardly focused, so involved in the local community, and so alert for every opportunity to point people toward Christ, that evangelism happens naturally through relationships.*

No! The truly missional church, namely, the only true body of Christ meeting locally, is focused outwardly only in the execution of the great Commission; the Church is focused inwardly as individuals and corporately on the grace and mercy shown them, on holiness, on sanctification, on the mortification of sins in their lives. They themselves are not outwardly focused, but they are inwardly focused, or better, they are upwardly focused on the grace and mercy shown them, and that is what their lives will reveal.

5) Because of the attractiveness of its community, the contextual nature of its message, and humility of its people, a missional church will discover significant numbers of people always in the midst, 'incubating' and exploring Christianity. It must welcome them in hundreds of ways.

The true Church of Christ is never attractive to unregenerates. That may make a large worldly clubhouse of false believers, but it is not the church of Jesus Christ.

By the way, in closing, if a local fellowships find "*significant numbers of people always in their midst, "incubating and exploring Christianity"*" they are most likely lost people and they are NOT the Church; and as far as welcoming them in "hundreds of ways" ...be ashamed Tim Keller, and Mark Driscoll, and all you SBC wanna-be celebrity hero's of the world. The Church is for believers.

The problem is that those pushing 'the missional church' are presenting a reformed version of a 'seeker-sensitive' church, and that results in unregenerate memberships among other things. May this view be corrected.