

RESOURCE Q

Discussion Guide

Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the Church

by Reggie McNeal

Study Guide by Steve Conway

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Introduction

“Missional is a way of living, not an affiliation or activity. Its emergence springs from a belief that God is changing his conversation with the world and with the church. . . . To think and live missionally means seeing all life as a way to be engaged with the mission of God in the world.”

1. Do you think “being missional” is a fad or does it have substance?
2. Is there something about “being missional” that resonates with you personally? If so, how would you describe it?
3. What questions or misgivings do you have about the current missional movement?
4. How does “being missional” apply to your current church and ministry context?
 - What are some “headwinds” in your context that create resistance to a missional focus?
 - What are some “tailwinds” in your context that you could use to gain momentum in moving more toward a missional focus?

Chapter One: The Missional Renaissance

1. What connections does the author draw between the historical Renaissance and the current missional movement?
2. McNeal identifies three cultural phenomena that he believes are fueling a missional renaissance in North America and links them to three shifts the church needs to take to join the missional movement. What connections do you see between these factors?
 - Emergence of Altruism and Missional Shift #1: From an Internal to an External Ministry Focus

- The Search for Personal Growth and Missional Shift #2: From Program Development to People Development
 - The Hunger for Spiritual Vitality and Missional Shift #3: From Church-Based to Kingdom-Based Leadership
3. Are there other factors in our society today that contribute to the need to shift from “institutional maintenance to incarnational influence”?

Chapter Two: Missional Manifesto

In this chapter McNeal discusses the theological and biblical foundations of the missional church.

1. What distinction does Reggie draw between speaking of “a” church and “the” church?
2. How is the heart of the missional church tied to the nature of God? To the incarnation?
3. What differences do you see in the following three descriptions of church?
 - “a place where certain things happen”
 - “a vendor of religious goods and services”
 - “a body of people sent on a mission”
4. The author offers this definition of a missional church: “the people of God partnering in his redemptive mission in the world.” How does this definition strike you? What might you change or add to it?
5. What principles of missional living do you draw from the following passages?
 - Genesis 12:1–3
 - 1 Peter 2:9
 - Matthew 5:13–15
 - John 20:21b
6. McNeal makes the following statements related to the missional church:
 - People are created in the image of God.
 - God is on mission.
 - God’s mission is redemptive.
 - God’s mission is always being prosecuted in the world.
 - God doesn’t postpone his mission for the church to “get it.”
 - God is up to something new.
 - The people of God play an important role in the mission of God.
 - The kingdom is a future that provokes a crisis.

- The missional expression of church will require new metrics to measure its vitality.
- Missional expression can grow out of the current church, but it is not limited to the current church.

Which of these statements stands out in your mind as especially significant? Why? Which of these statements would you challenge? Why?

Chapter Three: Missional Shift 1—From an Internal to an External Focus

“Unfortunately, many church leaders think that simply their engagement in some kind of community service makes them missional. But this is not the case. That would reduce what it means to be missional to just another program or methodological approach to ‘doing church.’ . . . Moving to an external focus pushes the church from doing missions as some second-mile project into being on mission as a way of life.”

How would you describe the difference between being missional as a program and being missional as a way of life? Could you give some specific examples?

Subshifts

In this chapter, the author lays out eleven “subshifts” in the journey from an inward to an outward focus.

1. From Church-Centric to Kingdom-Focused
 - What characterizes a church-centric approach?
 - What characterizes a kingdom-focused approach?
2. From Destination to Connector
 - How would you apply Reggie’s metaphor of an airport to the church?
3. From Thinking We Are the Point to Being Absolutely the Point
 - How would you distinguish the kingdom of God from the church?
 - How would you describe the difference between an “evangelism” strategy and a “blessing” strategy?
4. From Attractional to Incarnational
 - How would you distinguish between an attractional approach and an incarnational approach?
 - In what ways can an attractional church incorporate incarnational principles?

5. From Member Culture to Missionary Culture
 - What contrasts does Reggie draw between a “member culture” and a “missionary culture”?
 - What would shifting more to a missionary culture mean for your church?
6. From Proclamation to Demonstration
 - Do you agree with the author’s assertion that demonstration has eclipsed proclamation as a way of gaining a hearing for the gospel? Why or why not?
7. From Institutional to Organic
 - How do institutional and organic approaches differ?
 - How could you change the conversation in your church toward a more organic orientation?
8. From Reaching and Assimilating to Connecting and Deploying
 - What are the potential dangers of a “reach and assimilate” approach?
 - In what ways is your congregation “connecting and deploying” people?
9. From Worship Services to Service as Worship
 - What are some ways churches can combine these two approaches?
10. From Congregations to Missional Communities
 - What are the essential ingredients of what constitutes a “church”?
 - How do “missional communities” differ from traditional small groups?
11. From There to Here
 - How does the following statement strike you?
“I have been thinking all along about changing the *church*. You are talking about changing the *world*.”

Chapter Four: Changing the Scorecard From Internal To External Focus

“What gets rewarded gets done. . . . A shift in what counts and is counted does not happen automatically. It involves intentional and persistent effort and significant re-education and modeling in your own life and ministry behaviors.”

Reggie uses a *resource allocation model* to describe how the church’s scorecard needs to change. What are your resources in these areas?

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Prayer | 4. Facilities Resources |
| 2. People | 5. Financial Resources |
| 3. Time and Calendar | 6. Technology Resources |

Chapter Five: Missional Shift 2—From Program Development to People Development

“Isn’t the church supposed to be the center of a person’s spiritual experience?” you might be wondering. No, it’s not. Everyday living is where spiritual development is worked out. The program-driven church has created an artificial environment divorced from the rhythms and realities of normal life. Its claims that participation in its consuming activities will result in spiritual growth is preposterous.

1. What are some of the untended consequences of a program orientation to spiritual growth?
2. What is the legitimate role of programs in a church focused on people development?

Fostering a People Development Culture

In discussing the shift from running programs to developing people, Reggie outlines these subshifts.

Subshifts

1. From Standardization to Customization
 - What is your reaction to the following quote?
“People are no longer going to let the church or church leaders provide the template for their spiritual journeys. Postmoderns do not know why they should have to search for God on church time or church real estate.”
 - Why is a mass production, assembly line approach to spiritual formation inadequate?
 - What are some of the advantages of a customized approach to spiritual formation?
2. From Scripting to Shaping
 - How would you apply the author’s illustration of joining a YMCA to a “people development” orientation?
 - What role might life coaching play in authentic spiritual growth?
3. From Delivering to Debriefing
 - How might the process of “debriefing” enhance spiritual development?
 - What are some examples of helping people intentionally unpack their lives?
4. From Didactic to Behavioral
 - What can be the drawbacks of a teacher-dominated, information-focused, curriculum-driven approach to spiritual formation?
 - How can we help people link knowing and doing?

5. From Curriculum-Centered to Life-Centered
 - What is the alternative to getting people through curriculum that is often unrelated to real-life situations?
6. From Growing into Service to Growing through Service
 - Why do we sometimes postpone people's involvement in service until they are "more mature"?
 - In what ways does ministering to others contribute to authentic spiritual formation?
7. From Compartmentalization to Integration
 - In what ways do we sometimes unintentionally reinforce a "sacred-versus-secular" duality?
 - How could we foster a more holistic approach to spirituality that shows up in all sectors of society?
8. From Age Segregation to Age Integration
 - What are the challenges of intergenerational ministry? What are the potential benefits?
 - How can the church help families with the discipleship of their children?

Chapter Six: Changing the Scorecard from Measuring Programs to Helping People Grow

Once again Reggie uses a *resource allocation model* to describe how the church's scorecard needs to change. How do you change your scorecard in each of these areas?

- | | |
|-------------|---------------|
| 1. Prayer | 4. Finances |
| 2. People | 5. Facilities |
| 3. Calendar | 6. Technology |

Getting Started: A Case Study in Conversation

"To change a culture, you have to change the conversation."

Reggie describes the efforts of one church in changing the conversation among its people by asking the following questions in one-on-one interviews:

- 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?

1. Could you envision an approach like this working in your setting? Why or why not?
2. How could you help change the conversation in your church from running programs to growing people?

Chapter Seven: From Church-Based to Kingdom-Based Leadership

In providing an overview of these two types of leadership, Reggie offers the following contrasts:

Church-Based Leadership to Kingdom-Based (30 A.D. Leadership)

FROM:	TO:
Institutional	Organic
Maintenance-oriented	Disruptive, mission-centered, reproductive
Controlling and clergy-dominated	Empowering
Church culture orientation	Community culture orientation

1. What kind of fears can surface from a shift toward kingdom-based leadership?
2. Would you tend to lean more toward a Pauline or Petrine orientation?

Subshifts

1. From Church Job to Kingdom Assignment

“Missional congregational pastors now pastor the community, not just the church.”

- What incremental steps could you take to shift from a church job orientation to more of a kingdom assignment oriented leader?
- How could you best communicate this shift to your congregation and leadership team?

2. From an Institutional Representative to Viral Agent

- What characterizes a leader as a “Viral Agent”?
- What challenges do you face in embracing the role of a Viral Agent?

3. From Director to Producer

“Today’s apostolic producer types can easily be spotted against the landscape of typical directors. Ministry doesn’t collapse around them; it radiates out from them. These leaders create a culture of ministry and leader incubation that multiples everyone’s efforts.”

- Does your current leadership role sometimes feel like a “Director”? If so, in what ways?
 - How are you presently functioning in a “Producer” role? How could this role be strengthened?
4. From Reliving the Past (the Historian) to Rearranging the Future (the Journalist)
- How can you as a leader live “out of the past” but not “in the past”?
 - What helps you keep forward looking?
5. From Train and Deploy to Deploy and Debrief
- What contrasts do you see between the way Jesus trained people for ministry and the traditional method of theological training used today?
 - How does the alternative approach to training leader impact your plans for lifelong learning?
 - How could you implement the “deploy and debrief” approach in training lay leaders?
6. From Position to Personal
- Would those within your sphere of influence view you as a positional or personal leader? Why?
 - In what ways are you seeking to model missional living?

Frequently Asked Questions: Reggie raises the following commonly asked questions regarding the shift from church-based to kingdom-based leadership. Which of these questions are of particular interest to you? Do you feel Reggie provides an adequate answer? What would you add or change about his answers?

- What is the role of the traditional church in the missional movement?
- How will you maintain doctrinal and biblical orthodoxy if you’re all off in your own communities doing your own thing?
- What is the role of clergy in the missional movement?
- How do I earn a living doing what you’re talking about?
- What about my call?

Chapter Eight: Changing the Scorecard from Church-Based to Kingdom-Based Leadership

“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.”

In discussing changes in the leadership scorecard, McNeal focuses on the following four areas:

- Paradigm Issues (how the leader sees the world)
- Microskill Development (competencies the leader needs)
- Resource Management (what the leader has to work with)
- Personal Growth (the leader as a person)

Scorecard Shifts

The author outlines metrics to monitor your progress toward becoming a missional leader. How would these metrics apply in your faith community?

1. Paradigm Issues

“Paradigms are about the way we see things. . . . Whatever you as a leader are looking at is what you are working on. And the way you are looking at it will determine your approach to engaging it.”

2. Microskill Development

As you reflect on the following microskills, list any action steps you want to take to develop them in your own life.

3. Resource Management

How you could reallocate them in moving toward a more missional approach to leadership.

4. Personal Growth

Consider personal development in a missional context.

Conclusion

Reggie highlights the following *changes in the spiritual landscape* we can anticipate as we move forward into a Missional Renaissance.

1. Disinterest in institutional cultural Christianity will accelerate.
2. Churches that thrive will become more externally focused in their ministry agenda and more intentional in developing their people.
3. An explosion of missional communities will occur.
4. Increasing numbers of Jesus followers will live out their missional expression in the context of their family and work environments.
5. Churches and church leaders who understand the missional impulse will sponsor and celebrate these new expressions of “being church.”
6. Many clergy will be able to transition their current ministry assignments into missional expressions.

7. Many clergy will not be able to make this transition in their current church roles. Consequently, they will move into the marketplace for employment in pursuit of their call to be missional leaders.
8. The current dominant affiliations based on doctrinal agreement and denominational polity will be replaced by those of common compassion and life orientation.
9. Spiritual literature will increasingly focus on helping people become more intentional Jesus followers in their natural habitats through home, office, school, and street application of biblical truth.
10. Those who shudder at these developments will likely miss the party. Those who welcome the new work of God will paddle like crazy with all their might to go out and catch the big wave.

Personal Take-Aways

List the major “take aways” from this book which you want to give priority attention to in the weeks to come:

Take Away #1:

Take Away #2:

Take Away #3: