

MISSIO

magazine



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Preparing
individuals to
incarnate &
communicate
the Gospel.





Table of CONTENTS

Why Missio? Why Now?4

7 Ideas for Improving Bible
Engagement in Your Church..... 7

Meet Dr. Kyle Canty..... 10

Living on Mission: A Faculty Reading
List..... 14

The Christotelic Interpretation18

PULPIT: Thriving in Ministry.....21

A Faithful Legacy.....22

News & Notes 23

President: Dr. Frank A. James, III
Executive Editor: Mr. Thomas D. Skinner
Editor: Mr. Thomas R. Cauley



info@biblical.edu/biblical.edu
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Why Missio?

Why Now?

Today's world is changing and moving faster than ever. And while access to information is at our fingertips, many churches are struggling to reach this post-Christian culture. As a seminary, we believe God is calling us to respond boldly. Two important changes in this direction include our move to Philadelphia and changing our name to Missio Seminary.

Why is the seminary moving to Philadelphia?

Our move to Philadelphia is driven by a commitment to follow Jesus into the world. No one can dispute that the city is a diverse and complex setting. Yet, we are convinced that God has called us to expand our unique approach of "doing" theology by preparing men and women to serve the communities where they are planted.

Our former extension site in North Philadelphia (our home since 2010)

has proven to be helpful in connecting the seminary with men and women presently serving the city through effective ministries.

Essentially, the extension site was a first step toward a larger vision of reaching and impacting not only the present generation, but generations to come. Philadelphia has been described as a "millennial magnet," a generation predisposed to mistrust churches and other religious institutions. Our move clarifies an institutional attitude that affirms God's love for the city, proclaims the gospel of Jesus, incarnates his love, and promotes his justice. This is important for reaching those who believe that the church is unnecessary. Our engagement in the city enables us to provide men and women called to serve with practical and theological skills that advance the priorities of Christ's kingdom.

The seminary's new location is located in the Logan Square neighborhood.

This beautiful part of the city is strategically located halfway between City Hall and The Philadelphia Museum of Art. Other nearby cultural institutions include the Rodin Museum, the Barnes Foundation, the Franklin Institute, the Community College of Philadelphia, and the main branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia.

While the new location is a mixture of residential neighborhoods, parks, and dining and cultural establishments, it is also easily accessible from major highways, the Vine St. Expressway, buses, and regional rail. The new location is less than a mile from both 30th Street Station and Suburban Station and will allow students to commute to campus from all over the region. The new location also includes parking. We will have 30 parking spots that will be ours for the entire day and 70 extra spots available in the evenings when we have most of our classes.

Ultimately we want the city of Philadelphia to be a launching pad for Missio to become a major theological influence from New York to Washington, D.C. We are excited to build upon our existing partnerships, as well as establish new relationships with the many organizations that have been making an impact in the city for years.

Why Missio Seminary?

Missio Seminary became the new name for Biblical Theological Seminary October 2018. In light of our upcoming move to the heart of Philadelphia, we believe this is the most strategic time to change our name.

Our name change does not signal a move away from biblical truth. In fact, we are committed more than ever to training ministry lead-

ers who will follow the God of the Bible and teach others to do the same. This commitment is fully consistent with what God formed originally in founding Biblical School of Theology in 1971.

Drs. MacRae and Murray began a seminary that combined rigorous biblical scholarship with a priority on evangelism. It is the merger of biblical depth and skillful, committed Kingdom fieldwork that has formed the DNA of our school. We believe this synthesis remains powerful and is still what the church and our culture desperately need. In pursuit of what we believe God is still calling us to do, we are moving to Philadelphia, and changing our name to Missio Seminary.

Missio is the Latin word for mission. You may recognize it from the Latin phrase *missio dei* or

“mission of God.” As the Father sends the Son into the world, Christians are also sent to the world with the Gospel of Jesus. Missio represents who we are and will help us better tell our story by reinforcing our legacy as one of the leading seminaries of missional theology in the nation. Since 1971 we believe God has called us to be entrusted with taking the gospel to local communities around the world. As Missio Seminary, our resolve to this mission remains the same.

Strong organizations communicate their core values and represent the essence of what they stand for. They build meaning, understanding, and recognition through messaging, experience, and consistent communications.

The Missio Seminary logo is the concise visual expression of our

Lounge & Library





*Lounge Outside Graduate School
of Counseling Offices*

*Main Hallway between
Staff Offices*

position as one of the leading missional seminaries in the world. The logo itself was inspired by the Greek letter “Chi” which looks like an “X.” Chi is the first Greek letter in the title “Christ.” This letter and Christ’s death on the cross lead to the design of early representations of the cross in Church History. The Missio symbol is a contemporary monogram forming both an “M” (for Missio) and the cross (X). Additionally, the two arrows inside the “M” represent pointing to the center of God’s Mission.

The seal includes the new Missio symbol but also includes the Greek phrase from our original seal. The phrase comes from 1 Thessalonians 2:4 and means “entrusted with Gospel.” As in 1971 at the founding of this institution, we believe that we are entrusted with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and commissioned to prepare missional leaders who can live and speak that Gospel for generations to come.



**AUTHOR
FRANK A.
JAMES III,
DPHIL, PHD,
President**





7 Ideas for Improving Bible Engagement in Your Church

How to Encourage a Deeper Experience of Scripture

An older neighbor of ours recently came over to the house. He was carrying a large box. After a little small talk, I welcomed him inside and motioned toward the box. “What’s this?” I asked.

“It’s a box of old Bibles.”

My neighbor had recently retired. He was moving into a smaller home and cleaning out his possessions. These Bibles had been in his family for a few generations. He wasn’t religious. Last year he told me he hadn’t been to church since before he served in Vietnam. He knew I was a pastor and thought maybe I’d want the Bibles. It was a kind gesture.

“You don’t want them?” I asked. “How about your kids. Would they want to keep them in the family?”

“No,” he said. “My wife passed away. My kids aren’t interested in them. They don’t read the Bible, and neither do I. If I throw them away, God might strike me dead or something.”

I almost laughed but realized he wasn’t kidding. He honestly thought God would punish him if he threw away the Bibles. The Bibles stayed with me. So did the conversation. It’s an

extreme example of many people’s contradictory relationship with the Bible: they believe there’s something special about the Good Book, but they seldom, if ever, actually read it.

While Bible ownership and sales remain strong, Bible reading and engagement are down significantly. According to the Institute for Bible Reading, the average household in North America owns four Bibles and the average Christian household has 11 Bibles. Yet every day, 700 people stop reading their Bible for good.

As pastors, what are we to do with people who possess more Bibles than ever but have little interest in reading them? Furthermore, how can we move people beyond rote, check-the-box Bible reading and into practices of deep Scripture engagement?

Beyond Reading

How important is Scripture engagement? Greg Hawkins and Cally Parkinson, in their book *Move*, share their findings from researching spiritual growth in 1,000 churches.

This was their conclusion:

“Nothing has a greater impact on spiritual growth than reflection on Scripture. If churches do only one thing to help people at all levels of spiritual maturity grow in their relationship with Christ, their choice is clear. They would inspire, encourage, and equip their people to read the Bible—specifically, to reflect on Scripture for meaning in their lives. ... The Bible’s power to advance spiritual growth is unrivaled by anything else we’ve discovered.”

But Scripture engagement means more than merely reading the Bible’s words. According to Paul Caminiti, senior director of mobilization with the Institute for Bible Reading, Scripture engagement is about immersing ourselves in the Bible. We were meant to bathe in the Word, to soak in it. He says many people are told to just “pray and read their Bible.” We naively expect people to read their Bibles successfully without direction or guidance. The result, says Caminiti, is that people read the Bible in fragments, out of context, and in isolation. Caminiti suggests that the best way to reverse this shallow engagement is to teach people to read Scripture in larger portions, within its original context, and together in community.

Phil Collins, professor of Christian Educational Ministries at Taylor University, describes Scripture engagement as a process of marinating in and mulling over Scripture in a way that leads to transformative encounters with God. “It’s not for information or guilt or pride,” he says, “but to meet and know God. It is relational.” Collins says that this kind of engagement leads us to delight in God and his ways (Psalm 119).

How Can We Facilitate This Kind of Deeper Engagement?

First, we need to help people focus less on what and more on who. New Testament scholar Scot McKnight teaches that the goal of reading the Bible is not to know our Bible; it is to know the God of the Bible. We must have the proper end in sight: not more information, but a deeper relationship with God.

Second, we must read the Bible on the Bible’s terms, not our own. We do not stand over Scripture and interpret it. Instead, we place ourselves under Scripture and let it interpret us. The Bible has authority over our lives, not the other way around.

Third, we must help people see the book as a narrative compilation and not a reference manual for life. It is a story in which we participate. Glenn Paauw, author of *Saving the Bible from Ourselves*, says that even when people have access to a well-translated Bible they don’t necessarily engage

it well. Snacking on little bits of Scripture is not what God intended. If people see it simply as a spiritual reference manual, says Paauw, it will never inspire them to engage with joy, excitement, and anticipation. But if we help people see the Bible as a grand story in which God invites us to participate, it can inspire and transform.

One fall morning, a few years ago, I looked out the living room window and noticed our neighbor’s tree changing colors.

“Look!” I said to my five-year-old son, putting my finger up to the glass and pointing at the resplendent tree.

He looked and slowly turned back to me with one eyebrow raised.

“What, Daddy?”

“Don’t you see it? It’s beautiful, isn’t it?”

He followed my finger again and then looked back again at me, blankly.

Insistent, I continued: “You don’t think that tree is beautiful with all of those colorful leaves?”

“What tree?”

I realized my son thought I was referring to the small speck of dirt on the window, which was quite close to where my finger pointed. He was looking at the window, not through it.

Many people take this approach to reading the Bible. They focus on the Bible rather than what the Bible reveals. Help people read the Bible in a way that enables them to see the whole world differently.

7 Practices to Foster Scripture Engagement

So, what can we do to foster Scripture engagement in our churches? Here are several practices to try.

1. WRITE OUT SCRIPTURE BY HAND.

Have people write out entire chapters or even books of the Bible. This can be painstaking, but it slows us down to savor each word. I’ve engaged in this process by slowly writing out the book of Matthew. I was forced to focus on each word and phrase, allowing me to discover fresh insights. I could only write out a handful of verses at a time, so it kept me from “speed reading” or skimming the passage. Instead of water skiing on the surface, I went scuba diving in the text.

2. ASK QUESTIONS—EVEN TOUGH ONES.

Read a passage, and then ask people to write out 10-to-15

questions about the passage on a piece of paper. Why did the woman ask that of Jesus? What was running through Abraham's mind when he was walking up the mountain to sacrifice Isaac? Allow people to interact with the text by courageously wrestling with tough questions.

3. PUT YOURSELF IN THE STORY.

Read a narrative passage of Scripture with a group of people. Then, divide the room into quarters and assign people different characters in the story you just read. Ask them to imagine themselves in the story as if it were happening. Then read the story again and have them answer the questions, "If you were that particular person, what would you feel, think, or consider doing?" and, "What would you want God to do for you in that situation?"

4. PRACTICE LECTIO DIVINA

Lectio Divina—"sacred reading"—is a way to prayerfully read a passage of Scripture, slowly and repetitively, inviting the Holy Spirit to reveal truth to us through four movements: reading, pondering/meditating, praying, and living. While this is practiced most often individually, it can be just as powerful with an entire church.

5. READ THE BIBLE COMMUNALLY AND ASK FIVE SIMPLE QUESTIONS.

Gather a group of people together, and have someone read a large chunk of Scripture. Then follow up with questions for interaction. For years our church has given people these five questions to encourage deeper interactions with the text.

- What's going on in the story/passage?
- What excites, inspires, or encourages me about the passage?
- What challenges, jolts, confuses, or even offends me about the passage?
- What does this tell us about the essence of God or the nature of Jesus?
- What will we do with what we just heard/learned in the next seven days?

6. MEMORIZE BIBLE STORIES TOGETHER.

Many of us grew up memorizing verses, but when was the last time you memorized an entire Bible story? Stories grip us, shape us, move us, and inspire us. Gather with a group of people and commit to memory the Parable of the Prodigal Son or the story of Jesus healing Bartimaeus, and then take turns recounting the story to each other.

7. UTILIZE ART AND SCRIPTURE.

Through the centuries, artists have painted beautiful renditions of biblical accounts. Rembrandt's *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, Caravaggio's *The Incredulity of Saint Thomas*, and Eugene Burnand's *The Disciples Peter and John Running to the Sepulchre on the Morning of the Resurrection* are great places to start. For a longer list of resources, visit Art and the Bible at artbible.info. You can also lay out art supplies (colored pencils, markers, paper, paints, canvases, clay), read a passage aloud, and ask people to draw or sculpt the story. Then, invite people to share their creations with others to stimulate conversation about the passage.

There are countless ways to invite people to engage with Scripture together. As pastors, may we model this love, delight, and passion for Scripture, showing others how our own relationship with Christ is deepened by our engagement with the Bible and inviting others to participate in the process with us.



AUTHOR
J.R. BRIGGS,
MA '11, DMIN '20,
Adjunct Professor of
Practical Theology



A portrait of Dr. Kyle Canty, a Black man with short, graying hair, a beard, and glasses. He is wearing a dark blue blazer over a maroon button-down shirt. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with greenery.

meet

Dr. Kyle
Canty

SEND City Missionary/
Church Plant Catalyst -
Philadelphia North
American Mission Board

THOMAS: I appreciate you taking some time to be with us today. I know you wear a lot of hats between your two primary roles, so thank you.

KYLE: Absolutely, I believe in what Missio has been doing. I've enjoyed my time there through my MDiv and DMin programs. It was great.

THOMAS: Why don't we kick this off with an introduction? Can you tell us the current ministry roles you are serving in and what are your primary responsibilities?

KYLE: I started December 1, 2017 working for the North American Mission Board (NAMB) as the Send City Missionary for Philadelphia. My primary role is to acquire partners and church planters for the city. But I also work to build support from existing churches that can send out new planters. In a sense, I am the face of Philadelphia for NAMB and a collective of SBC churches. Some of the things that I'm responsible for are: recruiting, training, and resourcing planters who are coming into the city. The scope of the territory called SEND Philly extends out 25 miles from center city Philadelphia. I am also an assistant pastor at Great Commission church in the West Oak Lane section of Philadelphia under our senior pastor, Dr. Larry Anderson. I've been there since 2000, but in my current role about 13 years.

THOMAS: So let's talk city. You mentioned that you are the Send City Missionary for Philadelphia for the NAMB of the SBC. What are some of the biggest challenges facing church leaders in Philly and where are the uncharted opportunities?

KYLE: From my perspective, when I think about Philadelphia and the neighborhoods that are changing, either by way of gentrification or simply culturally, one of the biggest challenges I see with church leaders is the need to be creative. There is a need to think outside the box when reaching a demographic or a people group that is new. The world is coming to Philly, and pastors need to be prepared to increase their Cultural IQ, and by that I mean thinking about how to engage with people where they are in life, how to understand the uniqueness in their community, and how to think strategically about how to reach a community that's changing and will continue to change. And all of this needs to be done in a way that doesn't water-down the gospel.

THOMAS: What are two areas in the city that stand out as "ripe for harvest"?

KYLE: So South Philly for sure, but also Northern Liberties. When I look at these two areas of Philly I see opportunities for someone to come in and do community exegesis, to learn the culture, and specifically ask the question, "how can I connect with this group of people incarnationally so that I can communicate the truth of the gospel?"

THOMAS: It sounds like you're saying that the greatest challenge is also the greatest opportunity. It seems like what a lot of pastors are struggling with is also a great opportunity for growth.

KYLE: Exactly. The northeast corridor of the United States and Philadelphia in particular are very hard to reach, so you need much more intentionality and perseverance to plant a church in this area. But you also need to have the attitude of a learner -- someone who knows it's going to take time, and who understands that in Philly you're an outsider until you're welcomed in. And eventually you'll be let in, but you've got to be willing to take that initial difficulty knowing that God has truly called you to this city.

THOMAS: Just following that train of thought, when you look at churches who are doing it right, what are some of the effective ways they're doing discipleship?

KYLE: First, these churches understand their discipleship has to occur outside the "four walls" of the church. It has to be life-on-life. The days are gone when you could really depend on people coming to Sunday school or a Wednesday night service. You have to create new entry points, vestibules for discipleship to happen. This can include eating

together, fellowshiping together, and just creating opportunities for people to connect. It's also important to understand that sometimes you may not get to give a gospel message on the first or even second time you get together with someone. You've got to engage them in life, understanding that eventually, if a relationship is built, you will get an opportunity to share the gospel with them and begin discipling them. So, I think churches that are doing discipleship well are those that understand that it can happen any day of the week, between families, between couples and friends, and it often happens when people share their lives together.

THOMAS: So you're saying that successful discipleship is opening your life up to others by getting involved with the messiness of their lives and inviting them to get involved in the messiness of your life. Those who are really doing this successfully are those getting outside of their churches and into their communities.

KYLE: Exactly, it's John 1:14. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We see Jesus spending the majority of his time in communities, in public places, with people – many of whom had bad reputations. So this model of discipleship isn't anything new, it's what we see in Jesus' life.

THOMAS: Let's ask the big question then. What does it mean to plant a church that functions missionally?

KYLE: Well, I think that you have to start with exegeting the community. Start by learning about the local businesses, people groups and ethnicities, and perhaps taking into account census information. It's important to look at housing values, income values, and even looking at the neighborhoods around the community you're planting in. It

means asking questions of people in the community, learning from them, and building relationships with them. All of this is a part of the process of getting to know the community where God has called you. Along with this is prayer. I would begin prayer walking and looking for opportunities to serve people. I think this has to be the foundation of planting a church that is missionally driven. Now, none of this trumps the gospel, but it does help you to apply it.

THOMAS: So this is the preparatory work that is done, but what about once the church is established, what goes into creating a culture that is missional within the people who are a part of the church?

KYLE: Certainly making sure that the core team is on the same page because the pastor/planter can't do it all. The planter needs the core team to share the larger vision for engaging the community. A key responsibility of the planter is leadership development — making sure that leaders are connected to the reality of the 'harvest field' that is their community.

THOMAS: Let me pick up on something you said. I think it is easy for churches once they are established to become inwardly focused; how can pastors ensure that their churches remain outwardly focused?

KYLE: Accountability. I think that pastors need to be around other men and women who are outwardly focused. Because they will be examples of what it means to be the "sent people" of Christ. And they will be able to offer accountability when you might become too attractional and less incarnational. One of the best ways that this can happen is through pastoral cohorts where a group of pastors get together to

sharpen each other and hold each other accountable to their goals. But this is a great question because it is very easy to become inward-focused once you start to grow and things become more established in your church.

THOMAS: If I can summarize, it sounds like you're saying there are three things churches can do, whether they are established or just starting a plant, to commit to being missional:

1. Establish a missional vision in your heart and your core team's heart so that it can be pursued and shared with people as they come to Christ.
2. Surround yourself with like-minded pastors who are going to be able to hold you accountable.
3. As you develop the programs and ministries of the church make it a habit of doing them in the community or in people's homes.

KYLE: Yes, absolutely.

THOMAS: Kyle what is one of the main reasons that church plants fail, and what advice could you give to new planters to avoid it?

KYLE: I see church plants fail because of unrealistic expectations. Many pastors expect churches to grow in Philadelphia at the same rate that they might grow in other areas of the country or world. I've seen the discouragement many pastors face when they don't experience the rapid growth they were expecting. Sustainability is another reason. Some pastors don't do the preparatory work they need, they move too fast, and the plant never has the foundation it needs to establish it for the long haul. Other churches just flat out don't make the gospel a priority. Many churches think that having the right lighting, the newest screens, the best location, the most talented

musicians, etc. will make them successful, and while those things are certainly great, they aren't the gospel. If the gospel isn't central then the church will wither and die. So if new planters want to avoid failure, I'd give three pieces of advice: they need accountability and fellowship from other pastors, they need to make sure they're not neglecting their families, and they need to make sure that they themselves are continuing to be poured into so that they can stay spiritually healthy.

THOMAS: Ok, last question. I know you just graduated last year with your DMin. Congrats on that milestone, but it was 2011 when you graduated with your MDiv. There was a period of time after graduating with your masters that you entered into ministry and you formally weren't learning. So what tools do you think are the most important for MDiv grads to continue using so they can stay sharp and continually learn?

KYLE: Well, I am an avid reader. I'm always reading something, so I'd say making sure that you continue reading, especially on topics that are trending within ministry because it's so easy to get stale. I know for me, this helps me to be sharp in the way I communicate. And along with reading, I'd say listening to podcasts and attending seminars or conferences are important, too. Also, it's important to stay engaged with the public happenings around you, with culture, and with trends. These are ways to continue staying sharp.

THOMAS: Kyle, I really appreciate all of your answers, and especially for the time that you've given me. It's been a pleasure, and I think the audience that will be reading our conversation will be encouraged by the things you've said. Thank you.

KYLE: You're welcome. This was a pleasure, and I appreciate the opportunity to share all that God is doing in my life.



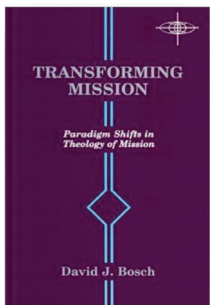
Living on Mission: *a faculty reading list*



SOME RECOMMENDATIONS FROM R. TODD MANGUM, PHD

Clemens Professor of
Missional Theology

DAVID BOSCH, *TRANSFORMING MISSION: PARADIGM SHIFTS IN THEOLOGY OF MISSION*. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991).



If you have never read David Bosch's *Transforming Mission*, why not take this holiday season to pick it up and read it? It is the book that probably is most to be credited

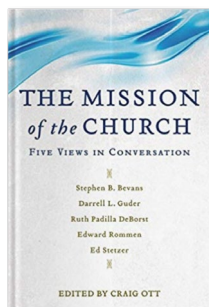
with bringing the "missional turn" to the English-speaking world. Many a self-described missional theologian testifies to being first brought to recognize the missional character of God by this book.

Traditional evangelicals (like me when I read it) will be distracted, occasionally, by Bosch's giving more credence

than necessary at times to higher critical biblical theories. Nevertheless, in the end, the case Bosch makes for seeing and understanding the missional character of God is a case he makes through biblical exegesis and biblical theology. And, once that point is established, the far-reaching implications of missional theology unfold naturally from there.

Bosch was a South African missionary, one who once supported apartheid. He had the scales fall off his eyes by discerning God's missional character in Scripture and by what he found "on the ground" practicing mission (testifying for Christ, forwarding Kingdom goals). No wonder then that Bosch's work has proven so influential on missional thinking and missional ministry – and rightly so.

CRAIG OTT, ED., *THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH: FIVE VIEWS IN CONVERSATION* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016).



If you are looking to get up-to-date fast on what is "the cutting edge" of "the missional conversation," this is the book to read. "Five views" are presented, but (in good missional style), the authors

engage one another conversationally and dialogically, rather than competitively or combatively.

One might notice right away that the conversation centers around the mission of the church, whereas we at Missio have tried hard to clarify that it is the mission of God that is key to missional theology. (God's Kingdom mission includes the church as key instrument, but it is the Kingdom, rather than the church, that forms the telos of God's purposes.) Still, if this focus on the church is misdirected, that is a fault of the how the "missional con-

versation" has in fact developed in North America; this book is accurately reflecting, then, the current stage of that conversation.

It is worth noting who the five representatives are. Steven Bevans is Catholic (though a very evangelical-ish one, as is well known by those familiar with him or his works); and Edward Rommen is Eastern Orthodox (a former evangelical Protestant, actually). From an evangelical perspective, it can feel like a stretch to include these two views (especially Rommen's) in a "missional conversation"; but they both bring substance and nuance to the question of what, exactly, is the mission of the church. Bevans sounds like a chastened Catholic – chastened, that is, by recognition of the indecorous history of Christendom and Catholic colonialism, which dominated western culture for centuries but has for good reason fallen into disfavor over the last century. Rommen is less "chastened," and his awareness that he represents a minority view gives his writing at times a bit of a defensive tone. I was pleased to see Ruth Padilla DeBorst included in this volume as well, though both the editor (Ott) and DeBorst herself note that her being invited seemed conspicuously designed to check off "diversity blocks – she is the only woman, the only person of color, the only non-American. Still, it was important for her contribution to be made; she represents the liberationist/social-justice wing of the missional conversation that is often overlooked. That leaves the two perspectives that have formed the heart of the discussion for most in the dominant culture in the Western world: Darrell Guder (mainline, Barthian theologian) and Ed Stetzer (evangelical, Southern Baptist, church planter, and church growth researcher).

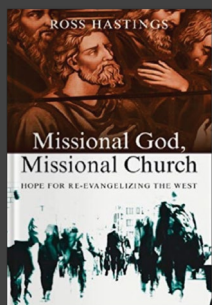
I will let you read the book to see some of the rationales and biblical cases presented. It is a book that seeks to address, "so what is the purpose of the



church?" from a missional perspective (from five missional perspectives, to be exact). It does not give a history of the missional conversation. (For that, read a book like *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation* by Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J Zscheile [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011]). Rather, *The Mission of the Church* takes you directly into where "the missional conversation" is right now – and in a readable way that, I guarantee, will stimulate your thinking even when you are not in complete agreement with a particular viewpoint being forwarded.

ROSS HASTINGS, *MISSIONAL GOD, MISSIONAL CHURCH: HOPE FOR RE-EVANGELIZING THE WEST*.

Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2012.



Hastings teaches "Trinitarian theology" at Regent College in Vancouver, which tips off the reader to his broaching missional theology at the right place (the Trinitarian nature and character of God, rather than with "church growth concerns" or something). Written in 2012, and from a thoroughly evangelical perspective (in the conservative, Bible-believing theological sense),

this volume may be the most well-nuanced presentation of missional theology to date. He is able to work out some of the kinks and growing pains of the missional movement, and forward a compelling case for a distinctive missional theology that accentuates the extending-and-sending character of God, then drawing implications for life and ministry. Thoroughly biblical as well as nuanced theologically (both philosophically and historically), Hastings is able to articulate how the missional character of God is clearly evidenced from the 1st century (when Jesus, God-in-the-flesh, walked the earth and articulated and embodied God's mission) till now.

Among other aspects of notable value, this book is just encouraging to read. On p. 31, he begins a section that I have never forgotten and that has nuanced my own presentation of missional theology ever since. The section is titled, "Defiant Optimism." He observes that we are called to join in mission with a God who is in control, on a mission that will ultimately succeed however grave the apparent setbacks at the moment. After all, the church was never smaller, more discouraged, more dysfunctional, than two days after Jesus was crucified . . . and then the risen Lord appeared, and that changed everything! We serve the same risen Lord today – and He

still shows up even when the church is at its lowest and most discouraged, most persecuted, most dysfunctional. If God is on mission and we accept His invitation to join Him in that mission (note: not the other way around!), we join a cause that cannot help but be characterized by "defiant optimism"; in fact, we must insist on a positive long view, no matter how dire the current challenges, obstacles, or discouragements.

This is an academic treatise bolstered by solid research and careful reasoning. Darrell Johnson calls it a "game changer," and J. I. Packer suggests it is an "expository tour de force" that "integrates all the main themes of half a century's missiological reflection." And yet, it bears a pastoral quality, too. The reader is genuinely encouraged, personally and spiritually, by reading it.

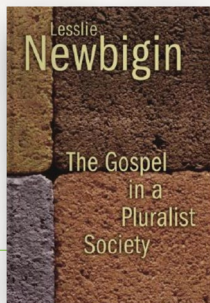
Room for some more missional reading material? I'll close this out with a little chart. Books in the left column are the standard, "everybody knows about and says read these" missional books; with the column on the right consisting of the lesser known, often overlooked, but just as good or better missional books on the same or similar subject matter. [See page 16.](#)

scan this code to save the reading chart:



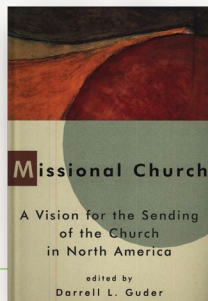
reading recommendations

EVERYBODY KNOWS ABOUT AND SAYS TO READ :



Lesslie Newbigin, The Gospel in a Pluralist Society.

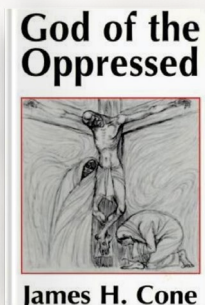
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989.



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

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

If Bosch was the one to introduce the English speaking world to missional theology, and Newbigin the one to introduce the missional conversation to the Western world, Guder may be the one to credit for bringing the missional conversation explicitly to the U.S.



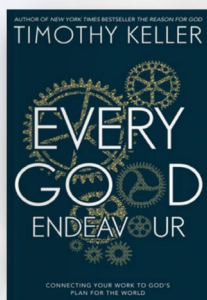
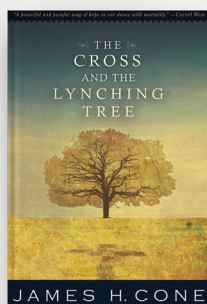
James Cone, God of the Oppressed

Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1975; or,

The Cross and the Lynching Tree

Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2011.

What is Cone, father of "black liberation theology," doing on a reading list of missional theology? It's hard to beat Cone's framing – which grabs the reader by the throat and does not let go – for understanding God's heart for justice, His anger at injustice, and the gap between where we are and where we need to be in terms of social justice and racial reconciliation – and how and why the church has fallen short, when it is we who should be leading the way. . . .



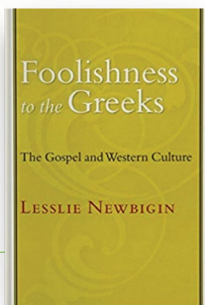
Tim Keller, Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work

New York: Dutton, 2012.

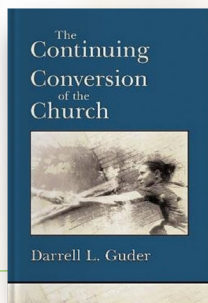
Everybody knows Tim Keller – why this book is in "column 1" – though not everyone may know this book, which may represent Keller's "most missional" work [that's right; even more than Center Church [!], and a book that does what MOST missional books do not: viz. explain how business persons [not just church people or vocational ministry people] are, and should be recognized as being, a vital part of God's mission.

FROM R. TODD MANGUM, PHD
Clemens Professor of Missional Theology

BUT DON'T OVERLOOK:

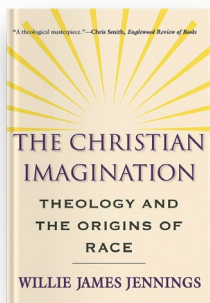


Lesslie Newbigin, Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1986; **The Open Secret An Introduction to the Theology of Mission.** Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978; or **Proper Confidence: Faith, Doubt, and Certainty in Christian Discipleship.** Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.



Darrell Guder, The Continuing Conversion of the Church. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.

I actually think this is Guder's best, most compelling, work – with some of the most practical ramifications for overcoming reductionist conceptualizations of the gospel in pursuit of a more robust understanding of the mission of the church, as actually given by God.

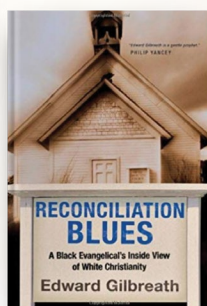


Willie James Jennings, The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race New Haven, CT: Yale, 2010.

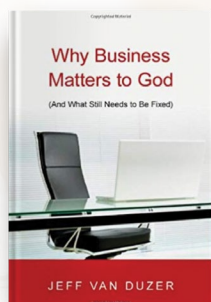
Simply put, this is the best book on theology and race I have ever read.

Edward Gilbreath, Reconciliation Blues: A Black Evangelical's Inside View of White Christianity

Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2006.



Written not just as theoretical exploration of racial reconciliation issues, but as one who has participated – with real skin in the game, as it were; Gilbreath has pursued Kingdom work, including racial reconciliation work, as a minority in the dominate culture [i.e., the “white world”]. His insights and observations are poignant, and sometimes heart-breaking. I would say his perspective is “unique,” but he is unique in publishing what, it turns out, is reported as a common set of experiences among minority people – Christian minority people – trying to forward Kingdom goals (or even just function, just live life) in a dominant culture world. Anyone serious about wanting “racial reconciliation” should read this book – which tells the truth in the gentlest way some of these hard truths could be expressed.



Jeff Van Duzer, Why Business Matters to God

Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2010.

Unfortunately, no one has heard of Jeff Van Duzer – but let's change that, once you have had a chance to read this book, too. This may be the best book written to date on how business [including business ownership and business management] can and should be among the most effective means of forwarding Kingdom goals, and certainly the most common among 99% of people in church on Sunday, who are sitting in the pews rather than speaking from the platform.



The Christotelic *Interpretation*

(At Missio Seminary, the interpretation of the Bible remains a central concern. One of the approaches we teach is what we call “Christotelic interpretation.” In a nutshell, Christotelic interpretation insists that honest, contextual reading of the Bible is essential to the discovery of its life-giving truth. The following is a brief example of Christotelic interpretation.)

Some years ago, a nationally known church celebrated the anniversary of its founding using the phrase, “Your Faithfulness to All Generations.”

The words come directly from Psalm 89:1 and the sentiment is of course true. The psalm begins with these couplets:

¹ I will sing of your steadfast love, O LORD, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.

² I declare that your steadfast love is established forever; your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.

Those with a more industrious bent, might read further and discover that the psalmist is not talking about God’s faithfulness abstractly (as a theological truth) or even generally toward all his creatures or people, but rather very specifically toward David and his kingly line. But surely who would quibble about extending God’s faithfulness promised to David to all who trust God, including this church?

Nevertheless, the psalmist’s intent becomes ever clearer as he unfolds his understanding of God’s promises to David in the next 35 verses. As a fitting climax, he recounts God’s unalterable oaths regarding David’s eternal throne:

³⁵ Once and for all I have sworn by my holiness; I will not lie to David.

³⁶ His line shall continue forever, and his throne endure before me like the sun.

³⁷ It shall be established forever like the moon, an enduring witness in the skies.”

As if reveling in the assurance given, the psalmist instructs the performer and perhaps the listener/reader with the notation, “Selah,” likely signaling a musical interlude for reflection on the lyrics just recited.

But then something goes horribly wrong and the true purpose of the psalmist is revealed:

³⁸ But now you have spurned and rejected him; you are full of wrath against your anointed.

³⁹ You have renounced the covenant with your servant; you have defiled his crown in the dust.

Say what?! What happened to the unshakeable promises of the prior verses? You mean God isn't faithful after all? And since the last verse of the psalm is simply the concluding benediction of the third book of the Psalter (compare the endings of the other books of the Psalter: 41:13, 76:18-20, 106:48, and all of Ps 150), the charge against God's character goes unchallenged and rebutted! As a human composition, the psalm gives every indication of being a meticulously crafted set-up all along. The dominant tone of the first 37 verses was irony not doxology! The design of the psalmist—from the beginning—was precisely to raise questions about God's character! These observations go so much against the grain that the average evangelical reader must strain to see them. Indeed, it is much easier to chop the psalm up and to use the pieces we like than to follow the carefully worked out intention of the writer. So what should we do with such psalms (see Psalm 44 and 88 for some other examples), once we have actually read them carefully and honestly?

The question becomes even more insistent and profound, if we factor into the picture the intentions of the Divine author: why would God want such self-accusatory psalms in his psalter? If the purpose of the human writer seem to be questionable, God's purposes seem to be mystifying!

One possible interpretive strategy is to take refuge in the genre of the Psalter itself. The Psalms, we might say, are emotive literature meant to guide and comfort weak and emotional beings like ourselves. God (and perhaps the inspired psalmist himself) was taking a pastoral tact by teaching us that it is okay to be real with God in our disappointments (though this is never so much as hinted at in Psalm 89 itself).

There is some wisdom here but it can't take us all the way. For one, we don't take this tact with the Psalms in general; we turn to them to find edifying truth. This move seems to be little more than an expediency in the face of a challenging text. More to the point, there are a host of Psalms of Lament that accomplish this pastoral move better, as they walk us through the stages of complaint and grief and bring us back to faith and even praise. This psalm in contrast brings us to question God himself and abandons us there. How long are we allowed to wallow in God's (apparent?) unfaithfulness?

But more to the point: this psalm is not about personal disappointments at all. Rather the psalmist is pointing out a major structural problem in the history of God's great covenantal promises: the seemingly unconditional promises God made to David have not been kept (see 2 Sam 7:12-29). And in the time this psalmist wrote (very likely the exilic or post-exilic period), there was no prospect in sight that they could ever be kept. The royal family was exiled in Babylonia and Persia and under the watchful eyes of foreign powers.

So the question persists: why is such a psalm in the Bible and what are we supposed to do with it? Do we just cherry-pick some of the verses we like and ignore the rest (like the church mentioned above)?

What if we were to commit ourselves to absolute honesty in reading it and yet hold on to the supreme wisdom of God in giving it? What if God specifically ordained this un-rebutted charge against his character to be leveled in ca. 500 B.C., so that His later actions and real character might be set in brilliant relief in A.D. 30?

For the Christian reader, how would such honesty before the text play out? Well, it should be second nature to Christians to recognize that God finally, yet decisively, rebutted the charge against his character in the person of his Son, Jesus Christ, David's greater descendant. In the resurrection and ascension of the Messiah, every ironic word of the first 37 verses of the psalm was proven sincere, while the accusatory words of the rest were exposed as false! But we must resist the temptation to label this psalm "Messianic." The psalm makes not glorious promises; it simply frames a problem to which Jesus Christ proves to be the solution.

Moreover, if we continue to take seriously the psalmist's brutal and unrelenting framing of the problem, we are put in a position to grapple with something much more profound. Not only is the psalmist not given to see the solution but he has hardly begun to understand the depth of the problem itself.

Consider this: the psalmist never factors in David's sins! (Not to mention the sordid history of Solomon and the rest of the Davidic line—recall all of these in connection with the teaching in Num. 15:30-31 about sins “with a high-hand.”) He seems only focused on God's failure to keep His promises. For the psalmist, it's a fairly simple scenario: God has unconditionally promised David an eternal kingdom. On that understanding, any failure in fulfillment is God's alone. His only question is, “why hasn't God proven faithful and good to his word?” For him, it appears that the only divine attribute necessary for making and carrying out an unconditional covenant is God's sovereign power.

He is blind to the deeper problem, the latent moral question: How can a good God promise an eternal kingdom to a royal line capable of lying, vindictiveness, injustices, adultery, and murder? What an unending and horrific dystopia that would be!

Clearly, though the psalmist does not realize it, God's goodness and faithfulness are implicated—already on trial—at the beginning, when God proposes the covenant. If such a covenant is going to meet conditions consistent with God's goodness and faithfulness,

the covenant maker must be pre-determined to meet the conditions no matter what. In other words, these “sure mercies of David” (Isa. 55:3 KJV), demand God's involvement upfront in imaginably costly ways.

But the psalmist can't go there. Indeed his frame-of-reference, his context in the story, almost guarantees a blindness toward it. How could he know? God reveals the cost of his covenant love and grace only at his personal entrance into and identification with David's family! But we, reading the Psalm in the light of God's rebuttal, can hardly avoid gazing on the costly basis of David's covenant head on: the Royal Son in whom God was well pleased, hanging on a cursed cross.

Thus, reading Psalm 89 carefully and honestly, not sugar coating it or chopping it up, lays bare two problems implicit in the story of God's promise to the House of David: not only “how can it be kept?” but also “how could it be made in the first place?” The crucified and risen Messiah turns out to be the solution to both problems. He is both the basis and the fulfillment of God's gracious promise! “Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!” (2 Corinthians 9:15).

This way of approaching Psalm 89 exemplifies what we call a Christotelic reading of Scripture. The advantages of this approach are also its necessary traits:

- Carefully **LISTENING** to each human author we encounter in the Bible and embracing what we find with honesty and candor, without anxiety or imposing conclusions for which we might be more comfortable.
- **OFFERING** what we discover to the God who inspired the human author and who finally revealed Himself most fully and intimately in Jesus.
- **ALLOWING** the interplay between the message of each human author and the ultimate message of God to move us from honest exegesis to heart-felt and full-throated doxology.



AUTHOR
PROFESSOR
STEPHEN S.
TAYLOR,
ABD



In September 2018 Missio Seminary (formerly Biblical Theological Seminary) received a \$976,616 grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. Thriving in Ministry initiative to launch the Program for Urban Leaders and Pastors in Transition (PULPIT). PULPIT is a monumental program for Missio Seminary and will equip urban pastors in Philadelphia and beyond with effective strategies to thrive personally and professionally. The program will involve expert teaching/training, small group learning, multi-generational cohort-based peer groups, and individual activities.

Lilly Endowment's Thriving in Ministry initiative supports a variety of religious organizations across the nation as they create or strengthen

is in a great position to communicate the gospel, teach Christ more clearly and to strengthen, equip, and support urban pastors in the Philadelphia region leading to healthier churches and more effective cooperation among the pastoral leaders in the city. We are humbled and honored to have receive a Lilly Endowment Thriving in Ministry grant." Dr. Lee added, "I am heartbroken by the pervasive lack of spiritual health, isolation, and attrition currently afflicting those tasked with giving spiritual leadership in the church and in our neighborhoods. Pastors need strengthening, mentoring, and mutual encouragement in community. But I am also thankful for this opportunity to work together

experienced colleagues, they are able to negotiate the challenges of ministry and their leadership thrives. These promising programs, including PULPIT, will help pastors develop these kinds of relationships, especially when they are in the midst of significant professional transitions."

Lilly Endowment Inc. is an Indianapolis-based private philanthropic foundation created in 1937 by three members of the Lilly family - J.K. Lilly Sr. and sons Eli and J.K. Jr. - through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly & Company. While those gifts remain the financial bedrock of the

PULPIT: *thriving in ministry*

programs that help pastors build relationships with experienced clergy who can serve as mentors through key leadership challenges in congregational ministry. Lilly Endowment awarded almost \$70 million in grants to 78 organizations, Missio Seminary being one.

Dr. Taunya Tinsley, director of the Graduate School of Counseling, Dr. Kyuboem Lee, director of the Doctor of Ministry Program, and Rev. Paul Zazzo, director of Church and Alumni Relations, will lead PULPIT. The program will implement research and best practices found in successful NFL life transition programs (some of which Dr. Tinsley has assisted to develop).

Dr. Tinsley said, "Missio Seminary

er with friends in ministry to help build such a community of spiritual caregivers and kingdom servants in Philadelphia, that will, we pray, make a deep and lasting impact on the work of missio dei here."

Thriving in Ministry is part of Lilly Endowment's grantmaking to strengthen pastoral leadership in Christian congregations in the United States. This has been a grantmaking priority at Lilly Endowment for nearly 25 years.

"Leading a congregation today is multi-faceted and exceptionally demanding," said Christopher L. Coble, Lilly Endowment's vice president for religion. "When pastors have opportunities to build meaningful relationships with

Endowment, the Endowment is a separate entity from the company, with a distinct governing board, staff and location. In keeping with the founders' wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of community development, education and religion. The Endowment maintains a special commitment to its hometown, Indianapolis, and its home state Indiana. Its grantmaking in religion focuses on supporting efforts to strengthen the leadership and vitality of Christian congregations throughout the country and to increase the public's understanding of the role of religion in public life.

a faithful legacy

We are always grateful when alumni support the seminary and refer potential students. Steve Petrie, MDiv, graduated from Biblical Seminary in 1984 and has faithfully been supporting the seminary since 1985.

After graduation Steve immediately realized the value of his BTS education when he accepted a position as an editor and writer for a publisher of Sunday school curricula. Steve said that his BTS education was “tested and proven” every day on the job and he is grateful for the academic rigor provided by Dr. MacRae, Dr. Newman, and his other professors.

Steve recently decided to make Missio Seminary a beneficiary in his estate plan. He thinks that the move to Philadelphia is “a bold, visionary step – much like the giant step the founders took nearly a half-century ago.” And when we asked Steve why he supports the seminary he responded “Educating servant-leaders for the church is always a smart, strategic investment in Christ’s kingdom.” Steve also said “When you plan your legacy giving, you want to feel confident that the organizations you choose will stay on message and on mission long into the future. Missio has demonstrated an enduring commitment to its founding principles – biblical orthodoxy and the proclamation of the Gospel.”

Missio Seminary is grateful to Steve for his generous annual support and for including Missio in his estate plans. Over the years, estate gifts have had a significant impact on the financial health of the seminary. These faithful partnerships allow us to train missional leaders who will follow Jesus into the world.

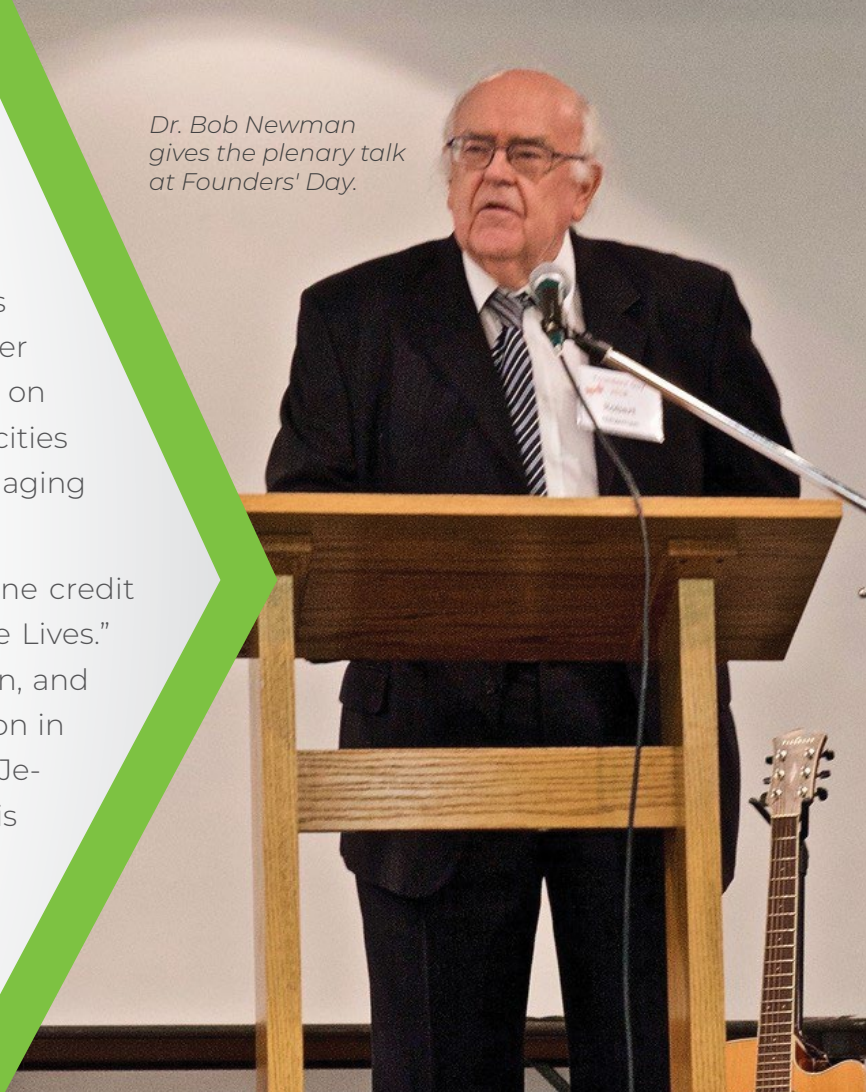


news & notes

Missio held its first Missiology class. This course, taught by Dr. Kyuboem Lee, instructed students to think and practice missionary living in an ever increasing secular and global context. It focused on reaching men and women from diverse ethnicities and languages with specific preparation on engaging these people with creativity and wisdom.

On October 13, Dr. Shannon Lamb taught a one credit hour seminary course on "Teaching to Change Lives." The church tends to over-utilize lecture, sermon, and other podium-centered styles of communication in the development of Christ followers. In contrast, Jesus' ministry engaged people's whole lives. This course challenged students to apply both Jesus' model and educational theories to the context of ministry to foster more active and transformative learning.

Dr. Bob Newman gives the plenary talk at Founders' Day.



Founders' Day was held on October 6. It was a wonderful day celebrating the history of Missio Seminary, hearing from founding faculty member Dr. Bob Newman, engaging with classmates and friends, and looking toward the future. Thank you so much for everyone who attended!

Alumni panel representing graduates from every decade of the seminary's existence.



Today's world is changing and moving faster than ever. Access and acceleration are at our fingertips, but many churches are struggling to reach this post-Christian culture. Yet, the world still needs the hope, healing, and love of Jesus more than ever. While our faith and instruction remains founded on the truths of the historic gospel of Jesus, we're re-imagining seminary to prepare leaders to face the challenges of today's world. Rather than retreat, we humbly engage our neighbors in the spheres of government, social services, public education, non-profit, and other faith traditions.

following Jesus into the world

