What Game Are We Playing?
August, 2014
The Gathering - Dallas
Tennis Anyone?
Church and Culture

Missionary Context – Nepal

Old South Presbyterian – 1742

First Presbyterian – Honolulu

Gambell Presbyterian – Alaska

First Presbyterian Church – Greenville, SC
"At the start of the twenty-first century, the church in North America finds itself in a very different place than it used to be. Fifty years ago, the church enjoyed a privileged place in our culture. Many people went to church. The social pressure encouraged 'good' people to belong to a church. People respected the church. The culture listened to the church. Politicians and government officials wanted the church on their side. The church was very much at the center of public life. Church life was booming. That world no longer exists."
Rip Van Winkle

The church is like Rip Van Winkle waking up from a twenty-year nap. We are living in the same country, but it is a completely different world. We don't recognize it, and we're not sure what to do about it.” (Clark Cowden, San Diego Presbytery)
Loren Mead - 1994

“Churches do not work the way they used to.” (Transforming Congregations for the Future, vii)

“The storm is so serious, I believe, that it marks the end of ‘business as usual’ for the churches and marks a need for us to begin again building church from the ground up.” (Transforming, ix)
What is the Local Church?
Ask the Right Question
Church Options of Our Lifetime

Christendom Congregations
Parish-Based, Denominationally Loyal

Attractional Church
Competition, Best Programs
Full Service, 24/7

Missional Church
1) Christendom Congregations

We have not always been in a Christendom context.

They fit best in Settled Areas and Settled Times.

Presbyterianism was quite evangelistic and revivalistic in the 19th Century.

Home Mission was planting churches westward.

Home Missions effectively ended 1950s.
Peak in the 1950s

Largest Church Attendance and Largest Church Membership of Any Decade in American Church History
Christendom Congregations

Shared Worldview

Institutional Delivery System - Uniformity

Ecology of How Faith Was Formed
(Coalter, Mulder, Weeks)
Christendom Congregations

Natural Relationships with Culture
Prayer in the Public Schools
“In God We Trust” get on currency
Elected Officials Had Churches
Eisenhower was Presbyterian
Christendom Congregations

Very Few Mega-Churches (2000 in worship)
Very Few Associate Pastors
Church was Parish-Based – Very Local

Sunday Morning – Sunday Night
Wednesday Prayer Meetings

Pastor-Preacher
Private Chaplain Model
Preaching for Inspiration more than Formation
Idlewild Presbyterian, Memphis
Christendom Congregations

Loyalty to Place
A Few Cathedral Congregations
Church Needs to Look Like a Church
Fellowship Halls Emerge in the 1950s
Christian Education Buildings
Programmatic Issues Emerge in 1950s
Growth Occurs through Mobility and BB
Wearing Your Sunday Best
Builder Generation Stability - Giving
The Challenge of the 60s

1) Anti-Institutional
2) Rebellious Against Power
3) Sexual Revolution
4) Rock and Roll
5) Dominance of Television
6) Unpopular War in Viet Nam
7) Race Blind Spot
8) Gender Blind Spot
9) Liberalism Published Popularly
Even Rebellious Hair!
Parachurch Growth

- Young Life
- Campus Crusade
- Navigators
- InterVarsity
- Billy Graham Association
- Jesus People
- Incarnational Approach
Consumerism Goes to Church

70s, 80s, and 90s brought church change
Parachurch Influence
New Movements – Calvary Chapel, Willow Creek, Saddleback
Boomers were returning to church
They wanted something different
Dockers Generation Wanted to Worship in Comfort
Classic Consumerism
Have It Your Way!
Boomers Came Back
Attractional Church

1) Great Worship
2) Great Preaching
3) Great Personality
4) Great Building
5) Great Program
6) Great Management
7) Great Staff
Attractional Presbyterians
Attractional Congregations

1) Drive past 7 churches to get to the best.
2) Big Pressure on the Preaching Pastor
3) Pressure to Have Something for Everyone
4) Lots of Management Issues
5) Vision/Mission Focus and Refocus
6) Great run in 1980s and 1990s
7) Aimed at Baby Boomer Culture
8) Big High School and Big Universities
Attractional Evaluation

1) Unconscious Wedding with Consumerism
2) Attractive Fit With the Culture
3) The Smell of a Church Basement
4) Clean and Sparkling Rest Rooms?
5) Nice Nurseries?
6) Cool Youth Ministry?
Funeral Home Fans or Air-Conditioning?
Attractional By-Products

1) High Pressure on Preacher/Pastor
2) Need Entrepreneurial Skill
3) Worship Wars – Music and Culture
4) Consultant Culture – Schaller, Easum, etc
5) Total Make-Over Mindset
6) Build It and They Will Come Hopes
Why Can’t We Sing the Old Songs?

1) Church Musicians – Isaac Watts
2) Grandmother – Fanny Crosby
3) Baby Boomers – Seek Ye First
4) Gen X - Newsboys
Hybrids

Christendom-Attractional

Builder-Boomer

Private Chaplain Plus Great Leader
Can the West Be Converted?
Lesslie Newbigin
Missiological Encounter

Newbigin Thesis

Sending------------------------Receiving
Culture                      Culture
Newbigin

Create a Missionary Encounter Between Congregation and Community

Retain Theological Tradition

Learn a Language
Learn a Culture
Learn the Yearnings
Roxburgh and Romanuk

A missional church is a community of God’s people who live into the imagination that they are, by their very nature, God’s missionary people living as a demonstration of what God plans to do in and for all of creation in Jesus Christ.” (Missional Leader, xv)
Missional Church

“A missional church is a reproducing community of authentic disciples being equipped as missionaries sent by God, to live and proclaim His Kingdom in their world. (Milfred Minatrea, Shaped by God’s Heart, 12)
Missional Church

“The mission-minded church perceives mission as one expression of its ministry; the missional church perceives mission as the essence of its existence”.

(Minatrea, Shaped by God’s Heart: The Passion and Practices of Missional Churches, 11)
Roxburgh and Boren

“A missional imagination is not about the church; it’s not about how to make the church better, how to get more people to come to the church, or about how to turn a dying church around. It is not about getting the church back to cultural respectability in a time when it has been marginalized. All of these things are good things but they are not the focus of the missional imagination.” (Introducing the Missional Church, 20)
Missional Church

“Our culture continues to move through massive levels of change that are decentering the church. This change is focusing us to ask how we can be God’s people in this pluralist culture where so much is up for grabs. One of the emerging responses from people like Lesslie Newbigin is that the church is to be the sign and witness of God’s dream for the world and to learn to do this in the neighborhoods and the contexts of their people.” (Roxburgh and Boren, 70-71)
Missional is not Unattractive

1) Congregation Assumes a Missionary Posture
2) Equips Members for This Moment
3) Especially Equips for Workplace
4) Compassion for Lost Sheep
5) Expresses Kingdom Values
6) Justice and Social Compassion
Competing Values

1) Internal vs. External
2) Inspiration vs. Equipping
3) Centripetal vs. Centrifugal
4) Multiple Gifted Leaders
5) Better in a Smaller Context vs. Mega
6) Consumer vs. Community
Culture Change

Focus on the Culture, Not the Organization
Culture Change

The Sending of God – reversing direction

Incarnational Models of Ministry – Dwell Among

Heightened Community - Trinitarian
Culture Change

Hospitality Abounding

Grace Centered

Aiming for Transformation (not information)
Culture Change

Equipping Laity to Vocational Witness

Seeking the Welfare of the City

Surprise People with the Gospel
David Bosch

“The New Testament witnesses assume the possibility of a community of people who, in the face of the tribulations they encounter, keep their eyes steadfastly on the reign of God by praying for its coming, by being its disciples, by proclaiming its presence, by working for peace and justice in the midst of hatred and oppression, and by looking and working toward God’s liberating future.” (54)
Roxburgh and Boren

Once 20% of the members are involved in missional experiments the culture changes (186)

“It will take a local church five to six years to make this transition.” (193)

Early adopters will be only about 10% of the church (193)
Decisions

1) Christendom
2) Attractional
3) Missional
4) Hybrids
Or No Decision
Machievelli, 1516

“There is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more difficult to handle, than to initiate a new order of things. For the reformer has enemies in all those who would profit by the old order, and only lukewarm defenders in all those who would profit by the new.”