

To Alter Your World: Partnering with God to Rebirth Our Communities

Available March 2017

\$17, 240 pages, paperback

978-0-8308-4137-0

"Most of us ache to see our messed-up world altered for the good, yet too often we unintentionally create more problems by pushing our own agendas. In To Alter Your World, Mike and Christiana give us an insightful and timely metaphor that helps us detect the impulses of the Spirit so we can humbly inhabit our neighborhoods and birth new kingdom realities."

—JR Woodward, national director, V3 Church Planting Movement, coauthor of *The Church as Movement*

How to Rebirth Your Community

How is *To Alter Your World* different than other missional books?

Michael Frost and Christiana Rice: A lot of "missional" books (and church leadership books in general) focus on what *we* can do, how *we* can engage our world. We think they feel a little off base. We wanted to encourage church leaders to become attentive to what *God* is doing in the world, and then to join in.

Who is this book written for?

Michael and Christiana: We wrote the book, first, for anyone desiring to join God's restorative work in the world, but with a general focus on church leaders who need a fresh imagination for the collective call of God's people. We introduce the metaphor of the midwife, attending to God in the birth of the new creation and sharing stories and practices for partnering with God in this way. Through this metaphor, we are addressing the need for all people everywhere to be awakened to their unique contribution in rebirthing their communities.

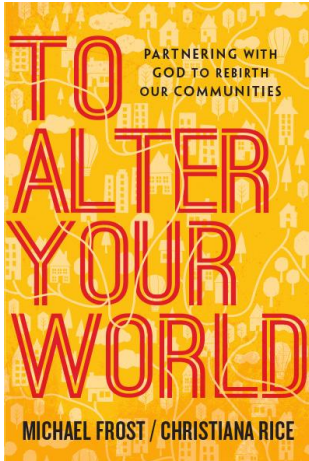
How do you hope to free church leaders up?

Michael and Christiana: We want to encourage church leaders to be freed from the burdensome task of having to "make mission happen" and to become more deeply in tune with the work of God in their world. The metaphor of the midwife is an overarching theme to help church leaders see the beauty and responsibility of attending to God's work of birthing the new creation. The book is full of ideas and examples of what it looks like when leaders embrace this calling.

What do you hope readers take away from *To Alter Your World*?

Michael and Christiana:

1. A new (provocative) metaphor for church ministry and mission
2. Liberation from older (less effective) modes of mission
3. A greater confidence in the work of God in bringing history to its true end
4. Stimulation about what it looks like for the church to be a sign, instrument, and foretaste of the age to come



To Alter Your World: Partnering with God to Rebirth Our Communities

Available March 2017

\$17, 240 pages, paperback

978-0-8308-4137-0

New from Michael Frost and Christiana Rice



Christiana Rice is an on-the-ground practitioner and visionary voice in the missional movement, serving as a coach and trainer with Thresholds, a community of player-coaches who help people create spaces of discovery and communities of transformation. She leads a neighborhood faith community in San Diego.

Christiana grew up in Tokyo, Japan, the daughter and granddaughter of missionaries to that country. Whether teaching and coaching global leaders, engaging the deeper spiritual longings of her neighbors, or embracing the sacred mundane of daily life with her family and her community, Christiana seeks to participate in God's restorative mission in all things.

thresholdscommunity.org

Follow her on Twitter: @ctianarice.

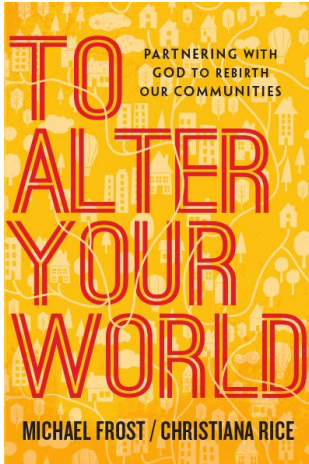


Michael Frost is an internationally recognized Australian missiologist and one of the leading voices in the missional church movement. He is the vice principal of Morling College in Sydney, Australia, and the founding director of the Tinsley Institute, a mission study centre located at Morling College. A popular speaker around the world, he has written more than a dozen books including *The Shaping of Things to Come*, *Exiles*, *The Road to Missional*, and *Incarnate*.

An expert in church planting, Frost cofounded the Forge Mission Training Network with Alan Hirsch. He remains an international director of that movement, which is now based in the United States.

forgeinternational.com

Follow him on Twitter: @michaelfrost6.



To Alter Your World: Partnering with God to Rebirth Our Communities

Available March 2017

\$17, 240 pages, paperback

978-0-8308-4137-0

Renowned missional leaders Michael Frost and Christiana Rice introduce the bold metaphor of a midwife to depict us as God's birthing attendants as the kingdom comes on earth as it is in heaven.

With groundbreaking ideas and practical illustrations from all corners of the globe, *To Alter Your World* will change the way you see how your church can partner in God's world-altering mission.

“I will cry out like a woman in labor, I will gasp and pant,” declares Yahweh

It is the stunning announcement that God, groaning like a woman in labor, will soon give birth to new life.

It's an unexpected metaphor for God because in the ancient world no one was more vulnerable than a birthing mother. The instances of death during childbirth were high. Giving birth in the ancient world wasn't as it is today. Women squatted, kneeled or stood on brightly painted birthing bricks around a hole in the ground. Those from more affluent families gave birth on a specially made birthing chair with a hole in the seat. Both these practices were common among Jewish women in biblical times as well.

Like a vulnerable woman in the final stages of labor, God's silence during Israel's defeat and captivity had been taken for powerlessness. But God's seeming absence wasn't weakness. It was gestation. Now, Yahweh will cry out as if in labor, birthing a new future for them.

In fact, while a woman might be at greater risk during labor, her apparent helplessness shouldn't be taken as anything less than the extraordinary power to bring forth life. This is the metaphor God chooses to describe the profaned absence the people of Israel had experienced in exile, and it beautifully describes the work of God throughout the ages—showing strength through weakness.

Some people today have referred to the church's current situation in the West as being a kind of exile. Christians haven't been carried to a new land, but the culture around them has changed. It is not uncommon for Christians to feel as though they're building their houses and planting their gardens on foreign soil. It's as if the land beneath the church's feet has shifted over recent generations and they feel a desperate need to hear Yahweh's voice, to know the way forward, to trust in God's promises for the future.

The world today is clearly foreign soil for us. As we write, the self-described Islamic State is beheading Christians in Libya and Syria. Health professionals are laboring to control an Ebola pandemic in West Africa. America is struggling to deal with a child-migrant crisis. We live with the chronic brokenness of domestic violence, child sexual assault, family breakdown, oppression of the weak, dirty politics, unfair business practices, racism, extreme poverty, dishonest government, murder, theft, environmental degradation, and many other indicators of the fissures and fractures that run through the heart of everything.

Nations are constantly at war. Societies are continually distressed. There's a deep yearning for a different way to educate our children, and a hunger for a new way of conducting

 INTERVARSITY PRESS

Visit ivpress.com/media



FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO SCHEDULE AN INTERVIEW CONTACT THE INTERVARSITY PRESS PUBLICITY TEAM:

Alisse Wissman, print publicity, at 800.843.4587 ext. 4059 or awissman@ivpress.com

Krista Clayton, broadcast and online publicity, at 800.843.4587 ext. 4013 or kclayton@ivpress.com

ivpress.com/praxis



BOOK EXCERPT

“Rejecting withdrawal or simply joining with the world, Frost and Rice ask the question all over again: How can we Christians transform the world? Moving beyond the old, tired Christendom habits, they offer the church a fresh way to inhabit, take up roots, and let God birth his kingdom in the neighborhoods of our lives. Their book To Alter Your World truly alters our imagination for the practice of church, and I am so pleased to recommend it.”

—David Fitch, B. R. Lindner
Chair of Evangelical Theology,
Northern Seminary, pastor,
Peace of Christ Church,
Westmont, Illinois

business and politics. No one believes that continuing on this same trajectory will make a difference in the healing of the world.

Like exiled Israel, the church today yearns for a word from God. As Christians, we believe that Christ came into the world to bring a new order; to bring redemption, healing, and restoration; and to birth a new society of redeemed persons. And as that new society, we hold fast to the truth that God is directing history toward its true end. But like Israel, we need to hear afresh that God is at work. We need to be reminded that, though forces of chaos and evil seem evident, God groans like a woman in labor, giving birth to the new world promised throughout the generations and confirmed for us in Christ.

Do Christians believe Jesus has an answer for racism and racial inequality? Do we think the Bible provides responses to a world of violence, both domestic and international? Does it involve more than just inviting people to a church service? Of course it does! But perhaps our missiology is stunted and our imagination shallow as we envision the future of the church. The redemptive plan of God cannot be divorced from the fruitfulness of the church. As the world is redeemed, the church flourishes; and as the church flourishes, the world is redeemed. So, the church is both commissioned and equipped to repair the fabric of society, and to serve as envoys of love, dignity, commitment, communion, and grace. As David Bosch wrote,

The central theme of our missionary message is that Christ is risen, and that, secondly and consequently, the church is called to live the resurrection life in the here and now and to be a sign of contradiction against the forces of death and destruction.

This book is about satisfying the desire to see the church altering the trajectory of culture in the way God envisions. To do so will involve new ways of thinking about community, politics, business, education, health care, art, religion, and society itself. It will involve everyone, not just the clergy. It will involve not merely asking what kind of church the world needs, but what kind of a world God is giving birth to.

— Adapted from chapter one, *“God Groans Like a Woman in Labor”*