



EXCERPT



Liturgical Mission
The Work of the People for the Life of the World

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“If it is indeed true that a biblical understanding of worship involves offering our world back to God, then what we need are liturgies that take us out of the confined experience of Sunday gatherings to a worship that engages the whole of life. Winfield Bevins does precisely this, and in following his guidance, disciples get to live genuinely sacramental lives.”

—Alan Hirsch, author and founder of Movement Leaders Collective and Forge Missional

Renewal in the Church’s Worship and Witness

While I am an Anglican, I am writing for the larger body of Christ. In particular, I wrote this book for two types of people. There are those coming from Protestant, evangelical, Pentecostal/charismatic backgrounds who are “liturgical curious” and wondering how they might better understand liturgy. They are intrigued that liturgy and mission can in fact go together.

The second are those from liturgical traditions, whether Lutheran, Catholic, Orthodox, or Anglican/Episcopal. They might be wondering how they might personally become more missional without compromising the riches of their liturgical tradition. Actually, I would argue that mission is in the DNA of the Great Tradition of the church. Throughout the ages, some of the greatest missional movements have been liturgical and sacramental in nature. Regardless of which type of Christian you are, this book is for you.

You will probably feel uncomfortable and challenged at times while reading this book. That is a good thing. I want to encourage you to press into the discomfort rather than close the book. We live in a deeply divided world of extremes. Over the last few decades, our world has increasingly become more and more polarized and politicized. Sadly, the church is becoming just as polarized as the world. The answer to many problems facing the church is not going to be found in extremes, but in rediscovering the power of paradox. It is this integration that the church must embrace in order to face the challenges of mission today.

I have learned to live into these tensions by having a foot in both the Liturgical Movement and the missional movement. Each one of these movements has profoundly influenced my life and ministry over the last few decades. At times this has been difficult, because these two movements rarely seem to intersect with one another. However, when they do connect, something wonderful occurs. I want to explore with you the beautiful tapestry that appears when these two great movements are interwoven.

This book is about recovering a holistic framework that weaves together faith, worship, and mission. To demonstrate the vital link between liturgy and mission, we will explore various interrelated themes which can lead to renewal in the church’s worship and witness. In the process, I will draw on various disciplines such as theology, liturgy, ecclesiology, missiology, ecumenicism, and spiritual formation.

I have tried to write from an ecumenical and global perspective, drawing from various Christian traditions to show the rich diversity that is in the body of Christ. Christians can and should claim the riches of the various streams of Christendom from both the past and present. The church is like a complex mosaic or tapestry that consists of many colors and fabrics. Each fragment displays a different color, but in unison, these individual pieces portray a beautiful masterpiece. Together, these diverse voices make up one heavenly choir, one church, yet many voices.

My prayer is that in the following pages, you will discover a way of living the Christian life that is historically rooted in liturgical worship, as well as inspiration for fresh mission and deep ecumenicism in the twenty-first century and beyond. I call this the way of “liturgical mission.”

—Adapted from the introduction



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