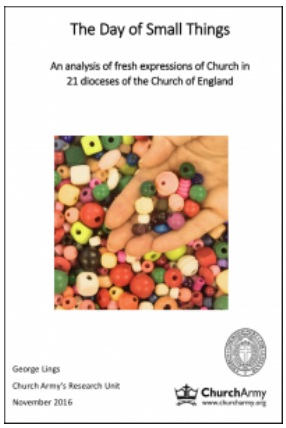
Review: The Day of Small Things – An Analysis of Fresh Expressions of Church…

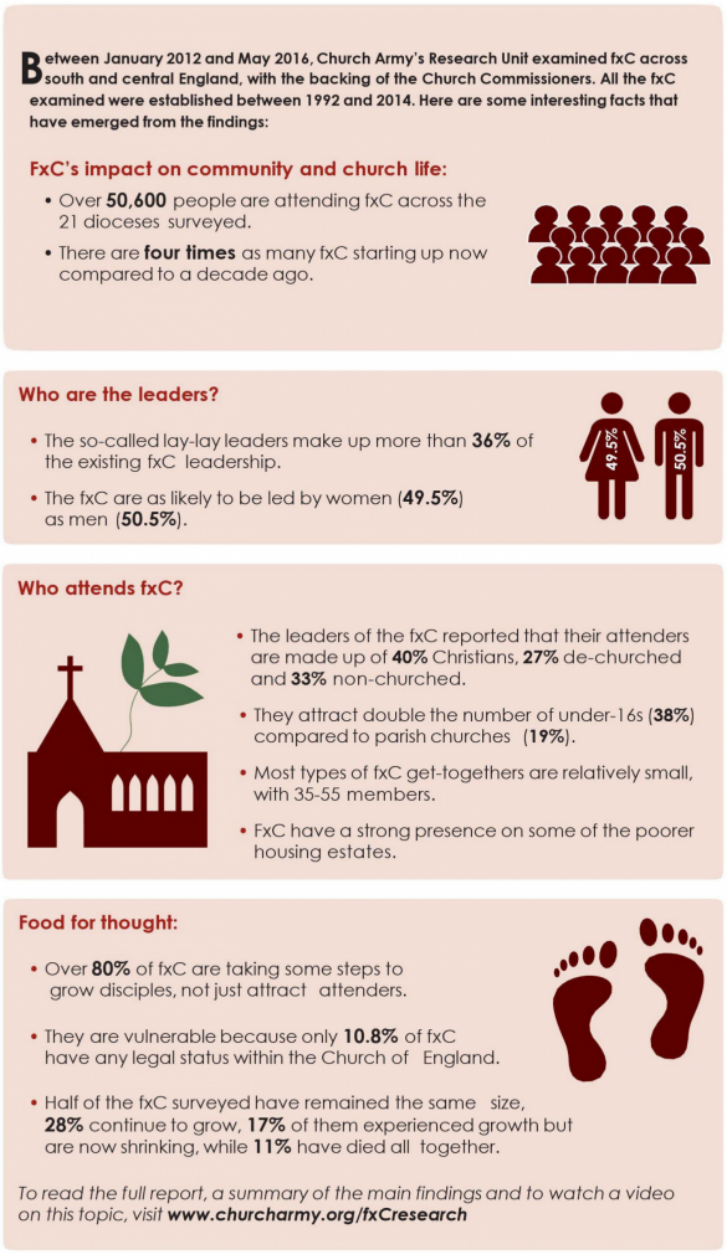


If there was any sense in which we were once starry-eyed about the Church of England it had something to do with what we now call "fresh expressions of Church." Gill and I were church planters once, inspired by the *Mission Shaped Church* report and the growing call for a "mixed economy church." The Church of England was, from an outside perspective, a place where missiology could be lively, and the ecclesial machinery would even appoint a bishop to lead a Fresh Expressions team.

The Day of Small Things is a recent report from the Church Army's Research Unit. It's a statistical analysis of fresh expressions (they abbreviate to "fxC"). It considers their number, their size and shape, and the manners and means of their missional and ecclesial effectiveness. It draws on over two decades of data; it is thorough and informative.

It is an encouraging picture in many ways. The crucial role of fresh expressions in the Church of England is revealed.

They may not be definitive metrics, but headline numbers such as 15% of church communities being fxC attended by 6% of the C of E populace show that the effect has been far from negligible (page 10, Executive Summary). It also indicates that much more can be done.



There is no need to summarise all the detail of the report here. It's impossible to do it justice in a blog post. Church Army have, themselves, put together some excellent resources, even producing a lovely infographic (see to the side). I do, however, want to record my own observations, highlighting some of the aspects that are close to my heart and our experience:

#1 – This report helps us understand what a fresh expression actually is. On the ground, this has both a positive and a negative component.

From the **negative** side, I note with a growing cynicism the propensity for churches, even if well-intentioned, to borrow

“off-the-shelf” language and so avoid some of the deeper challenges of mission activity. The survey invited responses from dioceses regarding activity that was classified as fresh expression and more than 40% of these activities simply had to be excluded as not only being “not an fxC” but not even readily identifiable as an “outreach project” (Section 12.10, pages 202-204).

Clearly there is confusion about the term “fresh expression”, and the excluded activities are not without value. But I share these sentiments:

> *We detect a disturbing tendency for increased use of any new label that becomes popular to be in inverse proportion to accurate understanding of its meaning. The same could be said for the use of the word ‘mission’ in parish and diocesan literature. It is almost now there by default, and as has been said: ‘when everything is mission, nothing is’. (Page 204)*

This tendency *is* disturbing. In our experience, we have seen those with a heart for mission be led up the garden path towards projects and positions that were only whitewashed as such. We have seen those who would otherwise be fully on board with a fresh expression baulking at the idea because of a previous negative or insipid encounter with a project that wore the name only as a brand. Experiences such as these are damaging and stultifying.

The report, however, brings a **positive** initiative. In pursuing the complex and difficult work of classification of an entire ecosystem of missional actvity we are given clarity. That clarity is not simply technical, narrowly encapsulating branded programs, but reveals, in both breadth and depth, the essence of what fresh expressions

are seeking to be. The discussion in section 2.4 and further development in 12.10 is worthwhile reading.

The **ten indicators of a fresh expression** that are used as criteria for inclusion in the survey are of great value. They draw upon classifications in *Mission Shaped Church* and are simple observable ways of ensuring that we are talking about groups that are *missional* ("intends to work with non-churchgoers"), *contextual* ("seeks to fit the context"), *formational* ("aims to form disciples"), and *ecclesial* ("intends to become church"). Church Army have a single-page summary of the ten indicators, but a summary is worth reiterating here:

> *1. Is this a **new and further group,** which is **Christian and communal**, rather than an existing group…*
> *2. Has the starting group tried to **engage with non-church goers?…** understand a culture and context and adapt to fit it, not make the local/indigenous people change and adapt to fit into an existing church context.*
> *3. Does the community meet **at least once a month?***
> *4. Does it have **a name** that helps give it an identity?…*
> *5. Is there **intention to be Church?** This could be the intention from the start, or by a discovery on the way…*
> *6. Is it **Anglican** or an Ecumenical project which includes **an Anglican partner**?…*
> *7. Is there some form of **leadership** recognised by those within the community and by those outside of it?*
> *8. Do at least the majority of members… see it as **their major expression** of being church?*
> *9. Are there **aspirations for the four creedal 'marks' of church, or ecclesial relationships:** 'up/holy, in/one, out/apostolic, of/catholic'?…*
> *10. Is there the **intention to become '3-self'** (self-financing, self-governing and self-reproducing)?…*
> *(Page 18)*

A personal impact for me from this is a re-evaluation of *Messy Church*. I have only seen Messy Church run as an outreach project at best, often merely as an in-house playgroup. The fact that so many of the included fxC's (close to 33%, Table 11, Page 41) were denoted as Messy Church has made me ponder them anew, especially with regards to criteria 5 to 10.

#2 – The diversity of leadership raises provocative questions. But one of the most crucial questions is absent.

Section 6.13 and Chapter 10 give the data on the forms of fxC leadership, looking at details such as gender, remuneration, time commitment, and training received. Much is as expected. For instance, male, ordained, stipended leaders predominate in traditional church plants; female, lay, volunteer leaders predominate in child-focussed fxC such as Messy Church (Table 53, page 106 and Table 74, page 176).

The report does well to highlight (in Chapter 11) the phenomenon of the so-called "lay-lay" leader who "has no centralised formal training, or official authorisation" (page 181). A leadership cohort has manifest without a clear reference to the institutional centre. I wonder how much this is a "because of" or an "in spite of" phenomenon: has the centre created space, or has it simply become ignorable? There is a gentle provocation for the institution in this:

> *Writers in the field of fxC have urged that the size of the mission task facing the Church of England will require many lay leaders and this is evidence that it is already occurring. The wider Church may need the difficult combination of humility to learn from them, as well as wisdom to give the kind of support, training and recognition that does not lead to any unintended emasculation of their essential contribution. (Page 189)*

I note with interest that the correlation of lay-lay leadership with cluster-based churches (Chart 39, page 184)

and its association with discipleship (page 187) demonstrates the crucial role of missional communities (as they are properly understood) in the development of fxC and the Church more widely.

A striking and concerning part of the data is the relative diminution of Ordained Pioneer Ministers (OPMs) with only 2.7% of fxC leaders (Table 76, page 177) being classified as such. In the seminal period of the early 2000's, OPMS were seen as a key innovation for mission development, a long-needed break away from classical clerical formation that was perceived to produce ecclesial clones emptied of their vocational zeal and disconnected from the place and people to which they were called. Anecdotally, our experience is that missional illiteracy is dismally high amongst the current cohort of ordained persons. The traditional academy can do many good things, but the action-reflection-based contextualised formation of OPM more readily leads to the deeper personal maturation upon which adaptive leadership rests.

The absent question in the data on leadership is this: **there is no recognition of couples in leadership**. This is a dismaying oversight. The number of clergy couples would, I suspect, be a growing phenomenon. Similarly, in our experience, much innovative practice (particularly forms of ministry where the home or household is a key component) is led by lay couples. The Church in general, and the Anglican variant in particular, is all but inept when it comes to adequately recognising and supporting couples who lead together. It would seem to me that fxC would be the best place to explore and experiment with what this might look like. To have no relevant data, therefore, is a significant oversight. This is a topic on which I will be writing more.

#3 – Ongoing structural concerns are indicated. Structurally, fxC remain at the periphery. Moreover, while the contribution of fxC *in themselves* can be measured as independent units, more work needs to be done to see fxC as an integral part of

the system.

The headline statistic in this regard is that 87.7% of fxC have no legal identity (Table 91, page 206). The report does well to reflect on how this increases the insecurity of the "continued existence" of an fxC. A more general point illustrates the key concern:

> *An analogy, designed to provoke further discussion, is that many fxC are in effect treated like immigrants doing good work, who have not yet been given the right to remain, let alone acquired British citizenship. There is active debate about whether they are to be regarded as churches or not but little to nothing is said about giving them rights and legal identity within the Anglican family, unless they can become indistinguishable from existing churches, a move which would remove their raison d'etre… We recommend that this present imbalance of so many fxC having no legal status, and thus no right to remain or not working representation, be addressed. (Page 206)*

It has been an aspect of our experience that much is demanded of fxC – Success! True Anglican identity! Numbers! Money! – in order to perpetually justify institutional existence. It's a rigged game. Existing forms of church happily, and without comment or query, lean upon legal standing, guaranteed livings, central administrative support, legacy bequests, and even the provision of curates/trainees. It has a propensity to keep them missionally infantile. Yet, without this support, are fxC unfairly expected to run before they can even crawl?

I think of the concerning admission that in some cases "numbers of fxC attenders were deliberately not reported in order to avoid parish share, on grounds that these early attenders do not yet make a financial contribution" (page 49). Even metrics like "attendance" presuppose a structural shape that may not apply, "not counting a wider fringe" (page 57)

and unfairly diminishing the value of fxC.

Perhaps the report's suggestion that a "control group of existing parishes" (page 215) be included in subsequent reports, would go some way to balancing the picture. Such a control group would at least allow a comparison. What would be even more valuable would be a way to assess *integration*, i.e. to consider fxC as part of a system. Two particular aspects of this that are worthy of further consideration are:

1) The nature and need of so-called "authority dissenters." The report recognises the importance of the diocese within the ecclesial system (page 62). It also points out that "*local* visions for growth have always been more common that a diocesan initiative, welcome though the latter is" (page 192, emphasis mine). An "authority dissenter" is a person or office that covers and connects new initiatives into the system. Does the high level of "localness" indicate that such provision is not needed, or that it has not been forthcoming? I suspect the latter.

I have a growing sense that the *deanery* is the ecclesial unit that can most readily provide a covering. Chart 46 (page 194) demonstrates at least some sense of this: Current fxC that are not "in benefice" or "in parish" are far more likely to be "within deanery." The "cluster church" fxC type intrigues me the most – 41% of these are classified as "within deanery."

Deaneries are peculiar ecclesial creatures. When they work, they work. But they generally have limited authority, overstretched leadership, and few resources – almost the exact opposite of the three-self maturity they might want to foment! Yet they are uniquely and strategically placed between the local and the large to nurture fxC and to protect them from diminution from both above and below as we learn to "think both culturally and by area" (page 96). An exploration of how Deaneries have fitted (or could fit) into the fxC picture would be helpful.

2) The impact on sending and surrounding churches. The report does well to distinguish between the sending team, and the participation of non-churched, de-churched, and churched cohorts. A more detailed picture would be helpful in a number of ways.

Firstly, it would help inform those who are considering being a "sending church." The cost of an fxC in terms of financial and human resources can often be readily counted. It would also be good to know how to look for benefits, and not just in terms of the kingdom contribution of the fxC itself (i.e. it's own sense of hoped-for "success"). A sending church is also changed in its act of sending. From a stimulus to looking "outside of ourselves" through to being able to learn from the fxC as a valued "research and development" opportunity, it would good to be able to describe and measure the sorts of blessings that attend to those who generously produce the fxC.

Secondly, it would help inform those who are wary of new kids on the block, so to speak. A typical fear is that an fxC would "steal sheep" away from existing structures, and the zero-sum calculations are made. What data exists that might address these fears? Do fxC have impacts, negative or positive, on existing surrounding ministries? What mechanisms best work to allow mutural flourishing to occur?

Finally, discipleship is key. And some personal thoughts.

The correlation of fxC mortality with "making no steps" in the direction of discipleship (page 208) is well made. The "ecclesial lesson" (page 214) is a clear imperative: "start with discipleship in mind, not just attendance… it should be intentional and relational." It seems Mike Breen's adage has significant veracity: "If you make disciples you will always get the church but if you try to build the church you will rarely get disciples."

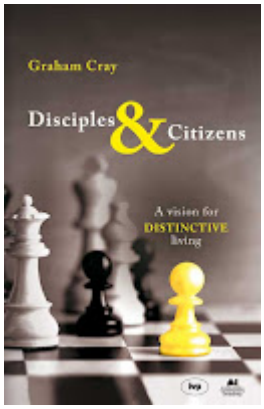
To conclude my thoughts, though, it is worth considering **New**

Monasticism. It's a new movement that the report has only just begun to incorporate. "Their focus is on sustaining intentional community, patterns of prayer, hospitality and engaging with mission" (page 222). But here's the interesting part:

> *More often the instincts for this [new monasticism] are combined into another type of fxC, rather than existing on its own. (Page 222)*

I note with interest that the type of fxC with the largest proportion of leaders that had had *prior experience with fresh expressions* is the New Monastic Community (48% – Table 70, Page 166). This intrigues me. As Gill and I continue to have conversations about pioneering and fresh expressions, the longings and callings that we discover in ourselves and in those we converse with, invariably sound like new monastic characteristics. Watch this space.

Review: Disciples & Citizens



I obtained a copy of Graham Cray's *Disciples & Citizens* at last year's EFAC Conference where Graham was speaking. I was enthused by Graham at that time and that enthusiasm continues having now read his book.

For those of us who are caught up in the perpetual lurch from creative crisis to creative crisis that so often defines church planting and fresh expression ministry this book is

immensely valuable. Without prescribing or proscribing direction or methodology +Graham unveils and delivers substance, weight and foundation to those wrestling with on-the-ground applied ecclesiology of the Christ-centred kind.

The key consideration is the promotion of a biblically-grounded framework for the essential mission of the church – corporate and individual spiritually applied publically and with integrity. As he explores the necessary distinctives between the ways of the world and the way of Christ we have a useful lens for observing the world, that of *citizenship*:

> *Citizenship is becoming increasingly passive… Perhaps most serious of all is the decline in concern for or confidence in the concept of the 'common good.' (page 19)*

This finds its clear expression in a correlation with the biblical city of Corinth:

> *Corinth was a materially ambitious, multicultural city. It was governed by personal ambition and self-promotion, sustained by a culture of spin. (page 31)*

If Christ came to such a world as this, how, then, does the church? +Graham lets us grasp a view of what it means to be a Christian *citizen*:

> *Our nation needs a vision of the public good, combined with a proportionate willingness for self-sacrifice. As citizens, Christians need to respond to these challenges… we will serve our nation and world best by being ourselves, by offering our nation a genuinely biblical vision (page 21)*

Indeed, citizenship for the Christian can be defined as "public discipleship" (page 19) – the simple, obedient following of Christ in the world. This means living lives of "involved distinctiveness" (page 32*ff*) and "subversive

engagement." (page 41*ff*)

> ***Involved distinctiveness*** *can be summed up as a call to be a countercultural community which also seeks common ground with its society whenever possible. (page 32)*

> ***Subversive engagement*** *involves a proactive community, actively doing good in its society (because the good can last, in the light of the kingdom of God), while subverting many of society's key social values (because they cannot last, in the light of the kingdom of God). (page 41-42)*

The middle parts of the book explore how public discipleship can be disinctively involved, and subversively engaged with issues such as individualization, consumerism and constructivism through Christ-focussed discipleship and cultivation of character. (As an aside, this includes a short discourse on the characteristics of Generation Y which explicitly mentions an aspect of Generation X that I very rarely read or see but keenly feel – "Generation X was a hinge generation, experiencing both the old and new modernities in conflict." Page 91).

The eleventh chapter ("The role of the church") and the final section ("The Transformation of Community") connects it all together – the engine of biblical citizenship is attached to the vehicle of the church. Church is begat by and begets disciples of Christ and so provides the location for distinctive, subversive citizenship of the life-giving kind.

> *The statement… that governments do not and cannot create the values upon which both government and citizenship depend, raises an obvious question. Where are they formed, then? Worship provides a major part of the answer, not just for religious communities, but for all people, because all people worship… What we serve shapes us. Our heart will always be where our treasure is… Christian worship is transformative. (page 122)*

Just as 1 Corinthians ends with the vision of resurrection hope in chapter 15, so the involved transformative church, producing distinctive, subversive public disciple-citizens, can only do so when it lives out its eschatological identity. The church can only be the church when it lives on the truth that in Christ the kingdom has come and in Christ the eternal things of this life and this world will pass through to eternity.

> *Earth and heaven will be shaken. Only those things which can endure the consuming fire will remain. But then there will be Sabbath, as the new creation is complete…*
>
> *Jesus… saw human history as divided between two ages… the critical dividing point was not the final judgment, but his own proclamation and ministry…*
>
> *In the new heaven and earth there would be no more blindness, lameness, deafness or death. There would be no poverty. The Son of God would be at the heart and centre of the new creation. But this was no longer completely future. In and through Jesus, it was starting now. (pages 148-149)*

And, quoting Backham and Hart,

> *Christians care called to identify and to become involved with God's Spirit in all that he is doing to fashion a genuine presence of the new within the midst of the old, drawing it into self-transcendent, albeit partial, anticipations of what will ultimately be. (page 172)*

And so the fundamental call of the book is to be Christlike, to follow Jesus. Jesus, who did not self-actualise but lived only in obedience to the father, by the power of the Spirit. Jesus who came to the world, identifying with it, having compassion on it, teaching, taking action, building community and counting the cost – the cost of suffering – that would

make it happen. That way doesn't just dictate the labels of individuals, it transforms lives and shapes hearts, and, when done well in public, it changes the world and lasts for eternity.

This book is theologically firm and kerygmatically fervent. It captures the heart of Christ-focused emerging churches around the world – from Driscoll to Church Army to the Imagine Project here in Tasmania. I will be using this book again and again because it shines a light.

Review: Metavista

Metavista, written by Colin Greene & Martin Robinson is a socio-philosophical, cultural, ecclesiological and missiological commentary. "Our context in the twenty-first century… is radically different," they say in the introduction (page xiv), and continue:

> *We shall argue that it is post-Christendom, post-secular, post-colonial and post-individualistic, in no particular order of priority, and therefore post-postmodern. And that "postist" reality requires an entirely new mission agenda that will not be adequately understood through adherence solely to church-planting strategies.*

Those who know me will understand my engagement with this book. I share a frustration with typical church-plant/growth/renewal strategies. I resonate with the authors' premise which is later on expressed thusly: "the technology of

mission… we are dealing here [is] art, not science" (page 187)… "an organic process rather than a ready-to-go formula" (page 197) and of "tension" between "a more sophisticated recalibration of the church" to "a deeply postmodern context" and those who look, rather, for a "**fundamental reimagining**." (page 180)

I'm one of those seeking a reimagining. But what are the whys and wherefores, where is the framework, what gives it life, how is it found? The value of this book is that it helps to remove the blinkers to the Holy Spirit at work.

Greene spends the first part of the book considering the cultural and sociological landscape. He unpacks the powerful narrative of modernity and secularisation from the 19th century – looking at it not just in philosophical academic terms but with regard to how it all engaged with the people's imagination.

> *At this moment in history… these creative ideas came together to form a stirring emancipation narrative that caught the public imagination and led irrevocably to fundamental changes in the way people experienced the world. To "indwell the world" no longer meant to be bound inevitably to the accepted social order instituted by God and maintained by the authority of the aristocracy. Neither did it mean to accept one's appointed lot in life which, for most, was one of grueling poverty, hardship and suffering. Nor did it mean to view religion and the church as the only safe refuge from a harsh and mercurial world that did not appear to operate according to any particular inbuilt order… The sociological achievement of the Enlightenment was the rise of the new bourgeoisie, and it was among this new class of rich merchants, bankers and industrialists that the narrative of emancipation was most venerated. (page 14)*

He then unpacks postmodernity in the normal terms – touching

on the “incredulity towards metanarratives,” the rejection of absolutes and “fiduciary frameworks”, and the “preference for individualized spirituality over and against organized religion” (page 42).

Greene wants “a way out of the postmodern impasse of no legitimating foundations to knowledge, ethical and political practice and, indeed, religious belief.” (page 42). Indeed:

> *To date postmodernity has been unable to provide us with a satisfying or legitimating account of why local stories are any more credible and authentic than the universal theories and archetypal myths we once found determinative of human existence and therefore believable. (page 50)*

And so the “cultural transition we are presently experiencing, that which we have called ‘metavista,’ the age of imagination” is introduced. And at it’s heart lies not just subjective postmodern mininarrative, or imposed modernistic metanarrative, but the **“power of retold stories.”** (page 51)

This framework imperative to “retell the story” resonates with current experience. The ills of the First World can be seen in the loss of a defining story. What does it mean to be Australian, or British, for instance? Modernity reduces us to economic units, postmodernity reduces us to individual characters in our own self-centred fantasy. How do I fit in the larger whole, what gives me purpose and reason-for-being?

I watched the inauguration of President Obama last night and recognised within his speech the ability to retell the American Story – spinning phrases such as “Yes, we can” that are not mere words but reimaginings, calls, echoes of longing that seems to be speaking to Americans and giving them a metanarrative that is not imposed but to which they run. **Similarly, the church story, the Jesus story needs retelling.**

And so Greene tackles the main locus of that story – the

Bible. He critiques the historical-critical hermeneutical and exegetical approach that modernistically asserts that the Word of God is reserved to the domain of the educated and academic. He suggests a return towards allegorical or typological reading – certainly not to the level of medieval excess but, dare I say it, with the same heart as biblical theologians such as Goldsworthy, and in the same vein as "many of the biblical writers [who] linked the two testaments into one unified story" (page 106):

> *Now it is very interesting that while the typological and the allegorical meaning was what the Reformers must distrusted… it is precisely this convention… figuration, that allows the Bible to be perceived as a unified narrative. (page 105)*

And so **Greene and Robinson place the Bible at the heart of the story that needs retelling in a metavista age.** They identify, in particular, the "four subplots" of the Bible – The creation story, The Israel story, The Jesus story, and The church's story. The gospel as theological assertion – you sinned, Jesus died – is replaced by gospel with flesh and bones – no less centred on the death and resurrection of the Messiah – but well-rooted, flourishing, bearing fruit in the reality of history and the imagination of today – a perichoresis of narratives that reveals Christ to us.

A crucial aspect of this perichoresis is the story of God at work in the church. **The Church is no longer relegated to the epilogue** of Christ's passion but is caught up in the gospel dance itself. This is no heresy, and no surprise. After all, even Bill Hybels holds to the vision of "The local church is the hope of the world"!

Greene finishes his contribution by considering the church in this respect, retelling the church story particularly in terms of political engagement against the modernistic relegation of the church to the merely private.

> *Here, at times amidst the fleshpots of Babylon, at others under the oppressive strictures and tyranny of empires, where the mission of the church is curtailed or controlled, the church must, nevertheless, fulfill her task to image the kingdom of God, proclaim judgment, and actively resist the idolatry of the oppressors. (page 149)*

Robinson then completes the book delivering one of the best overviews of nineteenth and twentieth century church history I have ever read.

In recent years, observing my own church – Anglican in Tasmania – I have noted how the vigour (and orthodoxy) of nineteenth century Anglo-Catholicism seemed to have collapsed across the world wars to a generation who ended up retaining the tradition but not its content. Having ministered in congregations defined by this generation I can testify to the contemporary echoes of the death-throes of Christendom which crescended, as Robinson states, in the 1960's.

Robinson continues the story through the 70's, considering the Lausanne evangelical resurgence of mission. He helpfully notes what many often ignore – the transition in Pentecostal churches from sect to mainstream, and, in the 80's from what I call "classical pentecostalism" focussing on the work of the Holy Spirit to "new-style pentecostalism" focussing on entertainment techniques and management programs.

> *It had become apparent by the 1980s that the revivalist hopes of the charismatic movement were misplaced. However much some individual charismatic and Pentecostal congregations had grown, the hoped for scenario in which a renewed church would see hundreds of thousands clamoring to become Christians in the context of signs and wonders came to be seen as a false hope… New solutions would need to be found. The 1980s and 1990s saw a succession of solutions presented… programs of*

> *one kind or another. (pages 176-177)*

All of this provides the background for the necessity of a "fundamental reimagining" of the church. Robinson picks up on contemporary concepts of Emerging Church and offers some critique and balance while working towards a presentation of a "Missional Community" at the heart of his reimagining. **He tells a counter-cultural story of church** "constituted not for itself, nor even for the world in an abstract sense, but towards the remaking of human communities as deeply incarnational expressions of the church in mission." (pages 188-189).

His comments provide a helpful balance that has been missing in contemporary urgings to be more missional. We don't always realise that the dying Christendom story can express itself outwardly ad well as inwardly in activities that look like mission but are no longer missional. In my own experience I have heard a call to mission answered by yet another round of people volunteering for charitable programs or "doing their bit" for the "work of the church." Why did I find such goodness frustrating? Because such "mission" would not retell the story or reimagine the church and live out the gospel. Robinson provides an excellent quote from Robert Jenson:

> *All that talk a few years ago about the world setting the agenda, about seeing where God was at work in the world and jumping in to help, etc., was just* ***a last gasp of the church's establishment in the West, of its erstwhile ability to suppose that what the culture nurtured as good had to be congruent with the good the church had to bring.*** *(page 189)*

Even the best intentions can fail to resonate when they either merge with culture, or find no point of connection. Robinson, rather, calls for a reimagination of a counter-cultural life. "To live counter-culturally will mean to confront rival ideologies and not to be subverted by them." (page 189).

Again, I find this resonates with my own kerygma in recent times to bring to the church the eschatological impetus to actively, passionately, “do life well” all the more as the Day approaches – for each to know their place in the story so that they can retell it in their living.

This lies at the heart of the difference between “attractional” models of church and missional models of church that happen to be “attractive.” Such attractive communities “are that way partly because they have a high threshold of expectation in terms of what members will do” (page 195). **Participation is expected – but not a simple volunteerism for programs, rather a participation in counter-cultural life itself.**

There are many other gems in Robinson’s thoughts – comments on leadership for instance and citations of a book by Alan Roxburgh that I have bought and will review at some point.

I will finish with one final quotation. Like most of the book it gives voice to my heart that I hear echoing in others. In this case let me note a congruence with Mark Driscoll’s theory of “reformission” in the collision of the three “narratives” of Gospel, Church and Culture where the church has to “live adventurously”:

> *To live this kind of counter-cultural life the church has to “risk” living at the interface of the collision of all three narratives… It has never been a safe option to live a genuinely counter-cultural Christian life, because such a life deconstructs old cultural verities and ignites new habits of the heart. It invites old men to dream dreams and young men to have visions. (pages 226-227)*

Amen.