QUOTES TO MAKE YOU THINK

Posted on December 11, 2014 by Eddie

God works out his redemptive purposes in this story by choosing a people to make known to all where history is leading. Jesus does not write a book to transmit the good news to succeeding generations. Instead, he chooses, prepares, and commissions a community to make the goal of universal history known. This gathering work is central to his kingdom mission, and it begins in the early days of his ministry.

Category: Observations

> *Mission is what God is doing for the sake of the world: it is Godâ€™s long-term purpose to renew the creation. The people of God are missional in that they are taken up into this work for the sake of the world.*

Over the last few weeks (it seems longer), I've been writing up notes onÂ Introducing Christian Mission Today: Scripture, History and IssuesÂ by Mike Goheen. In the meantime, I've also been readingÂ A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical StoryÂ by the same author. Here is a selection of quotes that you might find interesting or challenging.

> *At its best, â€œmissionalâ€ describes not a specific activity of the church but the very essence and identity of the church as it takes up its role in Godâ€™s story in the context of its culture and participates in Godâ€™s mission to the world.*

I think Goheen is at his best when he makes us re-examine the big themes of Scripture in all their depth. I like this quote, which challenges the way that some of my Wycliffe colleagues see the Bible as being the 'greatestÂ missionary'.

> *God works out his redemptive purposes in this story by choosing a people to make known to all where history is leading. Jesus does not write a book to transmit the good news to succeeding generations. Instead, he chooses, prepares, and commissions a community to make the goal of universal history known. This gathering work is central to his kingdom mission, and it begins in the early days of his ministry. Following the central events of the salvation storyâ€"his death and resurrectionâ€"Jesus commissions this small community: â€œAs the Father has sent me, I am sending youâ€ (John 20:21). Here the nucleus of the community we now call â€œchurchâ€ is commissioned to make.*

This one is particularly challenging:

> *The second problem in traditional evangelical interpretations of the crucifixionâ€™s significance derives from the first: in overemphasizing the benefits of the cross to the individual believer, we have mistakenly allowed its communal significance to be eclipsed. Too often the message of the cross is simply that it removes guilt from the individual and replaces it with forgiveness and justification. If there is a social component to this, it comes as an afterthought: the church is merely a collection of forgiven and justified individuals. The Argentinean church leader RenÃ© Padilla suggests that Western Christianity â€œhas concentrated on the salvation of the individual soul but has frequently disregarded Godâ€™s purpose to create a new humanity by sacrificial love and justice for the poor.â€ Thus, he*

> *continues, â€œin classical theories of the atonement, the work of Christ was unrelated to Godâ€™s intention to create a new humanity.â€*

In a couple of recent posts, I've written about the importance of the role of Churches in sending out missionaries. Some commenters have not been entirely happy with this suggestion of a broader, corporate view of mission. Goheen, however, takes things a step further.

> *The centrifugal movement of mission may be misunderstood as only a matter of individual Christians being sent out as evangelists or missionaries (either from a home base or from the institutional church) into the nations (nearby or far away). Although these are legitimateâ€"indeed essentialâ€"activities, the story told in Acts is different: it is an account of how ecclesial communities that corporately embody the gospel (like the one in Jerusalem) are spread throughout the world. The centrifugal movement of the book of Acts concerns communities sent out by their Lord to live on the â€œperiphery,â€ where they must also take on new forms. No longer are they geographically bound to one place nor comprised ethnically of one people; no longer are they defined by one political-cultural identity, and no longer do those of other nations come to them to join as part of their cultural and political community. The people of God are sent out as a people to live out the gospel in the midst of all nations.*

If you are interested in the narrative of the Bible, or in mission (or - even better - in both), then this is a book that you should plan on getting hold of.