

“How The Gospel Impacts Our Ecclesiology”
(Insights From The Epistle of Ephesians)

Introduction: Begin with 8 introductory remarks followed by 6 theological foundations and concluding with 10 practical responses:

- 1) I approach my assignment as a biblical theologian.
- 2) Who we are determines what we believe/do.
 (Faith seeking understanding/Faith moving into action)
- 3) You must know who you are and what you believe before you know what to do.
- 4) Principles for church planting and church renewal often overlap, especially at the foundational level. However, wherever we are, our goal is to establish “bench heads” for the gospel.
- 5) The indicative of the Gospel flows naturally into the imperatives of the Gospel.
- 6) A basic gospel definition: “The gospel is the good news that King Jesus died and paid the full penalty of sin as our penal substitute, rose from the dead and saves completely all who repent of sin and trust only in Him.” (The word “gospel” occurs almost 100 times in the New Testament; 5 times in Ephesians 1:13; 3:6, 7; 6:15, 19).
- 7) “Gospel-centered description” of the Church (Gospel Coalition).

The Gospel should:

produce churches filled with winsome but theologically substantial preaching, dynamic evangelism and apologetics, and church growth. They [will] emphasize repentance, personal renewal and holiness of life. At the same time, and in the same congregations, there [will] be great stress on cultural engagement in art, business, scholarship, and government, and on justice for the poor. There [will] be calls for radical Christian community in which all members share wealth and resources and make room for the

marginalized. These priorities would all be combined and would mutually strengthen one another in each local church. (*Gospel-Centered Ministry*, 10).

- 8) Why focus on Ephesians: Because it teaches us that “Christ has reconciled all creation to God and united people from every nation to Himself in the Church thru the Gospel.” It shows us how the gospel impacts our ecclesiology. Interestingly, it was Calvin’s favorite epistle. Raymond Brown says only Romans has exercised more influence on Christian thought throughout church history (C. C. C., 579).

I. The Gospel Establishes Certain Theological Foundations Eph. 1-3

- 6 can be identified in chapters 1-3

- 1) The gospel is grounded in a Trinitarian soteriology. 1:1-14

Some have identified no less than 9 Trinitarian references in Ephesians. Ephesians 1:3-14 stands out along with 3:2-5 which explicitly connects the Trinity to gospel proclamation.

- The Father authored or planned our salvation. 1:3-6
- The Son accomplished or purchased our salvation. 1:7-12
- The Spirit applies or preserves our salvation. 1:13-14
- App: Make sure your preaching of the gospel is Trinitarian in content and emphasis.
Seek balance in the way you exalt each person in the Godhead and their role in the drama of redemption. Do not miss the Father or dis the Holy Spirit.
- Remember: the Trinity is a distinctively Christian doctrine that sets us apart from all world religions and cults. It is not an optional doctrine up for negotiation.

- 2) The gospel is grounded in the knowledge of the resurrected Christ who is head over the Church His body by which He will fill all in all. 1:15-23

- The gospel is grounded in faith in the Lord Jesus that results in love toward all the saints (1:15).

- It matures into a greater knowledge of Christ (1:17-18) thru the same divine power that raised and exalted Christ (1:19-21).
 - This great Lord and Messiah now has all things under his feet and has been given as head over all things to the church which is his body (1:22-23).
 - Now, as the body of the resurrected one, we are filling all in all. We are filling our city, state, nation and all nations with Christ! Or maybe better, Christ is now filling for Himself all in all thru His body the Church.
 - Crucial implications: If we are His body:
 - We are not a building of bricks and mortar, for then we will become consumers.
 - We are not an institution with a product, for then we will become competitors.
 - We are the body of Christ, the fullness of Christ, thus we are a community that is intent on enlarging its boundaries that it might fill all in all as the body of the resurrected and exalted Christ.
 - Any agenda that does not have as its goal of making Christ known and present in every sphere and place is a biblically faulty agenda. It is christologically and missiologically inadequate.
- 3) The gospel is grounded in the reality of human depravity and a gracious salvation made possible by Jesus rooted in faith and resulting in good works. 2:1-10
- The radical depravity of humanity must be taught regardless of the theological and cultural winds that blow against it (2:1-3).
 - The amazing nature of our salvation thru Christ must never lose its amazing impact. Teach His mercy, great love, kindness and grace for dead, depraved and doomed sinners (2:4-9).

- Teach your people we are now a visible display of the glory of Christ and the power of the gospel. God’s design is to use the body of His Son (the Church) and show the glory of His grace in the gospel for all eternity.
 - Hold firm to a salvation that is by grace alone thru faith alone in Christ alone for the glory of God alone, “new perspectives” notwithstanding.
 - Teach in the tradition of the Reformers, that we are saved by faith alone but not a faith that is alone, that we are saved not by faith plus works but by a faith that will work.
 - David Platt: “the gospel that saves us from work also saves us to work... actions fueled by faith that brings great glory to God.” (*Radical Together*, 28).
 - However, remember that religious activity apart from the grace of God not motivated by gospel gratitude is an ever present danger we must guard against. Legalism is always lurking at the door and it is a deadly enemy to the gospel of grace.
- 4) The gospel is grounded in the good news that Jesus Christ has destroyed all barriers in creating one new reality the Church. 2:11-22
- Racial barriers are torn down.
- National barriers are torn down.
- Gender barriers are torn down.
- Social barriers are torn down.
- Economic barriers are torn down.
- Educational barriers are torn down.
- 2:14 → He has made us one!
- 2:15 → He has created in Himself one new man!
- 2:18 → Trinitarian work!
- 2:21 → Trinitarian work!
- App: Build a church on earth that looks like the church in heaven!

5) The gospel is grounded in a stewardship to preach the good news to the nations to bring light to everyone. 3:1-13

- *Ethnes* (trans. “Gentiles”) are noted 3 times in 3:1, 6, 8. Since v. 7 says we are ministers of the gospel and v. 8 focuses on preaching, let me specifically address pastors.
- Pastors must take up this stewardship and lead their churches to take the light to the nations, especially the unreached (6,800) and unengaged. It is God’s plan that they are made “partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel” (3:6).
- No church will be more mission minded with a heart for the nations than their pastors.
- In *Key to the Missionary Problem*, Andrew Murray quotes the words of George Fredrick Pentecost, pastor of Bethany Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia delivered April 1900 at a major mission conference in New York City:

To the pastor belongs the privilege and the responsibility of solving the foreign missionary problem. Until the pastors of our churches wake up to the truth of this proposition, and the foreign work becomes a passion in their own hearts and consciences, our Boards may do what they can, by way of devising forward movements or organizing new methods for raising money from the churches, yet the chariot wheels of missions will drive heavily.

Every pastor holds his office under Christ’s commission, and can only fulfill it when, as a missionary bishop, he counts the whole world his fold. The pastor of the smallest church has the power to make his influence felt around the world. No pastor is worthy of his office who does not put himself into sympathy with the magnificent breadth of the great commission, and draw inspiration and zeal from its worldwide sweep.

The pastor is not only instructor, but the leader of his congregation. He must not only care for their souls, but direct their activities. If there are churches that do not give and do not pray for foreign missions, it is because they have pastors who are falling short of the command of Christ. I feel almost warranted in saying that, as no congregation can long resist the enthusiastic pastor, so, on the other hand, a congregation can hardly rise above cold indifference or lack of conviction regarding missions on the part of the pastor. (p. 11-12).

- And note, even Satan, demons, and the host of hell that is now under Christ's feet (1:21) will know of this gospel as the revelation of the manifold witness of God (3:10).
- God has designed that the Church and the proclamation of the gospel would put on display His glorious perfections in the whole universe, including the world of the demonic.
- John Piper says it as only he can, "Missions exists, and the ingathering of God's elect exists, and the church exists so that angels would stand in awe of the wisdom of God. God displays his wisdom in history so that the worship of heaven would be white hot with admiration and wonder. The good angels never fell into sin, and only marvel at the wisdom of God's grace from outside, so to speak. No angel will ever sing Amazing Grace. "How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me." They are not wretches and have never been lost. This is *our* song and *our* joy, and they can never sing it or know it. But God wanted them to see it. And so his aim in history is to display the wisdom of his grace in the way he saves the church by justifying the ungodly from all nations by faith alone on the basis of Christ alone. And the angels love to stoop down and get as close as they can to the wonders of redemption and how God prepared and saved and gathered his church (1 Peter 1:12).

And the demons (Ephesians 6:12)—the evil principalities and powers—[they] must look ... (The Unfathomable Riches of Christ, For All Peoples... 10-24-04).

- 6) The gospel is grounded in the truth that Christ dwells in us by faith in order that we may know His love that surpasses knowledge and that we may glorify God forever and ever.

3:14-21

- The church universal is a family made up of all the believers of all the ages (v. 14-15). This is what the gospel accomplishes.

- We are strengthened with power by God in order that Christ may dwell in our hearts thru faith (v. 16-17). It is God's work, all of it!
- This gospel grounds us in love (v. 17) and enables us to comprehend the greatness of Christ's love for us (v. 18-19) and to also be filled with all the fullness of God (v. 19).
- All of this is to renown to the glory of God in the church throughout all generations (v. 20-21).
- The Church, as a covenant community, has been formed by God to proclaim His gospel, celebrate His grace, demonstrate His power, and communicate His glory throughout all generations.
- So a great question: "How can we in the church best unleash the people of God in the Spirit of God with the [gospel] of God for the glory of God in the world?" (Platt, *Radical Together*, 3).

II. The Gospel Demands Certain Practical Actions. Eph. 4-6

- The gospel is the main thing but not the only thing when rightly understood. It is certainly the prior and primary thing! It is the essential thing that gives birth to "gospel" implications.
- It is the hub of the wheel that supports the spokes or rods that connect to the rim of the wheel.
- Without the hub there is no wheel. Without the gospel there is no church. Therefore, it is central and essential.
- Ephesians 4:1-6:24 identifies 10 spiritual spokes that are (super) natural outgrowths of the gospel. These specifics of "gospel life in the church" are most instructive in our 21st century context where we often confuse that which is essential with that which is optional, that which is good with that which is best. I am doubly amazed both by what we find addressed in these 3 chapters and what we don't find.

- 1) We develop a body life that teaches and encourages the Christian graces. 4:1-3

- There is a life that bears eloquent witness to the power of the gospel (4:1). It shows the gospel in “life transformation.” There is a “worthy walk” that witnesses to the power of the gospel. It is a walk energized by the Spirit that, motivated by “gospel gratitude,” reflects Christ individually and corporately. It is an approach to the Christian life that asks: 1) “What did Jesus do”, before it asks 2) “What would Jesus do?” (Keller tweet) These “gospel graces” include humility, gentleness, patience, love for one another, an eagerness to maintain unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (4:2-3).
 - By its very nature a gospel-centered church will strive for unity, a unity grounded in the Word and maintained by the Spirit (4:3).
 - Gospel graced churches do not get sidetracked or split over issues like building proposals, musical styles, racial differences, secondary theological matters or social class distinctions. They have a higher and more worthy agenda.
- 2) We develop a body life that teaches and encourages sound doctrine with a missionary impulse. 4:4-6
- “One” (7 times)
 - Trinitarian context again(vs. 4-6)
 - Point is simple: Doctrine matters and must be taught. Doctrine matters and must be lived.
 - ★ Example David Platt and “Secret Church” April 2011 “Salvation” 6 hours! Has done this 9 times!
 - Have a Confession of Faith that is biblical and bold.
 - Teach that Confession of Faith intentionally and in-depth.
 - Tim Keller says we need to teach the Bible both diachronically (Historically: Creation→Fall→Redemption→Consumation) and also synchronically (Systematically:

Revelation, God, Humanity, Christ, Holy Spirit, Salvation, Church, Last Things). Both are necessary. I agree.

- But, doctrine is not just important for the life of the church within. It also impacts the life of the church within and her call to missions.
- In a message entitled, “One Lord, One Spirit, One Body For All Time and All Peoples”, (11-8-92), John Piper again rings and rings correctly, I believe, the missions bell embedded in this text. In the midst of expounding Ephesians 4:1-6 he asks, “What does this [text] have to do with missions? What does it have to do with the task of the church to evangelize the unreached peoples of the world? The answer is that since there is only one God (the Father of all who believe, Ephesians 2:12) and only one Lord (the Lord Jesus Christ, Ephesians 1:2f), and only one Spirit (the Holy Spirit poured out from the Father by the Son, Acts 2:33) and only one faith (faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, Ephesians 1:13, 15) and only one baptism (into Christ in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Matthew 28:19f), and only one body (the church of God gathered with Jesus as the head, Ephesians 4:15)—since there is only one God and one faith, we must take the news of this God and this faith to the nations. “There is no other name under heaven,” Peter said, “given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Other religions and other lords will not save. You might think that this text is about church unity, not about missions. But think again. The issue at Ephesus, ... was the issue of whether Gentiles could be full fellow heirs with Jews in the body of Christ. The answer was that Christ reconciled both in ONE body to God through the cross (2:16). Both have access in ONE Spirit to the Father (2:18). Those who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ and made into ONE new man (2:15). So the issue of unity for Paul is created by the mission of the church to “those who were far off”—the Gentiles, the nations—far off spiritually and far off culturally and

sometimes geographically. In other words, the uniqueness of Christ—the fact that there is only one Christ, and only one God, and only one faith—is the foundation for mission outside the church and the foundation of unity inside the church. If there were many true gods, and many Saviors, and many valid faiths, and many baptismal entrances into many genuine bodies of redeemed people, there would be little need for missions the way Paul sees the need. But there is only one God and one Lord and one faith and one baptism. And so this salvation truth must be proclaimed to all creation—to all the peoples.”

3) We develop a body life that teaches and encourages the exercise of grace gifts. 4:7-11

- The church is entrusted (graced) with servants of the Word. In fact all servants of Christ are graced with spiritual gifts sovereignly given by Christ the ascended Lord who again will “fill all things” (4:10).
- These are grace gifts not natural talents or abilities.
- All receive such gifts. No one left out.
- These gifts are sovereignly bestowed by Christ. He makes the choice, not you.
- Certain gifts, such as these in Ephesians 4 (cf. also Rom 12:3-8; 1 Cor 12-14; 1 Peter 4:10-11) are given to leaders in the Church for the purpose of fulfilling 4:12-16.

4) We develop a body life that teaches and encourages all saints to engage their work of ministry. 4:12-16

- Craig Bartholomew and Michael Goheen note, “The church’s life *begins* by receiving the life of the Spirit through the gospel: it is established upon Christ and rooted in Him. But the church’s life also *continues* by faith in the gospel (Galatians 3:2-3; Colossians 2:6-7) as the believers are brought along by the Spirit to completion, adulthood, fruitfulness: the “fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-16)... This is the church: a people

who live in a new world with a new identity and a new relationship to God.” (*The Drama of Scripture*, 192-93).

- The church is equipped to be servants of the Word.
- Note Paul’s airtight logic in these verses!
 - 1) God’s gifted men equip the saints for the work of the ministry (v. 12).
 - 2) Saints doing the work of the ministry builds the body (v. 12).
 - 3) Building the body results in unity in the faith and knowledge of the Son (v. 13).
 - 4) This process produces a mature body that looks and acts like Christ (4:13).
 - 5) This mature body is prepared to recognize and handle doctrinal heresy (4:14).
 - 6) This mature body will speak truth but do it in love (4:15).
 - 7) This mature body grows in every way into Christ (4:15).
 - 8) This mature body has each part working properly (4:16).
 - 9) This mature body keeps on growing (4:16).
 - 10) This mature body builds itself up [also] in love (4:16).

(Love occurs 22 times in Ephesians. So crucial is it to the health of the church and the display of the gospel, it is found in all 6 chapters of Ephesians).

- All of this implies, I believe, a tangible covenant relationship and community. Membership in a local, visible, body of believers involves committing our lives in covenant to one another in community in love to “show the Gospel to each other and to spread the Gospel to the nations.”

5 Questions to consider:

- Are you working yourself out of a job?
- Are you a Word-saturated church?
- Are you a theologically informed people?
- Are you a spiritually wise congregation?

- Are you a spiritually humble people?

5) We develop a body life that teaches and encourages us to learn Christ and live as Christ.

4:17-5:20

- If anyone ever doubted that there are definite imperatives that flow from the gospel they only need to read these verses. In 4:25-5:18 Paul admonishes the Ephesians by means of 23 imperatives of command that teach us what a gospel transformed life looks like.
- These good works (Eph 2:10) are not in any sense the basis of salvation. Rather they are the result and fruit of salvation, motivated by “gospel gratitude.”
- Because we have learned Christ (4:20), been taught the truth in Jesus (4:21) to put off the old self and who we used to be (4:22), and been renewed in the spirit of our minds (4:23) to put on the new self after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness (4:24)... then, we will:
 - 1) speak the truth to one another (4:25)
 - 2) be angry over sin but not sin ourselves (4:26)
 - 3) avoid giving the devil a foothold (4:27)
 - 4) not steal but work hard in order to help others in need (4:28)
 - 5) watch how we talk (4:29)
 - 6) not grieve the Spirit (4:30) Note the gospel grounding!
 - 7) put away bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, malice (4:31)
 - 8) be kind to one another (4:32)
 - 9) be tender with one another (4:32)
 - 10) forgive as God in Christ forgave us (4:32) Note the gospel grounding!
 - 11) be imitators of God (5:1)
 - 12) walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us (5:2) Note the gospel grounding!

- 13) avoid sexual immorality (5:3)
 - 14) avoid all impurity (5:3)
 - 15) avoid covetousness which is idolatry (5:3, 5)
 - 16) avoid filthiness (5:4)
 - 17) avoid foolish talk (5:4)
 - 18) avoid crude joking (5:4)
 - 19) be thankful (5:4)
 - 20) not be deceived by lies (5:6)
 - 21) walk as children of light for that is who we are (5:8)
 - 22) pursue what is good, right and pure (5:9)
 - 23) seek to please the Lord (5:10)
 - 24) expose works of darkness and not participate in them (5:7-8, 11-14)
 - 25) walk in wisdom (5:15) cf. 1 Cor 1:30!
 - 26) use our time wisely (5:16)
 - 27) seek to understand God's will (5:17)
 - 28) be filled with the Spirit (5:18)
 - 29) address one another in spiritual singing (5:19)
 - 30) be thankful always and for everything (5:20)
 - 31) submit to one another out of worship of Christ (5:21)
- The insights of Don Carson and Tim Keller are “spot on” as we consider just how the gospel flows from Jesus into the Christian life:
 “Not only does the gospel of Jesus Christ gather into itself all the trajectories of Scripture, but under the terms of the new covenant, all of Christian life and thought grow out of what Jesus has accomplished. This good news not only declares that God justifies sinners so that our status before him is secured but also that he regenerates us

and establishes us in his saving kingdom. The gospel deals with more than the judicial, our standing before God, for it is the power of God that brings salvation (Rom 1:18)—a comprehensive transformation. Everything is secured by Jesus’ death and resurrection; everything is empowered by the Spirit, whom he bequeaths; everything unfolds as God himself has ordained this great salvation.

Especially telling are the motive clauses [what I describe as “gospel gratitude”] that underlie Christian ethics. We forgive others because we ourselves have been forgiven (Matt 6:12-15; Mark 11:25; Col 3:13). We walk in humility because no one has ever displayed more humility than our Savior in abandoning his rights as God and dying our death (Phil 2:3-8). We hunger to live out the love on display among the persons of the Godhead because it was out of love that the Father determined that all should honor the Son even as they honor the Father, and because it was out of love for his Father that the Son went to the cross to do his Father’s will (John 5:20, 23; 14:30-31). Our ultimate model for husband-wife relationships is predicated on the gospel: the bond between Christ and the church (Eph 5:22-33). We hunger for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord, because the Holy One has not only established our status before his Father but is at work to make us holy (Heb 12:14; Phil 2:12-13).

As all the wretched malice of assorted idolatries and transgressions is precisely what the gospel of Christ overcomes, we hunger to live as Jesus lived, our Savior and Lord, living another way in our individual lives, in our homes, in our world (Gal 5:16-26; Eph 4:17-6:18).” (D. A. Carson and Timothy Keller, *Gospel-Centered Ministry*, 14-15).

6) We develop a body life that teaches and encourages Gospel-centered homes. 5:21-6:4

- Paul grounds his theology of family in 4 ways:
 - 1) Husbands → the atonement! (5:25)
 - 2) Wives → Christology/Ecclesiology (5:22-24)

3) Marriage → Creation (5:31)

4) Parenting → 10 Commandments (moral law of the Old Testament)

- The gospel impacts how we do marriage and family.
- Question: how are you training your people to enjoy a gospel-centered marriage and family?
- Question: how are you modeling a gospel-centered marriage and family?

7) We develop a body life that teaches and encourages Gospel-centered workplaces. 6:5-9

- Question: how are you preparing your people to live out in the gospel in the public arena?
- Question: how are you invading the public square with a gospel witness?
- Question: how are you training your people to tell the gospel where they work, go to school, engage in sports?
- Question: have you been seduced in constructing Christian forts and cocoons?!
- The gospel needs to go where the lost are located!

8) We develop a body life that teaches and encourages strategies for spiritual warfare. 6:10-18

- Spiritual warfare reminds us we are in war time not peace time. We are soldiers who have weapons and we are called to fight the good fight of faith. However, the gospel reminds us that we do not fight for victory; we fight from victory!
- We must train and arm our people to attack and defeat 1) a roaring lion who would destroy us (1 Pet 5:8); 2) false philosophies (Col 2:8); 3) false religions (1 Cor 10:20); 4) false prophets/ministers (2 Cor 11:14-15); 5) false doctrine (1 John 4:1-6); 6) false morality (2 Thess 2:7-12).
- We must warn them that his most effective devises include anger, pride, worry, worldliness, lying, immorality, doubt, and idolatry.

- Weapons for warfare...

- The armor of God.

- * A reflection of the character of God.

- Spiritual warfare is not primarily about technique, but character.
 - Spiritual warfare is about ongoing gospel transformation.
 - We need to appropriate the character of God.

Note that the armor of God is grounded in Old Testament truth circulating in the Servant of the Lord section of Scripture. “To put on the whole armor of God is to put on Christ!”

Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.
Isaiah 11:5

He put on righteousness as his breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on his head; he put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak.
Isaiah 59:17

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, “Your God reigns!”
Isaiah 52:7

He made my mouth like a sharpened sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me into a polished arrow and concealed me in his quiver.
Isaiah 49:2

- What are the means whereby you are growing the church you lead:
 - 1) To grow strong in God and His power? 6:10, 16
 - 2) To withstand Satanic assault? 6:11-13
 - 3) To fasten about them truth and righteousness? 6:14
 - 4) To walk in the gospel of peace? 6:15
 - 5) To live in faith? 6:16
 - 6) Think well concerning their salvation? 6:17
 - 7) To use the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God? 6:17

8) To pray? 6:18

- great weakness of the American church
- great weakness of most American Christians

These are good questions we all should continually be asking ourselves.

9) We develop a body life that teaches and encourages the bold proclamation of the gospel.

6:18-21

- Note the crucial role of prayer (6:18).
- Note the prayer for boldness (6:19-20).
- Note the calling we all have: ambassadors (6:20).

10) We develop a body life that teaches and encourages love for the Lord Jesus. 6:21-24

- Love is the distinguishing mark of the church.
- Jonathan Edwards in *Charity and It's Fruit* raised the question, "What makes the Church like heaven?" He had a one word answer: "Love."
- Note Paul places in close proximity love for the brothers (and sisters) and love for Christ, a love he prays will be "incorruptible" (*NIV*), "undying"; *NKJV*, "in sincerity").

Conclusion:

1) Today on planet earth King Jesus has a body that the Bible calls the Church. It has eyes that see the needs of this world. It has ears that hear the cries of the nations. It has a mouth that can proclaim the gospel. It has legs that can walk, arms that can serve, feet that can be blistered and backs that can be whipped all for the sake of Christ and the gospel.

This body makes Christ real to this world. Our goal is not to build buildings, grow budgets, acquire knowledge or be captivated by social agendas. Our aim is to fill this world with Christ and His gospel, "the fullness of him who fills all in all" (Eph 1:23). Our gospel strategies should reflect this. Our ecclesiastical strategies should reflect this. It is this and this alone that sets the agenda for the Church. Any other will fall short. Any other is not worth having.

2) Matt Carter along with Darrin Patrick sums it up so well, “How can my church be different? God has given us his Word and his life so that we can know his heart. We know *how* to be a church that looks like him—it’s no mystery! We follow Jesus and refuse to allow our hearts to serve idols of comfort and security. We embrace the visions of the living God, who is on the move in the midst of our cities [and I would add, “the world”].... God has invited you, as part of his church, to join him in redeeming a world broken by the effects of sin. The only question now is: *Will you go?*” (*For The City*, 133-34).