

Expecting to Change the World  
Essential Practice Number Six of the Missional Congregation  
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In *The Mustard Seed Conspiracy*, author Tom Sine comments, “It is still God’s policy to work through the embarrassingly insignificant to change his world and create his future.” Missional congregations know that, and they view the world through those lenses. They are not congregations which exist only to repeat religious rituals and preserve traditions of the past. Nor do they see simple survival and status quo as satisfactory signals of kingdom impact. Instead, missional congregations are churches of *great expectations*.

For the very point of the Kingdom of God is transformation. As God has radically transformed disciples who demonstrate the impact of His reign through their lives (Romans 12:2), missional congregations expect to see the world transformed as the Holy Spirit moves and acts through the Word of God through their involvement and ministry. They believe that the Gospel is still the power of God to transform all who believe.

In *Shaped by God’s Heart--The Passion and Practices of Missional Churches*, missiologist Milfred Minatrea observes that missional congregations behave in a distinct manner by expecting to change the world. Such congregations exhibit a dynamic, contagious, optimistic spirit of high expectation and anticipation, trusting that the Word will not return void, but will accomplish what God desires and achieve the purpose for which He sent it (Isaiah 55:11).

Missional congregations expect to see spiritual transformation taking place in four basic domains:

**1. Immediate Relationships.** If it is to be authentic, mission must begin at home.. People closest to us observe the way we live. Sometimes it is true that, “What you are doing speaks so loudly, I cannot hear what you are saying!” So as disciples seek to be authentic witnesses to the transforming work of Christ in their lives, it can be helpful to confess to those of closest relationship with us: *Listen, I want to ask you to forgive me. The way I have lived has not always shown the difference God is making in my life. I have been a poor witness in my words and actions. Recently, I began to realize how far I was from the person God wanted me to be. I just wanted you to know that I am sorry for the poor example I have been as a follower of Christ.*

**2. Global Community.** Internet technology is “shrinking” the globe. It is in this “small, shrinking world” that disciples live and work. And although these disciples live in a local community, they often have relationships around the globe. And wherever those relationships are lived out constitutes a part of their mission field: persons and places where God brings about *spiritual transformation*.

**3. Primary Personal Mission Fields.** The primary personal mission field is the sphere in which disciples have ongoing relationships with the largest number of unsaved or uncommitted people. While the identification of the PPMF does not require sharing Christ with all persons, the disciple will sense greater responsibility for sharing Christ with those of more frequent contact and opportunity for deeper relationships. Prayer for the conversion of those individuals becomes an authentic missional expression.

**4. Touching the World.** Missional congregations communicate God's grace and saving activity in the world. Their passion for the nations is evident often by participation in short and longer term mission trips and by developing ongoing relationships with particular peoples and nations, often assisting with church planting in those nations.

Recently I was struck by a string of words uttered by a district mission executive. Reflecting on the common plight of many congregations which value maintenance above missions, he spoke about the gap between *belief* and *behavior*. And when the congregation no longer expects to see the Lord bringing about spiritual transformation through its ministry of the Word, then that congregation's behavior does not align with its belief.

*... but you will receive POWER when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth. Acts 1:8*

Holy Spirit, bless and invigorate all Christian congregations, igniting them, by your Word of Promise, to *expect to change the world!*