



MONASTIC PRACTICES AND THE MISSIO DEI: TOWARDS A SOCIALLY-TRANSFORMATIVE UNDERSTANDING OF MISSIONAL PRACTICE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE NORTHUMBRIA COMMUNITY

To be a missional people means to live according to the reality of the presence of the kingdom

of God that is now at hand. This radical call to missional living requires us to practice intentional spiritual disciplines that are consistent with kingdom values and which work for the benefit and transformation of the watching world. In the new missionary context in which we now find ourselves in the West, we need to refocus our theological reflection away from personal application of the disciplines and towards a consideration of the socially-transformative aspects of spiritual formation. This article reflects theologially on the practices and ethos of the Northumbria Community as a means towards the elucidation of vital questions about the kind of practices that can enrich and sustain the church missional vocation as the pilgrim people of God in a context of cultural exile. Moving towards a socially transformative understanding of the spiritual disciplines, this article poses the question of how the church can embrace a missional way for living. The article draws on the story of the Northumbria Community to explore how churches can become communities of disciples, which are able to preach the gospel as a transformative message of good news for the poor. The authors consider these issues by addressing them from four perspectives: (1) Towards a social understanding of missional practice (2) Intentional availability and vulnerability as a pattern of missional living; (3) Monastic disciplines and missional practice; and (4) Missional living in a post-Christendom culture. The underlying theological conviction of this article is that the missio Dei must be considered as both the object and point of departure of all missional practice.

In the same way that the gifts of the Spirit are tools for mission and not toys for the church, so spiritual disciplines are not self help aids for a happier life but rather the means for the transformation of the human heart and the world.

The call to mission is a call to live according to the reality of the presence of the kingdom of God that is 'now at hand', adopting spiritual disciplines and practices that are consistent with kingdom values for the benefit and transformation of the world.

Although much has been written about both the disciplines of spiritual formation on the one hand, and the emergence of new missional communities on the other, there has been surprisingly little theological reflection on the ways in which the spiritual disciplines can inform and invigorate missional practice. This article seeks to redress this deficit by drawing on the monastic disciplines that help to sustain the missional practices of the Northumbria Community.

The Northumbria Community is one of many new monastic expressions emerging across Europe and North America. As a community covenanted together within the love of Christ, we are seeking to embody the light and hope of the gospel in the midst of a changing culture through a disciplined and radical appropriation of monastic practices with the aim of bringing renewal to the church and hope to society. Our experience of living as a pilgrim people in cultural exile in the midst of a rapidly changing society has taught us that the integrity of our witness to the kingdom of God requires a full integration

of life, community and mission. Our desire to contribute towards realising the *missio Dei*, as our friend, Parush Parushev, rightly asserts, is ‘defined by a holistic involvement with the local context, personally and as a community of the followers of the Way of Jesus Christ, as an authentic witness for the Kingdom of God, bringing hope in cultures of fragmentation and despair.’^[1]

In the new missionary context in which we now find ourselves in the West, we need to refocus our theological reflection away from personal application of the disciplines and towards a consideration of the socially-transformative aspects of spiritual formation. We can begin by asking such questions as: ‘What are the disciplines of the spiritual life that will enrich and sustain our missional practice?’ ‘How can these disciplines contribute towards the transformation of not only our hearts but our homes, streets, neighbourhoods, public institutions and societies?’ ‘How can the church move towards a social understanding of missional practice so that the gospel will become “good news for the poor” (Luke 4:18)?’

This article will reflect theologically on these questions by addressing them from four perspectives: (1) Towards a social understanding of missional practice (2) Intentional availability and vulnerability as a pattern of missional living; (3) Monastic disciplines and missional practice; and (4) Missional living in a post-Christendom culture.

(1) Towards a Social Understanding of Missional Practice

Mission, as Parush Parushev and other leading missiologists have maintained, involves the extension of the kingdom of God into every sphere of life. Once considered practically synonymous with ‘evangelism’, the word, ‘mission’^[2], now has a much wider currency, encompassing not only proclamation (κήρυγμα), but also community or (κοινωνία) and service (διακονία).^[3] This holistic understanding of the mission corresponds with the conviction that the *missio Dei* is concerned just as much with the transformation of whole societies into kingdom-likeness as it is with the renovation of individual characters into Christ-likeness.

The gospel is a transformative manifesto for social justice to be realised in the here-and-now. Ever since the ‘social gospel’ was proclaimed by Walter Rauschenbusch^[4] and others at the beginning of the last century, missionaries and theologians have come to recognise that, as James McClendon put it, ‘The church must preach not only individual conversion but the transformation of economics and politics also’.^[5] God’s vision for the redemption of the world encompasses every aspect of human life, including the casting down of the strongholds of injustice and the systems that degrade social life, tarnish God’s creation and exploit people made in God’s image.

The inward journey of spiritual formation has profound social implications. Jürgen Moltmann insists that Christian spirituality is not a private issue: ‘to be crucified with Christ is no longer a purely private and spiritualized matter, but develops into a political theology of the following of the crucified Christ’.^[6] Dallas Willard and Don Simpson likewise point out that, ‘In sending out his disciples, Jesus set in motion a *perpetual world* revolution, one that is still in process and will continue until God’s will

is done on earth as it is in heaven'.[\[7\]](#)

Spiritual formation that doesn't translate into a transformed life that engages with the world runs the risk of self-indulgence, rendering spirituality nothing more than a satisfying leisure activity that bolsters the ego but which diminishes participation in God's radical kingdom. Spiritual formation addresses the need of transformed hearts, for without such, the ability to embrace the values of the kingdom are unattainable e.g. to love our enemies, bless those who curse us, lend and expect nothing in return, invest in heaven, forgive our enemies, live generously, serve sacrificially, deny ourselves, etc.

The spiritual revolution inaugurated by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount transforms not only our beliefs, ideas and habits, but also our social relations. The missional imperative to proclaim Jesus as Lord, as Lesslie Newbigin asserted, 'implies a commitment to make good that confession in relation to the whole life of the world - its philosophy, its culture, and its politics no less than the personal lives of its people'. Newbigin rightly maintained that, 'The Christian mission is thus to act out in the whole life of the whole world the confession that Jesus is Lord of all'.[\[8\]](#)

The natural overflow of personal transformation into Christ likeness is the extension of the kingdom of God so that social structures are transformed to the extent that justice 'rolls down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream' (Amos 5:24). Whereas God's desire is for individuals to be transformed into the likeness of Christ (Romans 8:29), his vision for communities, societies and nations is for them to be transformed into the likeness of his kingdom (Revelation 11:15). Spiritual formation is therefore not merely a matter of personal expediency or individual sanctification, but of critical eschatological urgency as we await the in-breaking of the eschaton and the time when the kingdoms of this world will have become the kingdoms of our God (Revelation 11:15; 22:2).

(2) Intentional Availability and Vulnerability as a Pattern of Missional Living

The Northumbria Community evolved out of a merger, which formally took place in 1990, between two groups of believers: the Nether Springs Trust under the leadership of John Skinner and Andy Raine, and Northumbria Ministries, led by Roy Searle. These two groups, both of which had their origins in the late-1970s, were concerned with exploring a 'new monasticism' and emerged out of such fundamental questions as, 'Who is it that you seek?' 'How then shall we live?' and 'How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?' These questions in turn informed the Rule of what became the Northumbria Community.

The Rule comprises two basic elements: Availability and Vulnerability. Availability entails a commitment to respond to God's call in the practice of solitude, silence, examen, prayer and hospitality and 'a willingness to journey for the love of God wherever the Father leads'. Vulnerability is expressed by 'being teachable in the discipline of prayer ... applying the wisdom of the Scriptures and through a mutual accountability in the advocacy of soul friends'. Vulnerability also extends to a commitment to value relationships more than reputation and to live 'openly among people as church without walls' and to look for 'the kingdom of God in the streets'.[\[9\]](#)

The Community's Rule of Life conveys compassion as the defining characteristic of the kingdom of God and sacrificial love (ἀγάπη) as both the object and point of departure of all Christian mission. Compassion stands to mission in the same relation as fire to flame; compassion is the heart and soul of mission. This integration of mission and compassion is consistent with Lesslie Newbigin's notion of 'mission as love in action' [10] and Paul's ringing declaration about the centrality of love, (1 Corinthians 13).

In the Community we believe that the missional challenges confronting the churches in the contemporary post-Christendom context can be addressed not merely by developing new strategies, mission statements or new visions; rather, what is needed is a renewed focus on the central component of the mission of Jesus as depicted in the gospels: compassion (Matthew 9:36; 14:14; Mark 6:34; Luke 7:13, 10:33, 15:20). Visions and programmes come and go, but gospel values endure. Visions and strategies must be buttressed by a clear set of values derived from gospel principles that are lived out in the context of a community (κοινωνία) that is characterised by service (διακονία) and sacrificial love (ἀγάπη).

The missional practices of the Northumbria Community arise out of our desire to reach and serve people with Christ's compassion. This 'vision', is rooted in the Community's Rule of Availability and Vulnerability. We believe these core values emphasise important aspects of Jesus' ministry as narrated in the gospels and provide a framework for our engagement in the *missio Dei*. Faithful mission thus depends on authentic living. As a community, we seek to live authentically by acting in accordance with the precepts of our Rule, which is rooted in an inclusive vision of radical, generous and hospitable witness to the kingdom of God, particularly as it is expressed in the Sermon on the Mount. The various practices we embrace can be seen not only as means of expressing the narrative coherence that sustains our moral life but also as expressions of our participation in the *missio Dei*. These practices include contemplation and action, solitude and hospitality,

(3) Monastic Disciplines and Missional Practice: Hospitality, Contemplation and Celebration

i. Hospitality as a Missional Practice

Our Rule includes a call to be available, not only to God but to the needs of our neighbours through prayer and hospitality. In terms of mission, the Rule issues a radical call to practice hospitality, not just to enrich our own community life, but also as a missional imperative that encompasses both availability and vulnerability. There are encouraging signs that mainstream churches are beginning to think seriously about hospitality as a missional practice. In 2012 the World Mission and Anglican Communion Panel published a volume on mission, which refers to the practice of hospitality as an integral part of the *missio Dei*:

Hospitality, as the mutual indwelling one with another, becomes the 'modus operandi' of mission as those in common participation in the life and mission of God meet and receive from each other ... Hospitality is an attitude of the heart which is about openness to the other ... This

mirrors the hospitality of the Trinity as God chooses to open himself to the other through the Incarnation and to subject himself to the created order ... It is about a generous acknowledgement and meeting of common humanity as well as meeting the needs of humanity, emotional, spiritual and physical, with generosity. As such it mirrors the activity of God towards creation.[\[11\]](#)

The Community's Mother House, Nether Springs, exists to provide heart, home, hospitality and hope to all who visit. It is an expression of the 'monastic heart' of the Community's ethos as well as being an administrative centre for much of the life and work of the wider Community.[\[12\]](#)

Our Rule of Availability and Vulnerability emphasises the crucial role of hospitality in the life and teaching of Jesus: 'Jesus was prepared to make friends with people who were marginalised in the society of his day and to risk misunderstanding in the process. We should do the same'.[\[13\]](#)

The trouble is that hospitality is hard work! The cynical aphorism - 'hospitality is making people feel at home when you wish they were' - contains a great deal of truth. Not even the most enthusiastic extrovert can be hospitable *all* the time. We should heed the warning of Dietrich Bonhoeffer who said, 'Let him who cannot be alone beware of community. He will only do harm to himself and to the community'.[\[14\]](#)

In order to avoid the discrepancy between idealistic aspiration and actual conduct, our practice of hospitality must be intentionally nurtured and sustained by the disciplines of solitude, silence and prayer.[\[15\]](#) Dietrich Bonhoeffer warned that, 'One who wants fellowship without solitude plunges into the void of words and feelings'.[\[16\]](#) Thomas Merton similarly remarked that, 'It is in deep solitude that I find the gentleness with which I can truly love my brothers ... Solitude and silence teach me to love my brothers for what they are, not for what they say'.[\[17\]](#)

It may seem unusual to think of solitude as a key component of mission. But this is only because our evangelical missional paradigms have so often been shaped by the busyness and activism of our contemporary culture, which causes us all too often to associate mission with 'doing' things. This activist understanding of mission seems to present a stark contrast to the missional practice of Jesus, who began his public ministry by spending forty days in the desert (Matthew 4:1-11) and who often 'withdrew ... to a deserted place by himself' (Matthew 14:13).[\[18\]](#) If we regard hospitality as a missional imperative, then our participation in the *missio Dei* requires that we engage in disciplined practices, such as solitude, silence and prayer that will sustain our commitment to hospitality and lend substance and authenticity to our evangelistic and missional programmes.

ii. The Discipline of Contemplation as a Missional Imperative

The commitment to a life of contemplative prayer helps Community Companions to focus on God

and to be inwardly transformed, as the Rule puts it, 'through saturation by Scripture'. Exposure to God in the 'cell of our hearts' leads to inward change. Contemplation is transformative and a contemplative spirit is cultivated in the midst of ordinary, everyday life. A sustained reflection on the ways in which the spiritual disciplines of contemplation and action are applied could give rise to new missional practices that might help the much-needed renewal and reimagining of the contemporary church.

The Community's Rule of Availability entails a commitment to be actively engaged in reading the Bible ('saturating ourselves in the Scriptures') both alone and together, studying, meditating and reflecting on the its narratives. The cultivation of this holy habit serves the process of spiritual formation, the goal of which is Christ-likeness. The Community's approach to contemplation and action stands as a helpful contrast to churches that may be inclined to regard spiritual disciplines such as prayer and Bible study as activities that emanate primarily from what is heard from the pulpit on a Sunday morning. Similarly, action is seen not in terms of activities or tasks to be carried out but as the outward manifestation of a commitment to participate in the *missio Dei* through continual, life-long meditation on the Scriptures. For the Community, spiritual formation is an ongoing task that comes through ordinary activities such as washing dishes or mowing lawns just as much as through sermons or organised discipleship classes.

iii. The Discipline of Celebration as a Missional Imperative

'Celebration', writes Richard Foster, 'is central to all the Spiritual Disciplines ... Without a joyful spirit of festivity the disciplines become dull, death-breathing tools in the hands of modern Pharisees.' [19] It is this emphasis on seeking God in the ordinariness and every day experiences of life that help us to live as a celebratory people. Celebration is one of the great outward expressions of Christian hope and the Northumbria Community is committed to celebrating the hope that is the overflow of the love which, as the Apostle Paul writes, 'has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit' (Romans 5:5).

We regard the invitation to participate in God's plan for the redemption of the world as a cause for celebration in itself. Our common participation in the *missio Dei* gives rise to a shared hope that enables Companions to celebrate the joy of companionship with people who are travelling a similar journey in faith. So, for example, sharing in a daily office, either alone or with other Companions is a celebration of our life together in God. Meals and conversations, gatherings and community teams, 'out on the road' carry with them elements of celebration.

We seek to encourage the church to value this element of both community and celebration in their missional calling to the world. In our experience, we have discovered a way of being church that feels more like a gathering or ceilidh than a traditional church service. Every gathering becomes an opportunity to meet together; around the table of Jesus, sharing our stories, eating together and encouraging one another on our faith journeys.

Stuart and Sian Murray Williams, write about the practice of celebration facilitating the development of ‘multi-voiced churches’ in which ‘men and women, young and old, educated and illiterate, rich and poor find their voices and discover their vocations’.[20] We have discovered that in this kind of setting, people on the fringe of the church, and those outside the church feel much more comfortable because they come into a context where home, heart and hospitality are the hallmarks of the people of God instead of a meeting, service, programme or prescriptive activity. In seeking to live as a celebratory people, therefore, churches may discover that creative practices, such as dancing, singing, story-telling, poetry and painting all have a legitimate place in their gatherings as ways of participating in the *missio Dei* and reaching out to people with hope.

Taken together these disciplines of contemplation, hospitality and celebration constitute an embodied witness to the kingdom of God that the Community seeks to express through its Rule of Availability and Vulnerability.

(4) Missional Living in a Post-Christendom Culture

Sociologists of religion, theologians, missiologists and journalists have noted the rapid decline of Christianity in Western culture. Terms such as ‘the universalisation of heresy’[21], the removal of ‘the sacred canopy’[22], ‘the plurality of Christendom’[23] and even the term, ‘post-Christian era’[24] have been used to describe the general shift in Western culture away from a single, unitary worldview formerly conferred by the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Instead of lamenting the passing of an alleged golden age of Christendom when the church wielded power, we need a new missional paradigm, focused on the kingdom of God, through which to reflect upon what has gone wrong and to ask searching questions about why God might have led the church into what feels like an exile, desert experience. The challenge that confronts us is how to reclaim the subversive dynamism and vitality that characterised the pre-Christendom Christian communities, which became such a powerful and world-transforming missional movement in the first few centuries of the church.

The spiritual disciplines, sustained and undergirded by an intentional Rule of Life, offer a way of witnessing to the kingdom vision in a post-Christendom culture. The disciplines of silence, solitude, prayer, study, submission, service and celebration are rooted in the life-giving vitality of the monastic tradition, which, throughout church history has often been a radical voice speaking from the margins, reminding the mainline churches that the most basic factor in every expression of Christian spirituality is relationship with God.

At its best, however, monasticism has been more than simply a movement calling for the renewal of the church; it has also been a movement concerned with the holistic transformation of the social order and the extension of the kingdom of God outside the walls of the church to the wider culture. In the Community we often say that if you want to see the signs of the

kingdom of God, don't look within the walls of the church, but seek for the kingdom in the streets. This conviction corresponds with the Community's refusal to conform to the insipid and artificial post-enlightenment distinction between the sacred and secular realms of human activity. Standing in the Johannine tradition of the early Church Fathers and the Celtic saints, the Community affirms the sanctity of the whole of life and the teaching of the scriptures concerning the 'recapitulation (*anakephalaisios*) of all things in Christ' (Ephesians 1:10). There is no sphere of human activity that is beyond the reach of the kingdom of God and the transforming power of the light of the gospel.

When thinking about the most fundamental aim or *telos* of Christian mission in a post-Christendom context, the criteria of the success (or faithfulness) of our mission should not be determined by how many people attend our church gatherings, but rather by the extent to which we, as the people of God, live as transparent witnesses to the presence and reality of the kingdom of God.[25] This conception of the kingdom of God as a transformative vision for a new order of society may act as a catalyst for the emergence of the kind of new missional movements required for the new cultural context, which has been described in terms of 'Post-Christendom'. [26]

Living in post-Christendom means living in a context in which Christian attitudes and values are no longer the dominant factors shaping Western culture. In his book, *Church After Christendom*, Stuart Murray calls for 'action at the trans-local level' that will lead to a paradigm shift from 'institution to movement'. By taking the kingdom of God as our first point of departure, we recognise that mission originates not in the church, but in the mysterious purposes of God for the redemption of the world. Murray maintains that, according to this understanding, 'Mission is not an agenda item - it is the agenda. It is not something churches do, but a divine initiative in which churches participate. Mission, not church, is the starting point'. [27] We believe that the new monastic emphasis on heart, home and hospitality offers important 'waymarks' (Jeremiah 6:16) for today's churches as they seek to break the old paradigm, which regarded mission as a series of church-centred programmes, activities, services and planned events.

Conclusion

The Northumbria Community has derived great inspiration from Dietrich Bonhoeffer's proclamation that, 'The renewal of the church will come about through a new type of monasticism which only has in common with the old an uncompromising allegiance to the Sermon on the Mount'. [28] Such 'uncompromising allegiance' requires a disciplined and intentional appropriation of practices that are consistent with the kingdom vision of the Sermon on the Mount. In our Rule of Availability and Vulnerability, we have tried - however inadequately and imperfectly, aspiring and often perspiring! - to pioneer a way of living that does not just enrich our own relationships as a community, but which also models a way of life that invites people outside of the church to journey with us as we explore together the fundamental questions: Who is it that you seek?, How then shall we live?, and 'How shall we sing the Lord's

song in a strange land? Our practice of mission is seen in terms of inviting people to 'come and see' (John 1:39, 46) the Community as we attempt to participate in the life of the kingdom of God and to discover how to live with integrity, authenticity and hope in the midst of a culture marked by fragmentation and fear.

Seeking to rediscover the radically inclusive and holistic vision of Aiden, Cuthbert and other Celtic saints, we believe that the message of hope and new life in Christ should be brought out of church buildings and applied in transformative and creative ways to communities, homes, families, neighbourhoods and nations. In keeping with this hope, we are persuaded that the monastic virtues of compassion, humility, self-denial and practices of availability, vulnerability, contemplation and the cultivation of attentiveness to listen to the heart of God should be brought out of the cloister walls and unleashed in order to bring renewal and a reimagining to the church by facilitating the development of new paradigms of missional practice. This is the challenge and the opportunity that confronts not only the Northumbria Community, but every community that wants to make a significant and enduring contribution to the *missio Dei* in our generation.

[1]Parush R. Parushev, 'Witness, Worship and Presence: On the Integrity of Mission in Contemporary Europe'. Plenary paper for the IAMS assembly in Malaysia, 2004. Available through Dr Parushev.

[2]The term, 'mission', is, unfortunately, beset with many complexities and problems. Many Christians dislike the term because historically it has been linked to imperialist aggression and forced 'conversion' of indigenous people to Western Christianity during the colonial period. Some argue that the term should not be used at all; see, Stephen Cottrell, *From the Abundance of the Heart* (London: Longman, Darnton and Todd, 2006), xi. We use the term in the conviction that it can be redeemed both from its imperialistic associations as well as from the bland and meaningless connotations that it carries in relation to certain 'mission statements'.

[3]Vladimir Feodorov, 'Orthodox View on Theological Education as Mission', in Peter F. Penner (ed.) *Theological Education as Mission* (Neuberg: Schwarzenfeld, 2008), 69-101.

[4]Rauschenbusch claimed that the kingdom of God 'is not a matter of getting individuals to heaven, but of transforming the life on earth into the harmony of heaven'; see Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (London: Macmillan, 1913), 65.

[5]James McClendon, Jr., *Systematic Theology: Volume 2: Doctrine* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 57.

[6]Jurgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ As the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology* (SCM Press, London, 1973), 63.

[7]Willard and Simpson, *Revolution of Character: Discovering Christ's Pattern for Spiritual Transformation* (Nottingham: IVP, 2006), 13.

[8]Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 17.

[9]Northumbria Community, *A Way for Living: Introducing the Rule of the Northumbria Community* (NC, 2009), 12-17.

[10]Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 40.

[11]Janice Price and the World Mission and Anglican Communion Panel, *World-Shaped Mission: Reimagining Mission Today: Exploring New Frameworks for the Church of England in World Mission* (London: Church House Publishing, 2012), 24.

[12]Northumbria Community, *Celtic Daily Prayer*, 3-4.

[13]Northumbria Community, *A Way for Living: the Rule of the Northumbria Community* (Hetton Hall: Cloisters, 2004), 20.

[14]Dale Larsen and Sandy Larsen, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Costly Grace* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 44.

[15]Although almost thirty years have passed since it was first published, Richard Foster's *Celebration of Discipline* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), remains the best guide to the spiritual disciplines. See the chapter on solitude (pp. 84-95).

[16]Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1954), 78.

[17]Thomas Merton, in Jonathan Montaldo (ed.) *A Year with Thomas Merton* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 8.

[18]Other examples of Jesus withdrawing to solitary places in the gospels include Matthew 14:22; 17:1-9; 26:36-46; Mark 1:35; 6:31; Luke 5:16.

[19]Foster, *Celebration*, 164.

[20]Stuart and Sian Murray Williams, *Multi-Voiced Church* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2012), 3.

[21] Peter Berger, *The Heretical Imperative: Contemporary Possibilities of Religious Affirmation* (New York: Doubleday, 1980), 1.

[22] Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (London: Anchor Books, 1967).

[23] Keith Ward, *Religion and Community* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 312.

[24] Hugh McLeod, 'The Crisis of Christianity in the West: entering a post-Christian era?', in McLeod (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Christianity: World Christianities, c. 1914-c. 2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 323-347.

[25] Parush R. Parushev, 'Kingdom of Heaven', in J H Y Briggs *et al* (eds.), *A Dictionary of European Baptist Life and Thought* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009).

[26] Stuart Murray, *Post Christendom: Church And Mission In A Strange New World* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2004).

[27] Murray, *Church After Christendom* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), 137.

[28] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in G. B. Kelly and F. B. Nelson (eds.), *A Testament to Freedom: The Essential Writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, (New York: HarperOne, 1995), 424.



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