PART ONE – THE SHAPE WE’RE IN
Chapter 1 – Evolution or Revolution?

“The kind of thinking that will solve the world’s problems will be of a different order to the kind of thinking that created those problems in the first place.” - Albert Einstein

Hirsch opens with a compelling picture of creativity, survival, belonging, empowerment, sensuality, and celebration created by the Burning Man – an annual pagan desert festival in Nevada. The missional church will need to get this creative if it is going to cut it in the Western context. Hirsch urges us to see the chaotic nature of the turns at hand as diasporas, not disorder. Or as Leonard Sweet says “chaordic” – an inclination toward chaos and improvising within the constraints of broadly held Biblical values (22).

Christendom is over. Christendom was religiously social pattern that ran its course from the 11th-20th centuries. Christendom emerged as a result of the institutional partnership between church and state solidified between the 5th and 10th century in Europe. It began its decline since the emergence of the Enlightenment of the 1700's. It's all but dead now.

The church fails today because it assumes Christendom still exists. Under Christendom, the church was the center of society – all you had to do was build a steeple tall enough for everyone to see, and then they would come; that was their disposition. The disposition is now gone. We are in a post-Christian culture. Doctoring up what happens inside or walls is not the answer – no one is coming either way. We are not the dominant fixture of culture anymore and therefore can settle no longer for a maintenance position.

Don’t let your ecclesiology run you. “Christology determines missiology, and missiology determines ecclesiology,” (16).

Hirsch introduces three principles of a missional church:
1. Incarnational, not attractional, in ecclesiology.
2. Messianic, not dualistic, in spirituality (holistic worldview of sacred and secular).
3. Apostolic, not hierarchical, in leadership.

GOCN’s (www.gocn.org) list of 12 hallmarks of a missional church are listed pages 11-12.

Chapter 2 – The Missional Church

After the “Decade of Evangelism” that saw an upsurge of activity and planting, experts now question whether church planting is the way to reach people. According to Hope for the Margins by Stuart Murray and Anne Wilkinson-Hayes:

- Most churches that planted in the early 90's have not recovered sufficiently to plant again.
- Few plants have grown fast enough to plant again.
- A disturbing number of plants are failures: they close shop, remain small, or primarily experience transfer growth.
Planting almost exclusively happens where other churches are already doing well – urban and rural areas are untouched. In short, “church plants” by-in-large have planted Sunday services, not missional communities.

Shared traits amongst missional churches:

• Proximity Spaces – places where Christians and Non-Christians interact meaningfully with each other.
• Shared Projects - Christians and Non-Christians doing something together for the host community (spending time in these contexts develops huge relational ties)
• Commercial Enterprise – plant service industries in a host community – something they will find value in. People are looking for assets to the local community, not churches.
• Emerging Indigenous Faith Communities – People need to see the body of Christ in motion, not just individuals. Ideally a community of believers is present in the above ventures and a contextual onsite Christian faith gathering can take place amongst prior and emerging believers. These communities, although appearing very different, are “church.”

PART TWO-INCARNATIONAL ECCLESIOLOGY

Chapter 3 – Incarnational Approach

With Christology defining your missiology, presence becomes key. Jesus is not above us, he is one of us. Missiology enters, and stays. The church must send, not extract; centrifugal power, not centripetal. Wherever you met and befriended people, that is where you start a church. Faith is a big jump as is; don’t make it bigger by making it a cultural and relational jump as well. Incorporate elements of heterogeneity (cell churches in culture’s natural pockets) and homogeneity (celebration gatherings for all, yet infrequent/deemphasized enough not to mess with incarnational emphasis).

You cannot conceptualize the mission in terms of “in” vs. “out.” See the landscape as a web of relationships in which church members are players. Some are closer to the center of God’s will, but no one is out. It’s kind of like animals on the Australian range – you don’t need a fence for your animals, they never stray too far from the water hole at the center.

Hirsch voices frustrations that we have not put workplace people on a pedestal as the most spiritually incarnational people in the church – in fact, we’ve done the opposite.

Vince Donavan on incarnation: “Do not try to call tem back to where they were, and do not try to call them to where you are… You must have the courage to go with them to a place that neither you nor they have ever been before.” (50)

What you need to make incarnation missional, not just social:

1. Holiness – sides with the poor, speaks for the wronged, masters togetherness, and loves
2. Prayer
3. Socializing – close proximity and frequent interaction
4. Support Evangelists – Clergy should be designated to serve the lost, not just the church
5. Jesus-Talk – Bring up Jesus in conversation at every opportunity
Chapter 4 – Shape of Missional Church

If you started your church all over again from scratch, would you do it the same way? Here is what Hirsch would do…

1. **Listen to the Patients:** Don’t propose a model until you understand the natural ways a local community congregates and interacts.
2. **Finding a “Person of Peace”:** Who has a good reputation, is a catalyst, and is spiritually open? This is your open door to the community. Luke 10.5-7
3. **Multiplication over Addition:** Create a movement, not an institution.
4. **Leadership:** Change will not happen unless you find/make good leaders.
5. **Question Buildings:** Your medium is your message. You can’t say “go” if your building says “stay.”

Objectives of Incarnational Mission

1. That nonChristians would see that Jesus is “for” them as people and as a local community. Ask the community what their concerns are and what we can do to help. Be a part of what they are a part of.
2. Each local community must develop theology in their terms.
3. Meet people and start sharing life in natural ways.

Chapter 5 – Contextualized Church

Hirsch defends contextualization at length. Pitfalls of contextualization are 1) choosing a model that is the same as we’ve always done it, and 2) choosing a model simply because it “works”

Chapter 6 – Whispering to the Soul

Figure out how to speak to another’s soul. People don’t listen to experts as much as they listen to someone who has face the same problems and found a way through.

- **Excite Curiosity through Storytelling** – We often squeeze the playfulness and intrigue out of the gospel by our attempts to make it clear.
- **Provoke Wonder** – Camping, Hiking, visiting Galleries… go with nonChristians to the place where wonder begins.
- **Be Extraordinarily Loving**
- **Explore how God is working** – Watch for how God is speaking to them through their trials, successes, relationships, history, etc…
- **Focus on Jesus** – Trust is more important than creed. Don’t get caught up in the do’s and don’t’s… Jesus often forsook the contemporary religious expectations.

PART THREE-MESSIANIC SPIRITUALITY

Chapter 7 & * – The God of Israel and the Renewal of Christianity, Action as Sacrament

Orthopraxy is a concept whereby we only embrace right thinking by starting with right acting. Everyone is looking to join a faith that acts more than it theorizes and theologizes. We will be known by what we do, not what we think.
Chapter 9 – Medium is the Message
“We shape our tools and then they shape us. We invented the sermon (actually we borrowed the
technique from the Greek and Roman philosophers), and then it reinvented us,” (151).

Mediums that need to be reevaluated for how they are shaping our message:
- Sermons – let the expert teach you
- Buildings – Come join us and hide from the rest of the world
- Seminaries – spiritual formation is lecture
- Middle class – God wants us to be safe, secure, separate and prosperous

Interesting charts on pages 157-158 show how church, God, and world aspects of our life all have to
come together before we will be missionally incarnational.

PART FOUR-APOSTOLIC LEADERSHIP
Chapter 10 – The Genius of APEST
Hirsch walks through Ephesians 4 – that church needs a balance of Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists,
Shepherds, and Teachers. However, we normally have tried to get by with the latter two, therefore
killing our mission. ST’s are maintenance; APE’s shake things up and reinvent the future.

Chapter 11 – Imagination and the Leadership Task
Where’s the creativity? In light of church failures, why do we go back to trying to do the
same the better every time? Do we really only have one arrow in our quiver? Can’t we do
something different to produce different results?

Einstein Quotes
- “Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination
  encircles the world.” – Albert Einstein, page 185
- “If you can’t imagine it, you can’t do it.” – Albert Einstein, page 187. Or as Stephen Covey
  says, “Begin with the end in mind.”
- “The kind of thinking that will solve the world’s problems will be of a different order to the
  kind of thinking that created them in the first place.” – Albert Einstein, page 189

In the world economy innovation and design are now the most sought after characteristics.
Functionality alone is not marketable. There are countless companies that made a killing on a
product, yet have long since died out, because they refused to adapt and innovate.

People won’t die for my vision; they will only die for theirs. My task as a leader is to get
people to imbed their sense of purpose a common vision for the community.

How to shift a Paradigm
• **Create Holy Dissatisfaction** – Communicate the problem before you communicate a solution. Excite them with what could be, what should be. To be a revolutionary, you have to have nothing left to lose.

• **Embrace Subversive Questioning** – Questions are subversive because they force listeners to come up with answers.
  - Is a can opener a can opener if it can’t open cans?
  - If you could start all over, would you do it the same way?
  - What would it be like if we 1) had no building, 2) could not meet on Sunday, and 3) had no pastor? Would we still have a church?

• **Use parables like Jesus Did** – Wound from behind.

• **Become a Beginner** – Think like a beginner, not an expert. Exercise unlearning. Expose the lies that sustain the illusion.

• **Take Risks** – Vertical thinking only builds on the old. Think laterally. Shift the playing field.

• **Create a Climate of Change** – Serve Ice Cream for breakfast, drive down your street in reverse, combine unusual ideas, before Edison made the light bulb he discovered 1,800 ways not to make it, have more than one idea (it’s dangerous to just have one), adopt a genius (Einstein, Kierkegaard, Buber, Bonhoeffer).

Wear Six Hats (exercise for discussing change) page 198-200.

- **White**: Seeks information without opinion. Neutral.
- **Red**: Feelings, hunches, emotions, intuition.
- **Black**: Pessimistic. Tells why it can’t work or would not be valuable.
- **Yellow**: Optimism. Looks for feasibility and possibility.
- **Green**: Creative, comes up with alternatives and new ideas.
- **Blue**: Thinks about the thinking. Asks for summaries, conclusions, and opinions from others. Tells what needs to be discussed when.

**Chapter 12 – Organizing Revolution**

Hirsch highlights Howard Snyder’s book *Signs of the Spirit* for distinctive of a renewal movement:

- Holy Discontent
- Tensions in existing structures
- Counter Cultural – more radical and potent than before
- Nonordained leaders run it. Women lead it more often than not. Movements are not building on titles or institutional power. They often start at the grass root level (Marx, Weber, etc…).
- Often starts as a mission to the poor (St. Francis, Wesley’s, Salvation Army, etc…)
- Dynamic energy captivates and enlists others

Gerlach & Hine (sociologists) claim that movements are characterized by the following elements:
• A Segmented, Cellular Organization – small & multiplying groupings carry the movement. It is easier to reproduce 10 kids than it is to grow a man 10 feet tall.
• Face-to-Face Recruitment – natural friends most readily join in
• Commitment to being different from some established order.
• Articulation of values and goals – know who they are and what they are about
• Real or perceived opposition

According to the Institute for Natural Church Development, small churches have equivalent health to the large, yet they tend to be more effective with missional growth and evangelism. Hirsch coaches interns as follows in church planting:
• Observe the organic rhythms of the host or target community.
• Watch for social patterning.
• Ask where the social centers are. Where do all the ant trails lead?
• What is church to this group of people? What is the good news for them? How would they follow Jesus/do church?