



helping cultivate the missional incarnational church

re-imagine 2008

Reading List

As part of the re-imagine course there are a number of recommended readings. While none of these are compulsory, it will obviously benefit you to engage with them as much as you are able.

We would suggest that as a church you agree together to at least a minimal reading plan and some level of assignments. That way the learning goes beyond the conceptual and into the practical.

Forge has always been grounded in an action / reflection learning model, so rather than supplying pure theoretical input that you can apply at a later date, we ask you to be practically involved in outworking the learning as you go.

To help you be discerning in your reading, these are divided into categories and I have made a few comments about each book. This list could be much longer, but I have intentionally tried to cull it to books that are really worth reading.

If you have a book that you think should be on here then let me know and I will try and include it in the next year's reading list. A few comments describing it would also be helpful.

Essential – ok so you don't have to... but if you want to get the most out of the year then this ought to be the bare minimum.

Hirsch Alan., **The Forgotten Ways** (Brazos:Grand Rapids 2006)

This is the book we will refer to throughout the course and will essentially form the skeleton of all we do. A high degree of familiarity with this book will mean the rest of what we discuss makes sense! Don't miss this one.

Hirsch Alan & Frost Michael., **The Shaping of Things to Come** (Hendirkson: Grand Rapids 2003)

This was the book that began challenging the church to think differently about how it approached mission. It presents a broad framework for missional church and also contains many foundational concepts. Its not a real easy read, but its well worth the effort.

McClaren B.D., **The Church on The Other Side** (Zondervan: Grand Rapids 1998)





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This book has dated a little but is still a great introductory read to the issues facing the church in the western world. It is easier reading than the first two, but not as comprehensive or as well conceived.

Winton Tim., **The Turning** (Picador: Sydney 2004)

You only need to read the title chapter 'The Turning' for one of the best depictions of relational mission you will ever come across. If you are easily offended by bad language or sexual concepts then it might be better if you don't read this one...

Highly recommended – these are books and articles that go a step beyond the foundational information.

Brafman O, **The starfish and the spider: the unstoppable power of leaderless organizations** (Portfolio: New York, 2006)

An interesting exploration of forms of leadership other than 'command and control'. It looks at decentralized forms of community and how they can operate.

Cole N., **Organic Church** (Jossey Bass: San Francisc, 2005)

A brilliant book on how to keep church simple and missional. Neal really knows his stuff and it is also very easy reading.

Donovan V., **Christianity Rediscovered** (Orbis: NY, 1978)

A missionary goes to African tribes and realizes he needs to completely re-think his approach to church and mission if he is genuinely connect with these people. For those who like more 'story based' reading.

Hamilton C., **Affluenza** (Allen & Unwin: Sydney 2005)

Written by an Aussie economist (not a Christian) this is a prophetic message to our nation about the excesses we indulge in and the effect it is having. Absolutely brilliant, but be prepared to be disturbed!

Holt S., **God Next Door** (Acorn: Brunswick, 2007)

This one is written by an Aussie theology lecturer in Melbourne and focuses on the simplicity of living missionally in our own communities. I read it in one evening and found it inspiring.





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Hunter G., **The Celtic Way of Evangelism** (Abingdon: Nashville 2000)

Hunter takes us back to the simple relational approach to mission used by the Celts and suggests that mission is not rocket science – just about connecting and living the gospel.

Jameison, Alan. **A Churchless Faith**. (Auckland: self published: 2001)

This is a very interesting analysis of why people leave the church and keep going in their faith. Based in New Zealand it has many parallels to our own setting. There is much to be learnt here.

McKay H., **Winter Close** (Hodder: Sydney, 2002)

A fantastic novel for a missionary to read. It explores the lives and relationships of people in one Sydney street. You will learn a lot about the dynamics of suburban interaction through this piece of fiction.

Goetz D, **Death by Suburb** (Harper Collins: San Francisco, 2006)

Subtitled 'how to keep the suburbs from killing your soul' this is an easy to read book that looks at how we can live as disciples of Jesus in the struggles of suburban life... 4WDs, lattes and plasma televisions.

Rainer T., **Simple Church** (Broadman & Holman: Nashville, 2006)

This book analyses 400 American churches and distills what it is that actually helps people become disciples. They identify 4 key principles. This is an excellent piece of research and writing.

For those who like to go deeper – these books are generally have more of a missiology focus and a 'text-book' like feel.

Bosch, David J. (1991). **Transforming Mission - paradigm shifts in theology of mission** (Orbis Books: New York)

Probably 'the' book on mission that has shaped so much of what is now developing. Its big, long, indepth but brilliant.

Drane, J. **The McDonaldization of the Church** (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2000)

John Drane argues that formulaic, business like approaches to church only serve to create a monster we would do well to avoid. He is insightful and confronting.





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Guder, Darrell. **Missional Church**. (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1998)

I haven't read this one, but its generally regarded as a classic in the area.

Newbigin, Lesslie,. **The Gospel in a Pluralist Society** (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989)

Great stuff for figuring out how to communicate to a world where there are multiple 'truths'. Newbiggin was a missionary to India who came home and realized that his own backyard was a bigger missiona field than what he had come from. Like Bosch he is one of the founders of the missional church movement.

Newbigin, Lesslie, **Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel & Western Culture**. (Grand Rapids:Eerdmans,1986)

Pretty much what it says – how the gospel connects with the west. Neither of Newbiggin's books are easy reads, but there are some real gems in them.

