



Missio Dei at work in Haiti

Justin Stark, Honors Student

MidAmerica Nazarene University, Olathe KS



Introduction:

This research project will be based around a missiological concern. The overall concern can be broken up into three sections: 1. What is the mission of God? 2. How can people from a Western context engage in cross-cultural mission congruent with *Missio Dei*? 3. How does this understanding specifically inform mission from a Western context to Haiti? The research draws specifically from the researcher's direct experience in Haiti, as well as missiological readings. The research project argues that physical community development is part of the *Missio Dei* or, the mission of God.

Purpose:

The purpose of this research is to provide a framework for understanding the holistic *Missio Dei* at work in the world. This study will explore the biblical foundations as well as practical applications for *Missio Dei* in cross-cultural ministry and transformational development. It will also explore the need to understand the influence of worldviews in cross-cultural mission.

Method:

1. Literature review on missiology, anthropology, and practices of transformational development.
2. Month-long trip to Haiti from Dec 2013-Jan 2014

Biblical Foundations of God's Mission

The following biblical texts demonstrate that *Missio Dei* is holistic in scope: salvation for both body and soul

Abraham – God's desire to bless all people

- "I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others." Genesis 12:2-3 NLT

The Exodus – God's holistic (socio-economic, political, etc.) deliverance

- "I have certainly seen the oppression of my people in Egypt...I have come down to rescue them..." Exodus 3:7-8 NLT

Christ – Kingdom of God for the marginalized

- "...for He has appointed me to preach Good News to the poor. ...captives will be released...blind will see...the oppressed will be set free." Luke 4:18 NLT

The Church – Grace through meeting physical needs

- "They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need...And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved." Acts 2:45,47 NLT

Worldview & Missio Dei:

- We need to learn to enter into dialogue with the people of Haiti so that we can begin to trust and learn from one another – then we can enter into a relationship for change
- Our "worldview" is the framework through which we assess the world and act according to those judgments. There are three aspects that inform our worldview:
 1. **Cognitive** – the way we think about the world and how it works
 2. **Affective** – What we feel and what feelings are allowed/expected in certain situations
 3. **Evaluative** – Morals, what is right and wrong, virtues, standards
- All three of these function synergistically to inform how a person behaves in a specific context.

How Do We Help?

There are three ways to help after a crisis.

1. **Relief** – short-term, immediate aid; stop decline
 2. **Rehabilitation** – returning to sustainability before crisis
 3. **Development** – long-term sustainable growth
- This is where Haiti is now**
- The Haitian community best knows what they need
 - The Westerners job, is to assist Haitians to achieve their own goals for growth

What is Poverty?

"[poverty is] the lack of freedom to be able to make meaningful choices – to have an ability to affect one's situation." – Amartya Sen (Nobel Laureate)

- Fighting poverty necessitates empowering people to change their own situation

Conclusion:

1. God is as interested in physical well-being as spiritual well-being...He desires that we actively seek justice and freedom for the oppressed both spiritually and physically
2. We must learn to both understand our own worldviews and the worldviews of others so that we can appreciate and learn from each other
3. We need to approach a community asking "What are you trying to accomplish, and how can I help you?"
4. Haiti needs hope through people coming alongside them and empowering them to change their own situation.

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