

Transformation Means Holistic Conversion

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In this paper, I will argue that Christian mission should facilitate conversion from being directed towards oneself, which is the essence of sin, to being directed outwards, which is the essence of mission. This way, transformation within the church directs churches in mission to aim at improvements in society at large.

The paper is based on my PhD dissertation *Missional Transformation*, in which I synthesize the concepts of transformation in the theologies of the American theologian Stanley Hauerwas and the minor *Mission as Transformation* movement.

Following Hauerwas, I point out that a nuanced, theological distinction between *the kingdom of God* and “the world” should serve as the decisive basis for understanding change in relation to mission. Yet, following *Mission as Transformation*, I maintain a holistic perspective on such change. Hence, mission should contribute to two interrelated kinds of change: On the one hand, a broad scope of changes in society at large, which may best be described as *improvements*, and, on the other hand, a journey of deep change taking place within the church, which may rightly be termed ‘transformation’.

Thus, the concept of transformation (pace common use in relation to ‘holistic mission’), I argue, should be confined to deep changes following from recognition of the lordship of Christ, which implies conversion. Yet, such conversion (pace traditional evangelical missiology) essentially is a ‘holistic’ change of directedness.