

Guest Editorial

The Christian Church(es) and Christian Movement(s)

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January's collection of articles in *Global Missiology* focused on Kingdom Movements, raising questions about movements' ecclesiological features and ecclesiology's movement character. The current pandemic has shown that the Church is not merely a social institution, revealing itself instead to be a plexus of various social movements within the Christian Tradition. This April issue's contributions continue the previous issue's conversation from different angles.

Without question, one crucial dimension of Christian mission is gospel proclamation. Ezekiel Adewale Ajibade, starting from the claim that education is an important tool for carrying out the Great Commission, raises a legitimate and interesting question: What roles should various types of education play in an oral society? In her study of the Hazara people, Jenny McGill examines their challenging social and political circumstances and suggests how gospel messengers can most effectively convey the good news of Jesus to them.

With the world becoming increasingly complex, any notion of a supposed centre of the world—including of the Christian world—is a relic of a bygone era. What, then, are the dynamics of polycentric Christian movements if there is no centre of Christianity? This issue's Part II of Joe Handley's reflections on "Polycentric Leadership for Kingdom Movements" is a timely and fascinating contribution to that discussion. In addition, two contrasting reviews of Matt Rhodes' provocative and insightful book *No Shortcut to Success: A Manifesto for Modern Missions* (2022) should also cast fresh light on ecclesiological and missiological questions connected to examining contemporary movements.

We are glad in the issue to have additional reviews of two books that deal, implicitly at least, with the issue of "glocality"—and hence of ecclesiology and movements. Ryan Shaw's *Rethinking Global Mobilization: Calling the Church to Her Core Identity* (2022) characterises the Church's missionary mobilisation as the movement-esque "strategic scattering of believers." For its part, *Effective Intercultural Evangelism: Good News in a Diverse World* (2021), by Jay Moon and Bud Simon, explores the cultural diversity of the world and the gospel's link to that variety.

These and other kaleidoscopic ideas about the missional nature of the Church require careful *theological* reflection. In his *Theology After Christendom*, Joshua T. Searle pleads that theology should be Kingdom-oriented rather than Church-oriented (Searle 2018, 116). Unfortunately, this bifocal understanding of the *missio Dei* splits Christian participation in public life into two types: within a social institution called "the Church" (even if it is a "missional church") or a social movement (such as CPM or DMM). Throughout ecclesiological and movement-related discussions, it is necessary to keep in mind the inherently theological character of the realities being discussed and avoid reducing the topics simply to sociological phenomena. Discussions about the Kingdom of God can embrace both Kingdom Movements and the *ecclesia* if they are filled with a Kingdom Theology that is unconfined by criteria of sociological effectiveness. God is God over all spheres of life, including human ones. His presence in these different phenomena might be unclear to human eyes, but human blind spots do not cancel his involvements. All the

topics taken up by this issue's articles and reviews need to be considered theologically, making it possible to recognize God's activities. Let us hear God's guiding voice as we hear each other.

References

Searle, Joshua T. (2018). *Theology After Christendom: Forming Prophets for a Post-Christian World*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books.