

# Mission in a Pluralistic Society – Why and How?

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*Underlying question: “What could be the contribution of the churches of the western world – do the western churches have anything to give, or are we tired old churches, needing more than giving?”*

## **Presentation I: Mission in a Pluralistic Society – Why?**

Outline of Presentations

1. Why is there skepticism about mission?
  - The ambiguous history of the western missionary movement
  - The complex role of the western Enlightenment in the western missionary movement
  - The irony of the western missionary movement: Enlightened skepticism mixed with Enlightened cultural superiority and optimism
  - The outcome of the western missionary movement: It worked!
2. The Reason for Mission – Core Biblical Convictions and Doctrinal Implications
  - A matter of fundamental theology and basic doctrine
  - The overarching missional thrust of the Biblical revelation
  - The resulting consensus: the missional calling of the church
  - Christendom’s reductionism of the church’s missional calling (a cautionary approach)
  - The absence of mission in western theologies of the church
  - From the church as an end in itself to the church in the service of God’s mission
3. Mission in Pluralist Contexts

- The pluralist context of early Christianity
- The New Testament formation of missional communities in religiously diverse settings
- Ancient pluralism and post-Enlightened pluralism
- The problems (again!) of Christendom reductionism: the preoccupation with salvation and the problem of judgmentalism
- Reclaiming the Gospel of the in-breaking Kingdom of God

## **Presentation II: Mission in a Pluralistic Society – How?**

### Outline of Presentations

1. The “What,” the “Why,” and the “How”: The Necessary Congruence of Christian Mission
  - The What Shapes and Defines the How
  - “Incarnational” witness
  - Christendom’s legacy – the loss of congruence
2. The Missional Strategy of the Particular Community
  - The biblical focus upon particular communities as the primary instrument of mission
  - The biblical formation of particular communities for their missional vocation: witness
  - The distinctive character of witnessing communities: “one-anotherness”
3. The Christendom Parish and the Missional Community
  - Can Christendom’s parish church become a missional community?
  - Conversion to missional calling
4. Two Trajectories of Missional Conversion in the Local Congregation
  - 4.1 Missional formation and conversion is a process shaped, guided, and empowered by the Biblical Word
    - New Testament patterns of missional formation
    - “Missional Hermeneutics”
  - 4.2 Missional formation intentionally relates the gathered life of the congregation to the scattered life of its members as they move from the community into the world.
    - The missional responsibility of the gathered life of the community
    - Scattered into the post-Christendom mission fields of the west
    - The global church and continuing conversion
    - The challenge: “Does the possible growth of the church in any given society to a position of cultural importance automatically mean that the mission purpose of the church changes?”