

# Narratives We Live By

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[ 0 : 00 ] This thesis is in a direct opposition of the homogeneous unity principle defended by Donald McGrathen in the 70s. Donald McGrathen argued that in order to have a successful church growth, the leaders of the church should keep the church as homogeneous as possible. What is homogeneous?

As, well, poor people having everything possible in common. He said that it is more likely that people will group themselves within the same kind of people, whether socially, linguistically, or ethnically speaking.

Today, I will make a case that in a society like we live nowadays, a secularized environment, the church is called to follow an intercultural narrative rather than a homogeneous narrative.

In order to explain myself here, I need first to get some definitions done. I will first explain mission, mission of God, and mission of church.

Then I will go through what are called linguistic terms, why languages, metaphors, narratives, culture. Then I will link both of them together.

[ 1 : 19 ] And I will put together saying that we need to change the church narrative and become intercultural. Now, why intercultural and not cross-cultural or multicultural?

We have these three, what I call, hot words today in any church or even in Vancouver.

Well, I chose the term intercultural and not cross-cultural or multicultural on purpose because I understand that multicultural is...

Think about it. We are living in a shopping mall that you have so many different stores. Each store sells different products. Everybody lives there.

Everybody respects each other. Everybody knows there are different products being sold there. But nobody actually goes and mingles to know what the products are being sold.

[ 2 : 19 ] Multicultural is living in a little pot or little mall with different people, different cultures, different societies, respectfully, all together, but actually not making sense and trying to understand their own words in society.

Cross-culture, on the other hand, and I think that's where church is nowadays, is a community and people actually assume there are different cultures around and they also live respectfully.

There is actually a tentative of knowing more of other cultures, but it assumes a dominant culture. So, there is a little mingle.

We get to know each other. We get to... Especially the cuisine. But... We still have a dominant culture, meaning that the visible minority still have to adapt and re-adapt to survive in a society like this.

The dominant culture gets to know more about the difference, but never actually let it shape and reshape their own cultural manners. Only the visible minority lets it shape and reshape their own worldview.

[ 3 : 43 ] Well, I bet... Oh, sorry. Multicultural and cross-culture are both completely okay and notable in our society. I bet you all are imagining a situation or two where you all saw this happening.

And the phrase, As long as we live and respect each other, everything is fine. It's like a mantra here in Vancouver, right? However, we are talking about the church here.

And being the church of God goes beyond everybody living respectfully in their own square or having a dominant culture that some of the individuals trying to mingle with the visible minorities.

That's why the concept of intercultural is important. It does not assume that dominant culture... And again, I'm not talking about society here.

I'm talking about church. It assumes that every culture has something good to offer and something bad. It assumes that in a Christian narrative context, we need to learn with each other and teach one another in an equal manner.

[ 4 : 53 ] In an intercultural narrative, everybody is equal and trying to learn together and grow together. So, this is the main point today.

To be an intercultural church in an intercultural and multicultural North America. Now, let's move to the definitions I need in order to discuss the means to change a dominant cultural narrative in a church.

The first definition, I believe, needs to be done here. The first definition, I believe, is on what does it mean when someone here in a pulpit, let's say, says mission or mission of God or mission of church.

It all looks like a good theological lingo that we should somehow know, but it's good to have it clarified. And I will try to do that today.

I know that when someone here says mission, usually the first thought we have in mind would be the transcultural mission, mission trips, go to Guatemala or any other third world country.

[ 6 : 00 ] I personally like Christopher Wright's definition of mission. Mission is the committed participation of Christians as people of God together in God's mission, being aware and belonging to the history of God's mission, being aware and belonging to the history of God's word, to the goal of the creation's redemption.

And I will repeat Christopher Wright's words. Mission is the committed participation of Christians as people of God together in God's mission, being aware and belonging to the history of God's word, to the goal of the creation's redemption.

The author also says that it starts in the inner movement of God. Mission starts in the inner movement of a triune God. Bosch says that mission is understood as being derived from the very nature of God.

Those are very powerful definitions for me, guys. And Orlando Costas, Latin America theologian that I particularly really like, defines mission, says that mission should be understood under the incarnational lenses.

He states the importance of Christ's death to humankind, saying that it was through the incarnation that humans started to grasp what is the mission of God's people.

[ 7 : 30 ] In sum, mission of the church can only be understood after we understand God's mission. So we can actually do mission as his people and as one body.

Therefore, mission is the telos or the purpose of the church. And here I refer as the whole Catholic and Apostolic Church. To discuss mission apart from Trinity is inadequate and incomplete.

And, well, this is, as I said, this is a work that I did from Regent College, and especially with Professor Ross Hastings, who, if anybody knows, know that he would always love to put Trinity here.

And I actually like it, too. So this is like understanding our amazing Trinity, our amazing triune God, is what makes possible to understand mission.

Bosch states that mission should be put in the context of the Trinity and not ecclesiology. The theology of a missional church is linked to the theology of mission day, or, as Ross Hastings puts it, mission trinitaris.

[ 8 : 47 ] He says that the trinitarian approach for mission of the church helps the church to see itself as an instrument of God in God's missions, or, as Guder puts it, the term mission day says God is missional God, and he has been in mission since the creation.

As I said, we have a very relational triune God, and it is a consequence of our union with the triune God in Christ, by the Spirit, that we are here to make his mission.

We are made the likeness of our triune and relational God. And it is a part of our human character to be relational, as the Trinity is relational in itself.

A trinitarian approach to the mission of God highlights the relationality of God, and offers us a narrative for a postmodern world which suffers from loneliness and meaninglessness.

The metanarrative of Trinity with a humanity as the image of a relational God is the first step to the thesis I'm developing here.

[ 10 : 09 ] And I will come back on this when I define narratives. Now, knowing that God is three in one, and that he is relational, it does not exactly define his mission on earth.

The term mission of God shows a personal, purposeful, and goal-oriented God. In analyzing the narratives of creation, the reader can see the commitment of God to creation and the covenantal characteristics.

As Christopher Wright said, God's mission, according to Christopher Wright, is to restore creation to its full original purpose of bringing all glory to God himself, and thereby to enable all creation to enjoy the fullness of blessing that he desires for it.

It's a redemptive mission to the whole creation, and we, as his church, again, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, are invited to participate in God's mission to the world.

We have so far right now, and I hope you are still carrying on with me here, mission, Trinity, and the mission of God. And I will try to conclude with the mission of church, and more importantly, what it is to be a mission of church.

[11:27] As I stated earlier, the mission of the church is to participate in God's mission of redeeming the whole creation. Practically speaking, how can this be done, and what implications does it have in the Western post-modern church?

Those are all beautiful words, but how can we do it? Paul Stevens defend the point that church does not have a mission. Church is mission.

In other words, if the mission of God is to redeem creation, the church is the means by which the triune God is completing this mission in the world.

The church is made up of the people of God, clergy, and laity. It is one people reflecting God's mission in the world sent by the triune God.

With all the definitions made, a mission of church is the one which has the telos to fulfill the mission of God. Godre states that the characteristics of a mission of church are compassion, justice, and peace of the reign of God, and having the Holy Spirit as the main distinctive characteristic.

[12:47] A mission of church is not formed by selfish human intentions and efforts, but by the empowering presence of a triune and relational God. It lives by the incarnated world that is Jesus and as a result intentionally lives an incarnational gospel and because of its incarnational characteristic it is also inculturated or at least it is constantly seeking to be, to understand the world that it is on.

It is not disconnected from the world and society, but it tries to understand culture and society in order to fulfill God's mission in the world. It is practical and wise and it listens to the problems of the people that are part of the church.

All people that are part of the church. It is patient knowing that the path that the whole creation is going through of the path of redemption is long and narrow one.

It also acknowledges that mission is God's and we as people of God participate in his mission.

Mission doesn't have an owner except God. It's not a human doing or anything.

It's an act of God. Why I'm saying all of this? This is really important to set the tone of who is in charge of church, of ministries, of anything in here.

[14:16] emphasizing that no human is the owner of a ministry or a church. A missional church is also heterogeneous, meaning it has people from different genders, social layers, academic and social backgrounds, etc., etc., etc.

It listens to the voices of those who are usually marginalized. It gives voice to the voiceless in the society and even in the church community by listening to them.

A missional church expresses shalom and hospitality. In the book of John, chapter 20, verses 19-23, we see Jesus sending his disciples.

Ross Hastings writes about this passage in his book, emphasizing in chapter 1 the Trinitarian characteristics of the santeness of the disciples. In the same manner, we, as a church of Christ today, are sent by Christ through the Holy Spirit as God sent Jesus to be one with humanity.

A missional church is in constant movement to understand the santeness of the church to act in the word. Thus, to be missional, a church should first and foremost be Trinitarian and incarnational, leaving the santeness of God in participation with the humanity of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

[15:51] And second, it should understand the narratives that are shaping the word inside and outside the church walls. the narrative of the gospel should be the one narrative that all those who believe in the incarnate world live under.

Okay, so I made my definitions on missional and mission. Now I move to the linguistic part of this. How can I make linguistic go together with this? And I will start with metaphors, discourse and language, narratives and culture.

Then I will show you why it is important to know all of this and how it goes together in my argument. And I really hope you are still here with me. So why language?

Well, I see language as God's gift to humanity. I personally, I love languages, all of them. Language and language discussion is an old topic amongst Western philosophers.

And although all animals have a way of communicating with one another, none is comparable to human beings and how language and human language is structured.

[17:17] Think about this. God created the universe by speaking. And Jesus was the incarnate word. In Portuguese we use the word verb.

Jesus was the incarnate verb. Language is important to talk and discuss theology in any level. It has the power to start and to finish and any kind of argument.

Barth developed a philosophy of language because he saw the importance of language in the relationship between God and humans and human knowledge and the nature of the Trinity.

Wittgenstein and Derrida also developed separately a philosophy of language because they understood language as the key to see the word.

Indeed, it is of great importance since language gives meaning to knowledge and knowledge goes together with the reality of the word. language and the language is important because it is the means we construct, elaborate, and express knowledge of concrete and abstract things.

[18:45] Gassaby makes a point on arguing about the relationship between language and culture saying language is culture and it marks any cultural identity.

The author argues using the linguistic relativity principle that the way in which we think about the word is directly influenced by the language we use to talk about it.

and this relativity theory was coined by Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Worf. It is the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis and I'm going to try to explain it here very quick.

If any of you ever saw the movie Arrival that was directed by Denis Villeneuve and it started with Amy Adams you saw a very practical way of this hypothesis.

What this hypothesis says is that language shapes the way we see the word and by learning another language we actually put ourselves in the shoes of those speakers and we can see the way those speakers see the word.

[19:56] So for example my husband and I we are obviously second language English speakers English is not our first language so by learning English we actually started to see how you guys make sense of the word.

word and if you try to learn Portuguese you're going to see why or understand a little bit why at least in Brazil not in Portugal I guess.

Being late is such a cultural thing it's okay and hugging is so important and healing for us and the way that we treat family and that we are all together but we are really happy to see them go and grow together you know.

it is very different it is our word view it is the way that we make sense of the word and it's coined by the language by the way we put the words together by the way we make the sentences as in English it is too.

So I try to do it very very quick and if you have any question about that by the end I will be happy to answer. So let's move to metaphors. And why I chose metaphors well if any of you saw the title of my talk today is Narratives We Live By.

[21:13] It is actually named after a book that I really like to that was written by Lakoff and Johnson. It's called Metaphors We Live By.

And what they do is they show metaphors not only as a poetic device but as having the power to shape the way the speaker sees the word.

And when you think about metaphors usually we think about those beautiful Tolkien poetry or C.S. Lewis and the Bible with all the beautiful Psalms.

But here he in this example I love a lot. He the author they use the example of metaphors in the daily life that we use and not even make sense that we are using them.

Like the metaphor of war to talk about love. Like I will conquer her. I will conquer her heart. It may seem that the way we communicate might be disconnected with respect to how we see the word

but Lakoff and Johnson argue that metaphors and linguistic expressions are containers for meaning and it conceptualize our experience in the word.

[ 22 : 37 ] Therefore it is powerful to uncover the imagination of an entire civilization. We experience the word and the means by which we express it is through language.

There are many untranslatable words in the world and I will quote again Portuguese because it is my first language. We have a word that is untranslatable to any language.

It is the meaning is the feeling of longing for something or someone which is missing or lost. And the word is saudade.

It is deeper than the missing concept. It is not only that I miss my mom or I miss my brother. It is something deeper and we have a word for that.

See the understanding of the words in a language shapes your worldview. And I will quote you an example in English. Not that there are untranslatable words in English.

[ 23 : 37 ] Probably there are but there is something that I find really interesting about English language. There are three words for vengeance. There is vengeance, avenge, and revenge.

So this shows a people that was marked, historically marked, by war so much that it felt the need to differentiate the nuances of these words of vengeance, revenge, and avenge.

I say that because in my language we only have one. We have vingança. That's all. That goes all together with all these three nuances. And in English we have three and this is amazing.

This shows how you were formed and your worldview. The word choice to refer or explain something that exists in the word shows how culture and behavior of the speakers is formed.

Well, I chose the concept of narrative over the concept of metaphor because although metaphor shows how language influences the way of thinking, it does not carry the full weight of this affirmation.

[ 24 : 44 ] It is just a first step for a further discussion of how narratives shapes our way of thinking and behaving. Okay, so I did metaphors and I put a little bit of narratives on it, but what are narratives?

The language we use assumes a common ground between the speakers so everyone can understand the speech. and this common ground is what I'm using as narratives.

We learn in school that narratives is a way of telling a story. And what are the premises of a good storytelling? You have at least one speaker and one listener, a main character, and this main character is involved in some kind of incident.

And it can be formal or informal. A narrative exists and makes sense because it assumes a sum of cultural values that both the reader and the listener will understand.

The way we tell the story of David to a kid, for example, is completely different than the way we tell the story of King David to an adult. Right? Every Sunday we see this here.

[ 26 : 02 ] So if language shapes the way we see the word, narratives are the means by which we tell the stories that shape us. Let me repeat.

If language shapes the way we see the word, narratives are the means by which we tell the stories that shape us. They model the way we create our memory and myth, and they can shape and reshape the conceptual rules of a given society of group or community.

Taylor defines narrative as a story that offers insight into causes, characters, values, alternative ways of being, and the like.

He essentially says that narratives are these stories that cannot be told through science or atemporal generalizations. So having defined language, metaphors, and narratives, I will go very quick to culture and then show the relationship between language and culture.

So carry on with me. I'm almost done. When seeing the word culture, we all think about, at least me, the first thing that comes to my mind is Beethoven and the beautiful piano songs and sonnets, or even like book and poetry.

[ 27 : 24 ] Andy Crouch makes a case for the multiple cultures in the world, knowing that usually we tend to use the term culture in singular, referring to a different string of culture, being that high culture, pop culture, or any other string.

He notes that when one wants to study culture, he or she should understand the deepness and the weight of each culture. From birth, passing through history that formed our relatives, all the way to language and literature, the formation of culture takes years.

It also takes time for a human being to learn to live in a given culture. Again, it takes time for a human being to learn to live in a given culture.

We are born into a culture, but we are not born into it by choice or anything else. We are just born into a culture. On the task of defining culture, Crouch says that it goes together with what it means to be human, since culture is what we were made to do.

He goes on to say that culture is a result of what humans make of the world, understanding also that it is not all that we have that shapes culture.

[ 28 : 43 ] So, if metaphors, narrative, and culture shapes human being, what is the greatest difference between them?

culture is and the crowd makes a big case telling us that culture is the basic lens through which we see and make sense of the world.

And I don't agree with him because I believe the narrative shapes culture and they are the lenses that we see the world. Metaphors are one way and the most visible way in which narratives are used to shape us.

And culture goes together with language and narrative. In fact, there is a linguistic scholar that says that the division between language and culture is hard to make because language is culture itself.

And I agree with her. Since language carries many cultural traits like the behavior of the society and its customs, a clear link between these two is easy to make.

[ 29 : 47 ] Another linguistic scholar says it goes deeper. It does appear that the structure of a language determines how the speakers of the language sees the word, as I said in the beginning, about worldviews and knowing the vocabularies that make any language.

Therefore, language shapes worldview. In this matter, language is a broader concept and narrative. Language is culture, narratives are the stories that shapes us, culture, stories.

And now I will go to the third part where a narrative will be linked to theology, showing that it is possible to change the narratives that constitute a community and church should constantly be reviewing which narrative is living by.

And I will put this question here that I want you guys to think about again, just so you can have that in mind. This is the third part and the last part of it, where we can all see the reason why I had to define all of this and discuss so many things.

Remember that I said in the beginning that this is about the church in North America? So I will go back to this. On writing about religion and narrative, Goethe states that the narrative shapes our identity and have the power to change our consciousness.

[ 31 : 22 ] He also defines religion as a cultural system that serves to promote interpretation of the practices of our existence by communicating the ideas in a social way.

He defends the idea that not only are narratives important in forming the human character, but among the many narratives that exist, religious narrative is one of the most important ones.

If narrative has this power of molding the worldview, with religious narrative being one of the most powerful ones in our society, and if the Christian church says it goes under the narrative of the gospel, then the worldview and practice should reflect in a mimetic way what the narrative of the gospel teaches.

And what are the narrative of the gospel then? The narrative of the gospel is a narrative of lament, redemption, and reconciliation. That's all that we see in the Bible, and even more.

It is a narrative of equality and inclusion. It is a narrative of respect and hospitality towards other culture. it is intercultural.

[ 32 : 38 ] To sum up this narrative of the gospel, and because it is Sunday morning and I feel that we need to read the Bible too, I will use the words of Paul to the Galatians in chapter 3, verses 26 to 29.

In Christ you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. Paul's words, not mine. He was dealing with a dispute between Jewish and Hellenistic Christians regarding the practice of the law and Jewish customs here.

And he concludes chapter 3 saying that we are all children of God and God and there is no ethnicity or cultural background that is even more, a little bit more important than the fact that we are children of God.

[ 33 : 53 ] I simply love this passage because it is really powerful. Paul was showing here a good example of how changing the narrative of a community works. Actually, regarding the Bible, we see the story, if you go to the Bible, we see the story of a people that is constantly being challenged by God to change the narratives.

If you go to the people of Israel from the path of the Old Testament to knowing the incarnate word of God and forming the church in the first century in the New Testament, you are going to see a people that is constantly being challenged and moving and adapting to a new narrative.

And we see diversity. In Pentecost, the Holy Spirit empowered men and women regardless of language and culture. This is the narrative of the gospel.

Those men and women had only one thing in common, the narrative of the gospel. It was more powerful than any other possible story that formed them that day in Pentecost.

So from Babel, where God confused all the languages, to the Pentecost, the narrative is of a God in mission to forge a relationship with his creation and a God who desires to redeem them.

[ 35 : 14 ] We are called to be disciples of Christ, practicing what he taught in our society and practicing to ourselves. Being a disciple of Jesus is to be drawn into living a life ruled by the word that is Christ.

So practically speaking, changing the narrative of a secular age requires radical change inside out. The story the gospel tells us is about redemption and acceptance.

Christ died on that cross to save us. On that cross, we were reconciled with God and to each other through an act of salvation that came from the incarnate world.

Christ taught his disciples about a life in community, loving one another, and a life of forgiveness.

The teachings and practice that Christ taught are powerful to bring together individuals and communities that would normally be marginalized to one another.

together. Let's exemplify this with a practical and visible example for anyone that lives in Vancouver today. Ethnic churches.

[ 36 : 29 ] In North America, there are many different cultures coexisting in the same city. It is a logical consequence that the many cultures will group together into communities.

One of these communities would be the ethnic churches. for example, let's take Asians and Americans. Jacob Wong writes a study on the power of the gospel narrative in the Korean culture in America.

He argues that the fundamental psychological features when an ethnic church is planted is ethnical over racial and generational.

So when we have ethnic churches, we will always see English ministry and Korean, Cantonese, Chinese ministry or second and first generation ministry.

Ethnic churches are a reality in North America and it's visible here. I bet you all know one or two, you just go for a walk in your neighborhood. The issues primarily is a generational issue and the author points out other problems that all and every single church will face.

[ 37 : 43 ] With ethnic churches, it's possible to see the narratives that brought them together to become a church. We have immigration issues, different country, adaptation, need for belonging, homesickness, and language.

So aside from language, all the other narratives are common to any immigrant in North America. The beauty of the narrative of the gospel reflected in an intercultural mission of church is that they love one another and they are family to one another in the name of the triune God because this is what the narrative of the gospel teaches us.

Scripture teaches us to deal with lament and the immigrant in a new country is lamenting to a degree. It could be as soon as he or she gets a new country or after a few months.

With me, it was after a few months. The reality is that so many ethnic churches exist in North America because the new immigrants do not feel they belong to any other community.

And I stress here that any other community the narrative of being a new country and their culture carries more weight than a narrative of being part of the family of God.

[ 38 : 59 ] The existing church did not lament with the new immigrants or even try to see their worldview. And I would say that this is partly because they were homogenous, monocultural,

foreign dominant culture, and did not know how to take the first step.

This is partly because they were trained to see the world with their own lenses and their own narratives, and partly because of the language barrier. It is indeed more comfortable to be among people that completely understand the specificities of what it means to be an immigrant in North America from your own country.

Ethnic churches are the perfect communities for first-generation immigrants. They are loving of one another and hospitable, and it is possible to be in a monocultural church and still be missional. However, the main narrative of an ethnic church is culture and language. To be called disciples and followers of Christ, the Christian church must be aware of the narrative that is leading them. What is the narrative forming the Christians in the secular society nowadays? Brenda Salter-McNeil defends the imagery of witness of the gospel as being the superior narrative to Christians than any other, thus bringing together people from different cultures, language, and transcending any historical background.

[ 40 : 30 ] being as such means having no idol, not even culture. When Paul says in Galatians that in God there is no Jew or Gentile, he makes a powerful statement on culture, on cultural gospel and the redeeming love of God.

No cultural traces should be superior to the teaching of Jesus for us. A missional church has in mind the power of narratives, the possibility to change them, the recognition of mistakes, and the need for forgiveness.

Being intercultural and heterogeneous means to see the other as equal regardless of language, race, gender, social status, or educational level. This is mirrored not only in the way the members of the church behave inside and outside the church building, but also in how the board of the church is formed.

A church who claims to be missional and living under the narrative of the gospel, but has a board made up of only a single ethnicity and gender, in a multicultural city like Vancouver, is using the wrong words to define themselves.

On the other hand, having a great variety of race, age, and gender, but at the same time having the same social and academic level, can also be homogeneously and non-representative of a church.

[ 41 : 56 ] And some, and I hope you're all still following me here. Being missional means being concerned about the people that belong to your community, particularly in regards to the narrative that forms the basis between them and you.

Do we have a dominant church culture? Does the dominant church culture give voice to the marginalized inside the church culture?

Ideally, there will be a point where there will be neither Jew nor Gentile, but only the children of God. We are shaped by the narratives that formed us.

Language and culture are part of what makes us individuals with our own personalities. We are the product of a creative relation of God in mission to redeem creation.

It is a narrative so powerful that it is able to transcend any culture and language barrier. And as image of God, we are relational too, meaning we are not to live alone in the world.

[ 43 : 06 ] We need one another. In the secular age, the narrative of individualism is growing each day more, and it is the main narrative that governs the Western North America.

people are living each day more focused on the self and to fulfill the hedonist desire that lives within. Nevertheless, this age carries a great rate of depression and suicide among Christians and non-Christians, as we all know.

The secularism narrative is killing the world God created. A church who has the gospel narrative as her main narrative would not conform to such a world, but would live to transform it.

The trust for the transforming grace and presence of God would be so great that the consequence would be a relevant church. However, this is not the current reality in North America.

Actually, the secular narrative is palpable in the life of the churches here. As an institution, the church is also becoming a psychological and triumphalist one, which can be said is the way the churches are hedonists in here.

[ 44 : 22 ] It is a hard-willed task to change the narrative of a church community, but it is possible. And I will quote Tim DeCole here.

If we go from isolation to community towards radical hospitality, from homogeneity to diversity, and living, sharing cultures, and from charity to friendship, this is very important, towards seeking justice

for the least, and from the confrontation of idolatries to repentance towards a new life in Christ, we can actually make an intercultural church.

There is a crisis in the way ecclesiology is being practiced in North America, and the diagnostic is it is not missional. The way to start to walk in a different direction is to pay attention on the narratives that are forming the imagination of our community.

The path to transform a fragmented and secular church is long and weary. To change the forming narrative of a community is difficult and challenging, but it is rewarding.

Being missional as a church means being intercultural. Learning the ways to make sense of the word each culture and ethnic group brings to the church to the point one day there will be no labels necessary to communicate to each other.

[ 45 : 50 ] And what I mean by labels is using race or cultural background as a way to refer to the other, like the Asian girl, the Brazilian family, the Sudanese group.

To be able to transcend these labels and let the church be transformed again regardless of them is one step forward to be missional and fulfilling the mission of God on earth.

And I invite everyone that is listening today to evaluate the narratives that are forming their communities and whether they need to be changed. If they do, know that it will take time to change, but in the end it will be a piece of heaven on earth.

Thank you very much for carrying on with you here. Thank you so much. Thank you so much.