DISCERNING TOGETHER

How Do We Discern What God is Doing?

Tihomir Lazic

Digesting Yesterday

WHAT DO I NEED THE OTHER FOR?

After everything we explored yesterday, how would you answer that question now?

I MAY ACTUALLY NEED THE OTHER

I need the other to become

I need the other to see.

I need the other to discern truth.

DO I ALSO NEED THE OTHER TO DISCERN WHAT GOD IS DOING?

WHAT IS GOD DOING?

How do we discern it — together?

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JESUS' WAY:
JOINING THE MISSION OF GOD

So Jesus explained, "I tell you the truth, **the Son can do nothing by himself.** He does **only what he sees** the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son **also does.** For the **Father loves** the Son and **shows him** everything he is doing. In fact, the Father will show him how to do even **greater works** than healing this man. Then you will truly be astonished."

John 5:19-20

GOD ACTS.
JESUS SEES.
JESUS JOINS.

MISSION BEGINS WITH
360° LISTENING

to God · to one another · to the other · to our context

IF GOD IS ALREADY AT WORK, WHAT CHANGES FOR MISSION?

Perspective · Attitude · Scope · Mode

PERSPECTIVE:

Replacement of the church-centric outlook with the God-centred one.

MISSION

- FOR GOD
- OF GOD

PERSPECTIVE:
EMPOWERING THE SHIFT

What would change if we moved from doing mission *FOR God* to participating in the mission *OF God*?

What might this mean practically for our local church?

ATTITUDES:

EMBRACING OPENNESS AND OTHERNESS

BE READY TO BE SURPRISED BY GOD

What assumptions about others might prevent us from seeing where God is already at work?

STEREOTYPES · BIASES · FEARS · ASSUMPTIONS

SCOPE:

EXPANDING THE EXTENT OF ENGAGEMENT

Political
Economic
Social
Technological
Environmental
Legal

} ENGAGEMENT

SCOPE:

HOW WIDE IS GOD'S MISSION?

1. Does intentional engagement with culture, politics, economics, education, technology, and the environment strengthen our proclamation of the eternal gospel—or risk distracting us from it?

2. Where might God already be at work that we are not paying attention to?

OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS · WORKPLACES · CULTURE · PUBLIC LIFE · PEOPLE UNLIKE US

MODE:

FROM MISSION *TO* PEOPLE
TO MISSION *WITH* PEOPLE

What changes when people are not simply recipients of our mission, but participants with us?

LISTEN · RELATE · LEARN · COLLABORATE

MISSION IS RELATIONAL BEFORE IT IS PROGRAMMATIC.

JOINING THE MISSION OF GOD

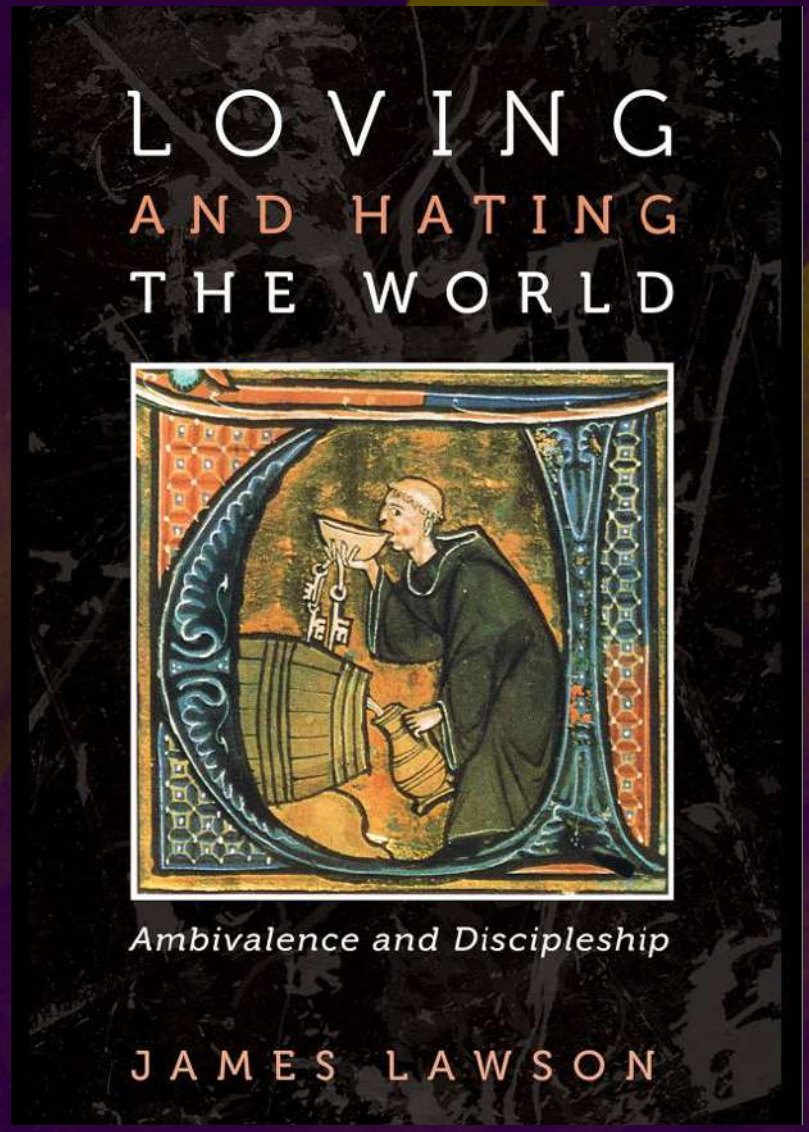
PERSPECTIVE — Move from mission FOR God to the mission OF God
ATTITUDE — Be surprised by God. Embrace the other.
SCOPE — Look beyond the expected.
MODE — Participate WITH people, not simply FOR them.

How should we, as the community of Jesus's disciples, participate together in the mission of God in changing world?

COMMUNITY ROOTED IN GOD AND THE WORLD

THEO-SOCIAL LOCATION MATTERS!

Describes the ambivalence of the first Christian disciples about ‘the world’



"God so **loved the world** that he gave his only Son so that anyone who believes in him will never perish but will have everlasting life"

(John 3:16, NRSV).



"**Do not love the world** or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. . ."

(1 John 2:15–16, NRSV)

The way of affirmation

Church & the World = Friends

ACCEPTANCE

Engagement

- Forming an alliance
- Belonging
- Embracing
- Focus on here-and-now and worldlines



The way of negation

Church & the World = Foes

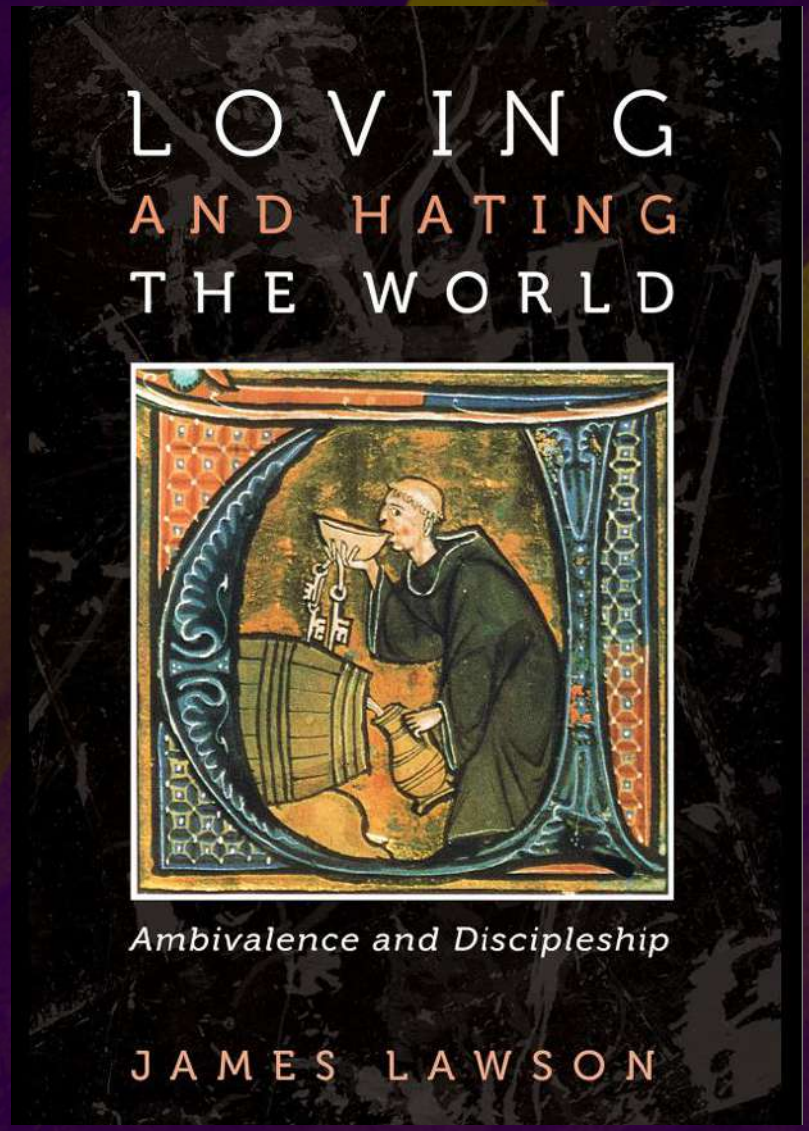
REJECTION

Withdrawal

- Being estranged
- Distancing
- Escaping
- Focus on the future and otherworldliness

There is a strange paradox inherent in the NT.

The first disciples did not choose between loving and hating the world. They both loved and hated the world.



Being in the world, but not of the world.



We need to learn
how to **discern**:

What should we love and
what should we hate?

One needs to develop
a way of thinking that
engages different aspects of life
(culture, society, politics, arts, philosophy,
worldviews, healthcare, and similar)
critically and **constructively**.

Discernment in Practice

adopt

adapt

abandon

advance

LOGO-PNEUMATIC DISCERNMENT:

WORD + SPIRIT
in the world

LET GOD GIVE US THE POWER OF PROPHETIC AND TRANSFORMATIVE PRESENCE IN THE WORLD

AS COMMUNITIES OF AMBIVALENCE, WE ARE CALLED TO BOTH EMBRACE THE WORLD AND CHALLENGE IT AS WE SEEK TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MISSION OF CHRIST THROUGH THE SPIRIT, BRINGING GOD'S KINGDOM ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

- a community of justice in a world of economic and ecological injustice;
- a community of generosity and simplicity (of being able to say 'enough') in a world of consumer satiation;
- a community of selfless giving in a world of selfishness;
- a community of truth [=humility and boldness] in a world of relativism;

JUST IMAGINE

- a community of hope in a world of disillusionment;
- a community of joy and thanksgiving in a world of entitlement;
- a community that experiences God's supernatural presence in a secular world where all days are the same and nothing is exceptional or supernatural...

Dr Daniel Duda

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