

‘Practices for the Refounding of God’s People’: Part 2: Practices for Refounding.

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The British and European church has benefitted from the arrival of Christian migrants from Africa and Asia, a ‘blessed reflex’ from the early days of mission. According to Alan Roxburgh the Canadian church has benefitted from the wisdom of First Nations indigenous peoples who have embodied an appreciation of the land and its stories which is contrary to the destructiveness of the western imagination. The practices of place and of eucharistic gathering are important for churches desiring deeper foundations than the western enlightenment. Martin Robinson feels that many disillusioned communities are open to encounter alternatives to western culture but that the church will need to reach out tentatively, humbly, with experiment and listening.

Modernity’s wager has demanded commitment to the nation state, aspiration to upward mobility (consumer capitalism) and a commitment to personal growth (the self) but has not delivered on its promises. As western cultures unravel, the euro-tribal churches who bought deeply into the consumerist individualism of modernity’s wager have nothing to say to people who have lost faith in the promises of the modern west. But the theological conviction of Practices for the Refounding of God’s People is that God’s Spirit is at work in the midst of this unravelling. A ‘fermenting and bubbling’ of the Spirit can be discerned which points towards a future that God is shaping in the unraveling. The question is how do the euro-tribal churches learn a responsive posture which will involve the risk of learning to ‘make the road as we walk on it’ rather than managing outcomes. In the European context, this sort of improvisation can occur in the context of migration and the multicultural church. Martin feels that these churches have the chance to model new-European communities drawn from every nation on Earth. This transition may occur only gradually in the immigrant church, but will come as churches become sensitive to the needs of their children and grandchildren. It is this generation who could bring a transforming influence to western culture.

Alan and Martin agree that where initially they’d felt that their book was written primarily for professional clergy, they now feel that it may be appropriate for any Christian who has become aware of the ‘bubbling and fermenting’ of the Holy Spirit in our communities. In fact, where professional clergy tend to leap to ‘How’ question, how do you fix the structures as they stand, lay people are wondering more, what does it mean to build these practices into our lives?

See also [‘Practices for the Refounding of God’s People’ Part 1: Modernity’s Wager.](#)