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MARTURIA IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Towards an Emerging, Missional Ecclesiology within a South African Dutch Reformed context

by
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ABSTRACT

In "Marturia and the Gospel of John" the following hypothesis is investigated: ***Theological investigation of the μαρτυρία lexeme in the Gospel of John contributes significantly towards an understanding of an emerging, missional ecclesiology.***

The study is precipitated by the accelerated pace of change our society is currently experiencing. The technological developments of the past fifty years created a society that is totally dependent on the technology it developed. This dependence led to the developing of a new cultural paradigm in which the church is ill at home. Not only are the ecclesial structures ill-adapted to effectively minister to people who increasingly live in a different cultural milieu, but also the premises upon which its theology is built, has increasingly come under scrutiny.

The question of an emerging, missional ecclesiology is therefore not only a question of developing new ministry praxis. Neither is it a matter of reframing theological theses with new metaphors. A growing realisation exists of the need for theological research from the perspective of this developing new paradigm.

Theology needs to turn to Scripture in a quest for such answers and it is proposed that a *hermeneutic approach* should be taken towards this investigation. This exegetical study is conducted from a New Testament perspective, specifically

focusing on the Gospel of John. It is done through a sequential reading of the Gospel with special emphasis on the pericopes that contain the word-group, μαρτυρία.

Finally, the insights gathered from this study are systemized into a framework that aims to contribute towards the further development of an emerging, missional ecclesiology. It will be argued that ecclesiology serves as the integration point for reflection and practical missional ministry. As such, the church as object of investigation is the ultimate technological praxis, as the community of believers serves as the show-case of God's presence in this world, as sacrament of his redemptive mission, and as mediator of the governance in his kingdom.

OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

In **Chapter One** attention is given to the changing cultural paradigm and the implications this holds for ministry as well as for theology. These changes are presented as the study's research problem. The Gospel of John is also introduced as a case study in the ongoing development of an emerging, missional ecclesiology as foundational cornerstone to a postmodern theological paradigm.

In **Chapter Two** the framework from which the hermeneutical study is undertaken, is established. A bird's eye view of the Gospel of John is attempted and a preliminary investigation into the μαρτυρία lexeme is also undertaken.

Chapter Three investigates the testimony of John the Baptist, as recounted in John's Gospel from John 1-4.

Chapter Four reads the second part of Jesus' public ministry, starting with John 5 and continuing until John concludes his narrative of this section of Jesus' mission in John 12.

Chapter Five studies John's account of Jesus' conversation with his disciples in John 13-17. It also reads John 18-21, which comprises of the Passion narrative and the Epilogue to the Gospel.

In **Chapter Six** the matter at hand will be the development of an emerging, missional ecclesiology as a result of the exegetical study of John's Gospel.

Finally, we **conclude** the study by exploring some issues that need further investigation.

KEY WORDS

Gospel of John
Witness
Ecclesiology
Epistemology
Missional
Paradigm shift
Emerging
Christology
Testimony
Theological Theory

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