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## Book Review: Right Here, Right Now: Everyday Mission for Everyday People by Alan Hirsch and Lance Ford

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Alan Hirsch and Lance Ford, *Right Here, Right Now: Everyday Mission for Everyday People*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011, 264 pp., \$14.99.

Reviewed by Kevin Book-Satterlee, Missionary, Latin America Mission.

When I received the copy of *Right Here, Right Now: Everyday Mission for Everyday People*, by Alan Hirsch and Lance Ford, I thought, “Oh no. Not another missional book!” Yes, another missional book. Missional Christianity has exploded in Christian publishing, and as a result, has become repetitive. Hirsch and Ford do not write much that is new, drawing mostly from Hirsch’s other works. However, they do reframe the missional church in language for everyday people. Before we had the missional trend, authors like Richard Foster and Howard Snyder wrote on similar themes, but, frankly, the church did not listen to Foster, Snyder, or their contemporaries; perhaps the church will listen to Hirsch, Ford, and company.

Hirsch writes the introductory and concluding chapters, but the bulk of the book is Ford’s writing. Hirsch does break in every couple of pages with margin notes titled, “Just Sayin’ . . .,” a bit of a gimmick to give Ford’s “folksiness” (238)

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some “geeky theory” (235) and to remind the reader that Hirsch is in there  
somewhere.

Ford brings to the book passion and examples. However, his commentary on why the church needs to be missional is repetitive to one who has already read missional church literature. He carries the charm, wit, and rhythm of southern preaching into his writing; and his illustrations bring to life a homey, nostalgic Christianity, yet one fraught with intensity. His passion for the way the church should be connects with childhood memories and calls for intense discipleship. Ford writes as though the reader is sitting with him at a restaurant. It is comfortable yet zealous. Hirsch’s introductory chapter sets up a solid framework for the missional church, but the real value of his contribution is the final chapter, helping readers to overcome risk aversion and social restraint.

Unfortunately, Hirsch and Ford’s book is very monocultural. They write for Western audiences, particularly the church in the United States. Hirsch confesses that he deems the church in the U.S. so important that he and his wife moved to Los Angeles to keep missional ideas aflame. I get the impression that they are writing primarily to a white, educated, and middle-class audience. This monocultural focus is a limitation. The Church of the Global South has practiced integrated missions for decades, and while they do not call it missional, there is no doubt that these churches model what Hirsch and Ford work so hard to advocate. Rather than try to have the Western church become a catalyst for the world, why not demonstrate how the rest of the body of Christ has moved into an ardent pursuit of the kingdom?

As an international missionary, one of best aspects of *Right Here, Right Now* is that I can now explain, positively, what “missional church” means to my international colleagues. The phrase “if everything is mission, nothing is mission” gets thrown around by missionaries who criticize the missional church movement. Basically, theirs is an unconscious criticism of self-preservation. First, there is no added importance for international missionaries verses domestic; and there is no added importance for full-time, paid ministry verses discipleship in a secular job. Second, the missional church has basically redefined “priesthood of all believers” as “missionaryhood of all believers,” motivating congregations to live out their faith. Why not appropriate the missional church movement rather than criticize it? Hirsch and Ford’s book does not provide much help for missional living in other cultures, but it is a good resource for international missionaries to understand the mindset of Western churches.

Hirsch and Ford’s book can also add to the rift between traditional

**Book-Satterlee: Book Review: Right Here, Right Now: Everyday Mission for Everyday** international missionaries and missional church folk. Missional church models and their monoregional focus have dramatically affected international missionaries. People constantly tell us that they will no longer support us as missionaries because they are focused on local projects. International missionaries do not wish to deny domestic ministry, but many missional church folk often forget the value of international ministry.

*Right Here, Right Now* is worth the purchase if 1) you have never read other missional books; 2) you want to purge the stack of other missional books and summarize them into one folksy volume; or 3) if you desire to give it as a gift to someone who has not read a missional church book. Ford does a good job telling the story and weaving in humor with the severity of what it means to be a disciple. Hirsch is academic but explains his theories in such simple ways that he loses all the pretensions of most academics—seminary graduates take note. Hirsch and Ford motivate their readers to rise up like Samson, to break down the walls of institutions, throw off the shackles of risk aversion and social restraint, and enter the kingdom of God. Hirsch and Ford's book is about the freedom to become a disciple; it is about everyday people freed to be missional in everyday life.

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Brian M. Howell and Jenell Williams Paris, *Introducing Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011. 273 pp., \$29.99.

Reviewed by M. David Sills, D.Miss., Ph.D., A.P. and Faye Stone, Professor of Christian Missions, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Brian M. Howell holds a Ph.D. in Socio-Cultural Anthropology from Washington University and is Associate Professor of Anthropology at Wheaton College. Howell's stated anthropological interests are centered in global Christianity, particularly Filipino Protestantism, as well as race relations in the U.S. (<http://www.wheaton.edu/Socio/faculty/howell.html>). Howell has previously published *Christianity in Local Context: Southern Baptists in the Philippines* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). Jenell Williams Paris holds a Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology from American University and is Professor of Anthropology and Sociology at Messiah College. Paris' areas of interest include "urban anthropology, race, gender, and sexuality" (viii). Paris' previous books include *Birth Control for Christians* (Baker Books, 2003) and *Urban Disciples* (co-author, Judson Press, 2000).

Howell and Paris begin *Introducing Cultural Anthropology* with a preface that contains preparatory content that includes an introduction to the authors,