

CONTOURS OF MISSIONAL NEOCALVINISM

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1. We begin with Jesus the Lord Christ and this focus opens up into a full Trinitarian faith.
2. Christ is rendered to us truly in Scripture, which is fully trustworthy as God's Word.
3. Christ stands at the centre of the biblical story and the good news he proclaims is about the kingdom as the goal of history—God is restoring his rule over the whole of human life and all of creation.
4. Since Christ has revealed and accomplished the end of history the Scriptures have a storied shape, and as such tell the true story of the whole world.
5. A central theme in the biblical story is God's election of a people to embody the kingdom, to be a preview of the goal of history, and thus to bear witness to Christ's rule over all of life in life, deed, and word – this constitutes mission.
6. The comprehensive gospel of the kingdom has been narrowed and consigned to a very minor, private place within the dominant Western humanist worldview, and this calls for a conscious articulation of a biblical worldview in relation to the cultural worldview to enable the church to recover the public truth and all-embracing scope of the good news.
7. The good news is a message concerning the restoration of the creation including human life from sin, and thus a biblical worldview insists on a comprehensive and integrated understanding of creation, fall and restoration as the most basic categories of the biblical story.
8. The fundamental backdrop of God's drama of restoration is creation and thus we embrace a rich doctrine of creation including its good and dynamic creation order and humanity's place within it.
9. God's order for creation unfolds in history and thus we affirm the historical development or differentiation of creation.
10. The implication of the fall is that the power of sin and evil now radically twists every part of creation, individual and communal human life, and cultural development. While the structures of society remain good the distorting power of sin means they have been radically misdirected.
11. The Bible tells the story of restoration centred and accomplished in the death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ which is the recovery of God's originally good purposes for the whole of his creation and all of human life.
12. The outpouring of the Spirit brings a foretaste of God's renewing power into history.
13. The church is the community that is gathered to Christ in repentance and faith for the forgiveness of sins, based on the substitutionary work of Jesus on the cross, and so have begun to taste that comprehensive salvation with the call to make known Christ's forgiveness and renewing power in life, word, and deed across the whole spectrum of human life.
14. The local congregation plays a central role in God's story as that place where God's renewing power is at work to form and nurture a faithful kingdom community.
15. Since God's restorative power is at work in the creation by the Spirit, and since the forces of evil remain powerfully at work in the creation, we recognize an ultimate religious conflict for the whole of human life that will often lead to suffering. The church is called to side with the kingdom of God and participate in God's redemptive mission—the *missio Dei*—as witnesses to his victory. But since we await the final victory, there is no room for triumphalism.
16. The mission of God's people must be rooted in a communal life centred in the gospel, and also in a vibrant spirituality of worship, prayer, and thanksgiving.
17. God is at work leading his creation to its destiny of a new heavens and a new earth, and only then will the kingdom finally come. Then the whole of human life and the creation will be restored and renewed from sin and its consequences.