

Connect!

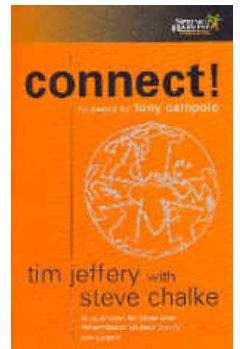
Paul Thaxter reviews Tim Jeffery and Steve Chalke's book on the church's role in mission

Title	Connect!
Author	Tim Jeffery with Steve Chalke
Publisher	Spring Harvest Publishing Division and Authentic Lifestyle
Length	163 pages
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Cost (£)	£7.00 or £5.00 for members
Reviewed By	Paul Thaxter, Church Mission Society
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Being a member of the Connect! partnership, I am not able to be independent in my review of this book, but that is not to say that I am in complete agreement with all its assumptions and ethos.

This is a short readable book in a popular format designed to stimulate and excite you into action. Written in a lively sound bite manner with useful one glance diagrams and illustrations it tells the story of how Christian people are connecting up with the church from around the world. There are lots of succinct insights, pertinent questions and cameo stories peppered by a few biblical quotes. The format is useful for individuals, small groups and for workshops.

The book takes a brief pithy look at how the world is changing from a Western perspective and highlights aspects of globalisation, cultural shifts in the West and the phenomenal growth of the church in the global south. Western Christians are encouraged to find their new place and relationship within the global church. As church and mission agencies are changing so is our response to mission issues with direct relationships amongst churches becoming increasingly important. Mission is "no more about 'home' and 'away'" but part of the way we live as global citizens.



There are diverse responses to mission - "In this new era of global mission there are no prescribed starting points and no pre-determined paths to follow. The only starting point for you and your church is where you are at right now. However, balanced with that exhortation is the discussion of the mission agency acting now as contractor or partner or consultant. " "It would be a tragedy if churches and businesses...decided to go it alone. Mission agencies are a fantastic source of expertise, advice and encouragement. " The challenge is to work in mutually beneficial ways.

Readers are encouraged to sign up to the Connect! covenant but that does not seem to have taken off. An example that not all good ideas necessarily get developed! The final 3 chapters focus on new imaginative ways of being involved in global mission, creating a strategy (but would benefit from a stronger integrated approach to local and global mission) and handling issues around power and money dynamics.

I would have welcomed a chapter on understanding mission today from a stronger biblical perspective focussing on how people from every tribe, race, nation and tongue are being gathered into Christ. At times the language slides into simplistic statements that irritate but that is generally compensated for by the book's overarching purpose.

The enthusiasm of the authors is to get people connected to someone, somehow, and somewhere - so mission can be worked out in practice. Enjoy the experience!

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