

## DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS

### AN ANALYSIS AND COMPARISON OF THE MISSIONAL DOCTRINAL HERMENEUTICS OF KEVIN J. VANHOOZER AND VELI-MATTI KÄRKKÄINEN, WITH EMPHASIS ON THEIR NOTIONS OF GOD, ESCHATOLOGY, AND MISSION

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This dissertation analyzes Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen's and Kevin J. Vanhoozer's theological method, in order to understand its structural elements, and thereby to facilitate comprehension of their missional doctrinal hermeneutics, and the ramifications of those hermeneutics for the construction and development of Christian theology. Missional doctrinal hermeneutical models conceive the missional dimension of doctrine in various ways. Some privilege the maintenance of theological identity cohering with the foundational sources of theological authority. Others privilege theological constructions that assimilate the context and the missional situational framework of understanding. This dissertation strives to examine the diverging missional hermeneutics of Kärkkäinen and Vanhoozer, the foundational assumptions and presuppositions of which hold significant implications for conceptualizing the interconnections between the notions of God, eschatology, and mission. The results of this study demonstrated that Kärkkäinen's doctrinal formulation is comparative, integrative, and ecumenical. It privileges the contextual/dynamic pole of missional doctrinal hermeneutics, assimilating the macro-hermeneutical assumptions of the targeted missional situation. Vanhoozer's doctrinal formulation is confessional, directive, participatory. It privileges the source theological authority as a fixed pole. In so doing, it establishes the direction of dependency from the canon as theological authority to the missional situation. The contribution of this analysis to missional doctrinal hermeneutics is to establish missional theology as reflecting more than simply the contextual theological reflection of a particular community, and as more than providing theological generalization by formulating doctrine/dogma/fundamental beliefs (or its equivalent). On the one hand, the contextual nature of missional theology leads to the fragmented and perspectival nature of knowledge. On the other hand, the generalist nature of doctrine maintains consensus, agreement, and catholicity/universality. Both concreteness (local-

ity, context) and generality (universality/constant) ought to be in dialectical tension. That would enable the hermeneutical non-linear processes for making the Christian message both intelligible and faithful to the theological normative sources while also relevant to the missional situation. The introductory chapter defines the problem, purpose, method, and delimitations of the study. It delineates the meaningfulness of the doctrine of God, eschatology, and mission as it relates to missional doctrinal hermeneutics. Chapter 2 provides a conceptual overview of selected missional doctrinal hermeneutical models in the twentieth century, namely, representative models of contextual theologies (translation and cultural/anthropological) and doctrinal development (fixed and dynamic theological formulations). Chapters 3 and 4, respectively, present a description and analysis of Kärkkäinen's and Vanhoozer's missional doctrinal hermeneutics through a structural methodological analysis of their theological construction as it relates to the doctrines of God, eschatology, and mission. Chapter 5 critically compares and evaluates Kärkkäinen's and Vanhoozer's missional doctrinal hermeneutics. It then offers synthetic considerations in reference to the previous discussion, pointing out possibilities for habilitating the missional dimensionality of doctrinal formulation and development. Finally, the conclusion of this study provides a summary, implications, and further areas of research.