

ABSTRACT

'Being a Sent One': Preaching the Gospel of John's 'Missional Discipleship'
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This dissertation begins by arguing that the social and cultural context within Ireland has changed rapidly in recent years. The Church is in a new missional context within which it needs a clear identity and focus. However, there is often separation of mission and discipleship from one another which lends itself to an emphasis on one to the neglect of the other. It is argued that this is detrimental and that the Church needs a fully-integrated and biblically-grounded identity. Noting that in most biblical theologies of mission that the Gospel of John plays little role, it is contended that there is a fresh opportunity through the Gospel's 'sending motif' to provide an integrated identity: 'missional discipleship'. The argument will be restricted to the implications of John's sending language, which is related to *halakhic* principles of agency. Then the dissertation asks how these ideas might be communicated in a parish context and it is concluded that preaching is the first step.

Chapter one provides an overview of the historical background. Chapter Two examines the *halakhic* principles of agency and concludes that John has used them to explicate the identity of Jesus, but not rigidly. Nonetheless the key principle 'the one who is sent is like the one who sent him' will be engaged with throughout the dissertation. This is crucial to understand the Johannine commission 'As the Father sent me, so I send you' (20:21). Chapter three takes selective passages as 'snapshots' of what it means to be a 'missional disciple' in the Gospel. Chapter Four looks at the Anglican Communion's 'Intentional Discipleship' theme and the Five Marks of Mission. The final chapter looks at issues in preaching the Gospel and concludes with a hermeneutic for preaching based upon the key principle of *halakhic* agency. The conclusion summarizes the argument and suggests five particular images which would aid preaching the Gospel's missional discipleship: tent; testify; transparent; tend, and; together.