

Towards an understanding of strategic intercessory prayer: Implications for mission practice

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Thesis submitted for the degree *Doctor of Philosophiae* in
Missiology at the North-West University

In co-operation with

GREENWICH SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

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Graduation July 2018

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree, except for this one.

Except where states otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Heartfelt thanks are due to the following people:

- Heritage College and Seminary Library staff for their helpful support;
- The staff at African Inland Mission (Canada) for their prayerful support;
- Prayer and financial supporters who have believed in me and this project;
- The individuals in several countries who participated in the Delphi research project;
- Ruth Engler, Research Assistant and Editor extraordinaire;
- Dr. Erich Engler for his support and expertise;
- Peg Evans (GST) and Tienie Buys (NWU) for their invaluable administrative assistance and positive attitudes and encouragement;
- Dr. Rob Elkington for his helping coaching and initial supervision;
- My supervisors: Dr. Koos Vorster and Dr. Naas Ferreira. Their combination of academic rigour, intellectual depth and breadth, spiritual character, hospitality and personal graciousness have been a superb model.

Special acknowledgement must go to my wife Bev, who has supported me and this dissertation in innumerable ways with graciousness, custom-made cappuccinos, sacrifice, flexibility and prayer. Gratefully, too, I note my six children: Christopher, Candice, Nicholas (plus wife Cassandra), Rachelle, Joelle and Bradley. They have not only been an encouragement to me, but also my teachers in 'faith, hope and love'.

Finally, I honour the Lord, who (surprisingly) calls and (amazingly) gives grace and strength. For anything helpful that may come from the dissertation, He deserves the credit.

ABSTRACT

North American conservative evangelical missiology does not typically focus on intercessory prayer as a primary tool for missions practice. Several factors have contributed to this, including the implementation of good and necessary practices arising from the study of missiology compared to the more difficult to measure and somewhat mysterious nature of prayer.

The research question for this study is ‘How can a theoretical model of strategic intercessory prayer be developed that is scripturally, theologically and missiologically sound for missions practice today?’ This question seeks to be answered through an overview of an understanding of evangelical theology including that of missions, prayer and discernment including relevant passages in the Old and New Testaments. Additionally, significant practitioners from early church and missions history are examined, as well as emerging data. During the study period, a comprehensive three iteration Delphi questionnaire research project was undertaken with expert participants consisting of evangelical missionaries, mission leaders, vocational Christian leaders and intercessors from various countries.

The results reveal an emerging consensus pointing to effective practices and approaches to intercessory prayer as it relates to missions. A praxis theoretical model is developed, with the goal of seeing intercessory prayer increasingly ‘strategic’ for gospel proclamation, the birth and strengthening of the church and the transformation of civil society.

KEY WORDS

Strategic intercessory prayer

Missions practice

Delphi method

Leaders

Missionaries

Prayer

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

North American conservative evangelical missiology does not typically focus on intercessory prayer as a primary tool for missions practice.

This thesis will seek to demonstrate, from the Scriptures and the history of missions, the importance of intercessory prayer as a *primary* tool for the purpose of participating in God's mission.

Christopher Wright defines 'mission' as the overall 'redemption of God's creation' and uses the term to denote 'a long-term purpose or goal that is to be achieved by proximate objectives and planned actions' (2006:25).

The study of missiology, broadly stated, is the 'science of missions' (Neil, 1970:387). It is the conscious, ongoing reflection on missions from a multi-disciplinary approach with leading scholars from the backgrounds of missiology proper, education, theology, linguistics, anthropology, and theology (Priest & De George, 2013). 'Practice' is defined as 'the application or use of a plan or method as opposed to the theories related to it' (Pearsall, 2002:1123). Missionaries are 'sent ones' usually to cultures other than their own who participate in 'missions' (Wright, 2006b:25).

The North American evangelical movement comprises persons who believe in 'historic doctrines of the Christian faith, the supreme authority of the Scripture in faith and practice, the need for personal conversion, and the imperative of world evangelization' (Moreau, 2000:337). Evangelical 'missions' (in this sense, agencies or groups) typically focus on some aspect to further the accomplishment of world evangelization, which is defined as the systematic effort to expand Christianity to non-Christian peoples by teaching, preaching and performing social services (Crim, 1981:485). There are many streams of evangelicalism believing in the orthodox doctrines of Christian faith without

the charismatic expression of practice. For the purposes of this paper, intercessory prayer in North American 'conservative' evangelical missiology will focus on the non-charismatic expression of evangelicalism. 'Charismatic' is defined as evangelical believers or churches who believe that all the gifts of the Holy Spirit listed in Scripture are in full operation today and typically give those gifts special emphasis (Corrie, 2007:43). For this reason, they may not be considered 'conservative' in this theological sense of the word.

Noll and Edwards further define evangelicalism as having four major 'roots' – arising from the Protestant Reformation - focusing on (1) the primacy of the Scriptures and the centrality of the gospel of Christ; (2) the revival movements of the eighteenth century; as a 'catchall' of theologically conservative albeit from a diverse cultural social and political tendencies, but still sharing a common commitment to the Bible, (3) in salvation through Christ alone, desire for holiness, concern for the world; and finally (4) as a 'denomination' (1988:5). The Christian faith proclaimed through evangelical missions is focused on the proclamation of God's grace, power, and salvation. Its specific focus includes participating in 'Missio Dei' - overcoming God's estrangement through Christ's death on the cross, through deliverance from sin's enslavement, from relational isolation to the body of Christ, to victory over Satan, to creation wholeness, to eschatological hope (Corrie, 2007:137-141).

Prayer in its simplest form is seen as a dynamic form of communion with the deity or transcendent other (P. Lefevre, as cited in Hunter, 1990:937). Throughout church history, prayer could be defined most simply as 'language used in relation to God' (Vanhoozer, 2005:616). Historian Charles Nienkirchen (2011:166-67) defines prayer as 'a dynamic, transformative dialogical relationship between humans and God' and then gives a compilation of definitions coined throughout history:

- 'a dialogue with God' (Clement of Alexandria)
- a 'continual intercourse of the spirit with God' (Evagrius of Pontus)
- the 'raising of the mind and heart to God' (Augustine of Hippo)

- an 'altar to God in your mind' (John Chrysostom)
- 'formal words or expressions' (Martin Luther)
- 'a special friendship' (Teresa of Avilla)
- 'always believing' (E.M. Bounds)
- 'the real I who speaks' (C.S. Lewis)
- 'the highest form of communion' (Jacques Ellul)
- 'an exploration of all our faculties as channels towards God' (Margaret Hebblethwaite)

Intercessory prayer in the context of this dissertation is 'other focused' for mission practice and particularly for the reception and advancement of the gospel, the birth and strengthening of the church and impact upon civil society. 'Intercede' is defined as 'to interpose in behalf of one in difficulty or trouble as by pleading or petition' (Stein & Urdang, 1966:74). Furthermore, intercession is defined as the action of interacting on behalf of another (Soanes & Stevenson, 2009:739).

We see Jesus linking prayer and mission together in Matthew 9:36-39. After Jesus saw that the crowds were harassed and like sheep without a shepherd, in compassion He exhorted His first disciples to participate in His mission by imploring the Lord of the harvest to send forth workers (Matthew 9:36-39). Conservative evangelical mission agencies or societies have the overarching purpose of fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). Although Christopher Wright would argue that focusing primarily on these verses as the fundamental basis for mission is akin to putting all of the apologetic eggs in one basket (2006b:34), that was the motivation of founders and followers of these missions (see Niklaus, 1986:36-37, 84).

The doctrinal statements and purpose statements of evangelical missiology organizations point to the importance of the foundation and thrust of the Scriptures as it relates to missions practice. This includes proclamation of the gospel and intercessory prayer for missions endeavours. As missions grew as a field of study, missiological studies grew and professional societies were born to provide academic structure, fellowship and encouragement for teachers of missiology as well as practitioners. A

forerunner was the founding of the American Missiological Society in 1973, which was an important step in gaining credibility for missiology as an academic discipline (Shenk, 2014:1). The Evangelical Missiological Society (EMS) was formed as a split from the American Missiological Society, in part because of a perceived need of evangelicals to be committed to both the authority of Scripture and the priority of church planting and evangelism (Netland, 2000:334, as cited in Moreau, 2000). The EMS's express purpose is to:

Advance the cause of world evangelization through study and evaluation of mission concepts and strategies from a biblical perspective with a view to commending sound mission theory and practice to churches, mission agencies, and the schools of missionary training around the world.
(https://www.emsweb.org/images/documents/2014_EMS_Constitution.pdf)

It adheres to the Lausanne Covenant, which states concerning the Scriptures that:

We affirm the divine inspiration, truthfulness and authority of both Old and New Testament Scriptures in their entirety as the only written word of God, without error in all that it affirms, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

Related to evangelism and prayer, the Lausanne Covenant continues:

We are convinced that this is the time for churches and para-church agencies to pray earnestly for the salvation of the unreached and to launch new efforts to achieve world evangelization.

(<http://www.lausanne.org/content/covenant/lausanne-covenant>)

However, as a promoter of mission concepts, strategies and sound theory based on the Scriptures, there is a significant gap between the EMS's stated purpose and the inclusion of intercessory prayer for gospel proclamation. For example, in the 2015, 2016, and 2017 EMS National Conferences, prayer connected to missions was not a primary focus of the EMS, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Conference Topics: 2015-2017 Evangelical Missionary Society National Conferences.

| Evangelical Missionary Society National Conference Topics | | |
|---|---|--|
| 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controversies in Missions • Insider Movements • Partnerships • Money and Business as Mission • Same Sex Issues • Bible Translation and Familial Language • Money and Technology in Missions • Urban Ministry and Rapid Church Reproduction • Ministry to Muslims • Social Justice and Missions • Short Term Missions • Hindu Insider Movements • Unreached People Groups. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missional Theology and Islam • The Importance of Context • How Culture, Worship and Missions Connect • Towards a Contextual Ecclesiology • World Christian Strategy • Diaspora Missions • Other Backward Castes • The Trinity and the Qur'an¹ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sex Trafficking and Mission • Prison Mission • Women at the Round Table • Local Theologies and Higher Education • Anti-Poverty Mission • Theology of Business as Mission • Honour-Shame & the Gospel • Trauma Healing & Scripture • Non-Negotiables in Global Worship • Patronage and Theological Education |

Note. From https://www.emsweb.org/images/Final_2015_Conference_Schedule.pdf, https://www.emsweb.org/images/national-conference/2016/EMS_Conference_2016_Daily_Schedule.pdf, and https://www.emsweb.org/images/national-conference/2017/EMS_National_2017_Poster.pdf

The lack of focus on intercessory prayer as a primary tool of gospel proclamation and missions practice is consistent when one examines the titles and summaries of fifty-two books authored by EMS members in the last five years. None deal directly with the practice of intercessory prayer as it relates to the strategy or function of missions (<https://www.emsweb.org/publications/by-members>). Thus, at least in this time period, there is a distinct difference between their stated foundation and their practice in which

¹As the chosen Canadian representative to present at the Evangelical Missiological Society Annual Meeting in Dallas (USA) in 2016, my paper concerning prayer was the only of its kind out of multiple tracks and papers in each track.

they apparently do not see intercessory prayer as 'sound mission theory' for their readership and adherents. This is in stark contrast to evangelical missions focus from previous generations (see Taylor, 1968:57).

The *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* is a professional missions journal that serves the worldwide missions community and bills itself as 'for many thought-practitioners, the premier journal for the North American mission community'. Its mission is stated as:

To provide a credible, comprehensive, Christ-focused resource engaging today's global settings that will equip and inspire Christian leaders and workers who are passionate about long-term mission. (<https://emqonline.com/about-us/mission>)

Since 1964, the journal has published only seven articles that deal with prayer of any manner. Only two of these have been linked with strategy (Bryant, 1987; Toyama-Szeto, 2016). The significant lack of emphasis on prayer ministry related to missions practice implies a gap in the 'comprehensive' resource to 'inspire' Christian leaders.

While some North American conservative evangelical missiologists write about the importance of prayer and its application to missions (see Kraft, 1992, 1997; Rankin & Stetzer, 2010; Hiebert, 2000), typically this is not the case. The *Missions Frontier Journal* is an example of a mission-focused journal more open to a charismatic expression of evangelicalism, and it cites a growing number of prayer groups and missions linking together (<http://www.ipcprayer.org/ipc-connections/item/9630-finishing-the-task-conference-invite-5-7-december-2017.html>).

This lack of focus on intercessory prayer as a primary tool in the practice of missions for North American conservative missiology is problematic for six reasons. First, the Scriptures are replete with the linkage of communication with God to humankind through prayer with God's mission or gospel proclamation. In the Old Testament, we read of the dialogue between God and Jonah concerning Jonah's cross-cultural task of the proclamation of God's goodness (Jonah 1, 2, 4). We read how communication with God

and mission is inexorably linked in Isaiah's dramatic call and commissioning (Isaiah 6:1-8), The bold prayer of the church in Acts 4 was for God to 'stretch out His mighty hand' for the purpose of proclamation and recognition of the Messiah. Thrasher noted that 'prayer and missions' are intertwined in the book of Acts (2000:782, as found in Moreau, 2000). In 1 Timothy 2:1, the Apostle Paul implored his hearers to intercede for him, as well as asking for prayer to boldly proclaim the gospel as an ambassador in Ephesians 6:20.

Second, Jesus modelled intercessory prayer during key times of advancement or import of His mission on earth: thus, demonstrating its importance. As previously mentioned, Matthew's gospel records that Jesus noticed the harvest was 'white' and then instructed His disciples to pray for the Lord of the harvest to send labourers (Matthew 9:35-39). He prayed for those who did not know Him yet in John 17:20. His prayer in John 5:17, 19 focused on Him being in communion with where the Father was working. He had great compassion for people ravaged by the 'enemy' whose role was to steal, kill and destroy while He would give abundant life as found in John 10:10. He prayed for a key leader not to fail (Luke 22:31, 32). The intense struggle of Gethsemane for the ultimate accomplishment of His mission on earth described in Matthew 26:36-46 has much to teach us about intercessory prayer. Hebrews 7:25 records that Jesus continues to intercede for us – pointing not only to our need and His graciousness, but also to the importance of prayer from His perspective.

Third, the lack of focus on intercessory prayer as a primary tool in the practice of missions is problematic because, without the guidance of God through intercessory prayer, one could seemingly be outside the sovereignty and blessing of God. According to the Lausanne-Cape Town Strategy for Evangelism in the 21st Century, **not** integrating evangelism with the understanding of intercessory prayer has resulted in the failure of many well-intentioned evangelistic efforts (Eshleman, 2010). This also applies to gospel proclamation without the understanding of the specific will of God for a particular mission endeavour. In Acts 16:6-10, we see the Apostle Paul twice taking the initiative to go to

Asia and twice being rebuffed. In the Old Testament, in Numbers 14:42, we see an example from Jewish history pointing to the folly of seeking to work without God's blessing. With limited means and time related to efforts dedicated to gospel proclamation, the effective use of resources from a pragmatic perspective alone is a great concern. Evans echoes my experience and conviction by commenting that closer adherence to the overarching strategy and timing of the *Missio Dei* (Latin for 'mission of God'; Moreau, 2000:232) through the listening ear of human mission partners in prayer could have reduced wasted effort in many enterprises launched by missions (2007:311).

Fourth, missions work has seemingly made significant advances – equally true during times of non-revival and revival – that are fuelled by intercessory prayer before and during mission activity. The Moravians initiated and sustained intercessory prayer for missions that lasted for one hundred years and they launched a mission movement. Amazingly, during times of persecution and political turbulence, the China Inland Mission saw strong growth with a major focus on intercessory prayer (Fung, 2012:loc. 338). In analysing the 'Great Awakening' revival of 1757-1758, Prothero (2004:199) noted that the movement began and was developed through intercessory prayer, and he categorized it as a 'movement of the Spirit'. This confirms historian J. Edwin Orr's assertion that the Second Great Awakening and subsequent advances in mission were fuelled by concerts of prayer in the sending countries (1975:126).

Fifth, the lack of focus on intercessory prayer as a primary tool in the practice of missions suggests a misplaced priority of the role of missiological science. Pocock comments that missiological science is meant to have a ministerial role to spiritual dynamics – i.e. as 'handmaids to mission' - as opposed to a magisterial role. Ultimately, the former fundamental, causal factors bring about spiritual change in people (2005:11). George Peters warns that we have become so preoccupied with technology and methodology that we have forgotten that the releasing of divine dynamics is ultimately what missions is about (cited by Bryant, 1987).

The noted Latin missiologist Samuel Escobar echoes this sentiment and warns against the mere accumulation of human and technical resources. He flatly states it will not work (Escobar, 2003:26). Samuel Mateer echoes this observation when he notes the inevitable pull to focus more on the plans and methodology of missions rather than on prayer patterned after Jesus (Mateer & Corwin, 1997).

Murphy notes that evangelical theology has been influenced greatly by the Western worldview and summarizes it with the word 'naturalism': seeing the world as a uniform system excluding any dimensions of reality that exclude the natural (1993:164). Hancilles observes that Western missiology has had a clear bias – including an immense attraction to cultural anthropology studies – and he suggests that more studies of the sociology of religion would be helpful (2014:130). Similarly, in analysing ten years of missiology doctorates, Priest and De George note a definite 'pro-Europe' bias (2013:200). While discussing various tensions and perspectives concerning intercession and spiritual warfare, the Lausanne Consultation Statement noted that Western contributors had a worldview and missiology vastly different than the Eastern ones (Lausanne Movement, 2000). Van Rheenen (1997:179-180) observes three responses to this: (1) ignore them, (2) deny the spiritual world exists, or (3) explain it away with naturalistic explanation.

All evangelicals, by virtue of their doctrinal belief in the authority of Scripture, would espouse the importance of personal prayer and praying for missionaries and their work. It would be inaccurate to say that all Western missiology is 'naturalistic'. The question could be raised, then, as to why there is not more evident linkage between intercessory prayer in North American conservative evangelical missiology.

Sixth, in order to proclaim the gospel with many competing powers and worldviews, spiritual power is needed to enable personal and community transformation. 'Unreached people groups' are commonly defined in evangelical literature as sociological groups having less than 2% of the population listed as 'Christian' by even a broad definition of

the word. An 'unreached people group' has no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize their people without outside assistance (<https://joshuaproject.net/help/definitions>).

Rondal Smith notes that, to reach these groups, intercessory prayer is needed to influence 'institutional unbelief' and behaviour in culture (1995:122). Little has changed in my observation since Robb noted the challenge of engaging in prayer for these groups. He stated that missions leaders have 'little time to pray and treat (prayer) as a harmless pastime, rather than a strategic weapon' (1991:23). This was not always so, as evidenced by Jonathan Edwards' firm belief in the 'concert of prayer' as the key element in divine blessing and the primary motivation behind his famous 'humble attempt' treatise in 1748 to unite believers in prayer for the outpouring of God's Spirit (cited by Haykin, 2005:141).

All of the insights, benefits and best practices missiological science can offer is necessary for the accomplishment of world evangelization. A restoration of intercessory prayer as a primary tool employed in missions practice is desirable and necessary.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

How can a practical model of strategic intercessory prayer be developed that is scripturally, theologically and missiologically sound for missions practice today?

1.3 GENERAL OUTLINE OF THESIS

To engage this research question, the following sections emerge:

1.3.1 The Basis Theoretical Material

- Biblical Understanding and Theology of Mission
 - Old Testament
 - New Testament

- Church History Overview
- Current Issues in Missiology
- Biblical Understanding and Theology of Prayer
 - Prayer Common Theme
 - Examples from the Old Testament
 - Examples from the New Testament
 - Church History Overview
 - Theological Principles Concerning Prayer
 - Theological Challenges Concerning Prayer
- Biblical Understanding and the Theology of Discernment
 - Biblical Examples
 - Examples from Church History
 - Theological Principles

1.3.2 The Meta-Theoretical Material

In this dissertation, seven historical, evangelically-based missionary initiatives significantly linked with intercessory prayer will be reviewed: Moravian, Chinese, European, Korean, South American, African and Historical. These were chosen to represent a cross-section that is geographically, methodologically and doctrinally divergent within evangelicalism yet strongly linked with intercessory prayer. Emerging national sending churches and church planting movements will be examined as well.

1.3.3 The Praxis Theoretical Material

The dissertation will seek to answer the question: 'Is it possible to take a seemingly subjective experience, such as intercessory prayer, and deconstruct it into its variant parts?' Examination will occur of the puzzle of how, as per the claims of Scripture, one knows that one's prayer has been 'heard' and how one can have confidence that the prayer is answered before it actually is. Additionally, the role of spiritual tools, which I define as 'augments found in the Scriptures to enhance the effectiveness of prayer', will be posited with the view of encouraging missions practice.

1.4 AIM OF STUDY

The aim of this study is to develop a model of intercessory prayer that is strategic and attainable for missions practice today through researching Scripture, church and missions history and gleaning information from related scholarship, emerging movements and experienced practitioners.

To fulfil this aim, the thesis will focus on three specific objectives:

- How does the biblical and theological understanding of mission, prayer and discernment provide a context for understanding the role of intercessory prayer and its relationship to missions practice in fulfilling the Great Commission?
- What do church and missions history, contemporary models and present day experts teach us concerning intercessory prayer? A historical and modern-day review of materials will be undertaken to answer this question. Also, questionnaires completed by expert practitioners and interviews of expert practitioners will be summarized and analysed.
- Can a model of intercessory prayer be developed that incorporates the principles of scripture and the best practices of practitioners: both historical and present day? Taking the biblical material as foundational along with best practices of ancient and contemporary church history, a transferable supra-cultural model will be developed.

1.5 CENTRAL THEORETICAL ARGUMENT

By way of researching Scripture, church and missions history, and gleaning information from related scholarship, emerging movements and experienced practitioners, a model of strategic intercessory prayer can be developed that is scripturally, theologically and missiologically sound (Figure 1).

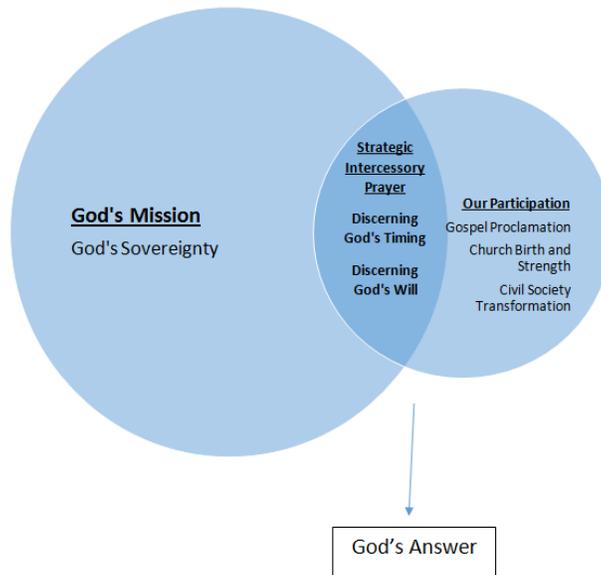


Figure 1. Strategic intercessory prayer model.

1.6 METHOD

Basis theoretical perspectives will be developed from the study of the biblical theology of mission, biblical examples and theology of the practice of intercessory prayer. The Bible was God-breathed (2 Timothy 2:16) and has divine authority. Therefore, it is our rule for faith and life, as affirmed in the Westminster Catechism (Schaff, 1983:602) and the Belgian Declaration of 1561 (Beeke & Ferguson, 1999:10-12), and it is foundational for this study. Early church history concerning prayer will be included in the study.

Meta-theoretical perspectives will be developed from:

- A comparative literature study: an overview and analysis of the literature – biblical, theological and missiological - related to intercessory prayer.
- Historical documents.
- Questionnaires and interviews:

- Research was conducted using the Mixed Method approach. This approach was chosen as it well suits a research question on a spiritually based subject – focusing on quantitative (facts) and qualitative (contexts) questions. Creswell and Plano Clark point out that ‘...Mixed Method’s central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches, in combination, provides a better understanding of the research problem than either approach alone’ (2010:5). Julia Branan notes that Mixed Methods research is a way of thinking ‘outside of the box’ (56) particularly across disciplines (Bergman: in Manfred, 2009:56).
- Pretesting was conducted to refine the questionnaire and the subsequent refinement.
- Questions were designed to employ open and closed ended questions.
- Questions were designed to solicit knowledge base, beliefs/perceptions, behaviours and attributes.
- There were four different categories of interviewees: (1) mission leaders, (2) missionaries, (3) vocational Christian workers (such as pastors, theologians, parachurch workers) and (4) prayer intercessors.
- Data collection, transcription and analysis of material were conducted.

The praxis theoretical perspective will be developed from analysis/interpretation of the basis theoretical data and meta-theoretical data including the literature review, observations and interpretation of interviews. From these conclusions, a model will emerge with potential implications for incorporating best practices of intercessory prayer and insights leading to becoming ‘strategic’. It must be emphasized that any model is indicative of research undertaken as well as patterns observed and cannot be prescriptive.

1.7 SUMMARY AND LOOKING AHEAD

In this introductory chapter, we have identified that North American evangelical missiology typically does not focus on intercessory prayer as a primary tool for missions practice.

This is problematic, as throughout the Old and New Testaments, prayer and mission have been inexorably intertwined. Additionally, the 'Author and Finisher of our faith' (Hebrews 12:2) modelled intercessory prayer before kingdom advancement and continues to do so as he intercedes for us. Also, missions work has made significant advances fuelled by strategic intercessory prayer before and during mission activity. This has been equally true during times of non-revival and revival. Thus, missions work without the guidance of intercessory prayer could seemingly mean being outside of the sovereignty and blessing of God.

To address this challenge, we will seek to develop a model of intercessory prayer that is strategic and attainable for missions practice. The next chapter will focus on the biblical and theological understanding of mission, prayer and discernment. Chapter 3 will contain an overview of historical and current conservative evangelical missions movements focused on intercessory prayer. A model for intercessory prayer that is strategic will be developed in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 will contain a discussion of the implications of this model for missions practice, and Chapter 6 will conclude the study.

CHAPTER 2

BASIS THEORETICAL MATERIAL

2.1 BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING AND THE THEOLOGY OF MISSION

Christopher Wright defines missions as ‘the overall redemption of God’s creation’ and uses the term to denote a long-term purpose or goal that is to be achieved by proximate objectives and planned actions (2006b:25). Anderson describes the theology of mission as a study of the ‘basic presuppositions and underlying principles which determine, from the standpoint of the Christian faith, the motives, message methods strategy and goals of the Christian world mission’ (as cited in Bosch, 1980:21).

A simple (but not simplistic) synthesis of many resources concerning the Biblical theology of mission is outlined in Table 2 (see the reference list). God, in His sovereignty and in response to the fall of man, ‘a déclenché’ His mission through proximate objectives and planned actions and invites us to participate in His mission through the proclamation of His gospel, through the birth and strengthening of His church, and the transformation of civil society leading to the overall redemption of God’s creation.

God is the ‘primary mover’: the designer and ultimately the executor of the plans. Humankind is invited to respond by participating or rejecting in those plans. Taking events throughout Biblical history, commonly agreed as pivotal in the development of a theology of mission, Table 2 demonstrates the interplay between sovereign initiation and humankind’s response.

Table 2. The Interplay Between Sovereign Initiation and Humankind’s Response.

| God Designs and/or Executes | Humankind’s Action/Response |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Perfect Environment of Eden | ⇒ Fulfilment of mandate – but rebellion/sin/blame |
| God takes initiative in relationship | ⇒ Hiding/shame |
| Curse of the fall initiated | ⇒ Pain in childbirth |
| ‘Crushing of the Heel’ | ⇒ Life more difficult – relationship enmity |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Expulsion from the Garden | ⇒ | Cultivation difficult |
| Grace extended | ⇒ | Everyone did what was right in their own eyes |
| Before the flood, provision of escape | ⇒ | Mockery, but Noah and his family saved |
| Grace extended | ⇒ | Building of an idolatrous tower at Babel |
| God confuses language | ⇒ | People scatter |
| Sovereign choice of Abraham | ⇒ | Abraham obeys |
| Covenants and renewal of covenants | ⇒ | Abraham becomes the father of nations |
| God designs a blueprint for a new nation that would be 'different'. Exodus initiated | ⇒ | Miraculous circumstances: Israel receives land They are distinguished among the nations |
| God sends Jonah to Nineveh, 2 nd chance | ⇒ | Jonah rejects call, ultimately submits |
| God initiates prophetic warnings, judgements, protection of Davidic line | ⇒ | Losing of the land, exile, limited restoration Davidic line kept |
| In the fullness of time, God sent His Son | ⇒ | Mary accepts |
| God chooses Mary for the Incarnation | ⇒ | Protection of the Christ child |
| 'Grace and truth' revealed (John 1:14) | ⇒ | Common people give overwhelming response |
| Claims of equality with God | ⇒ | Disciples confused. Religious leaders threatened |
| Jesus crucified 'the Lamb of God' | ⇒ | Recognition of deity |
| Substitutionary atonement | ⇒ | Disciples scattered |
| Jesus' resurrection demonstrated proofs | ⇒ | Proofs accepted |
| The Great Commission | ⇒ | The 120 were to make disciples, teach and |
| The Ascension | ⇒ | baptize, but were to wait for 'power from on high' |
| Pentecost – sending of the Holy Spirit | ⇒ | Endured with power, birth of the church |
| Peter given a vision – new paradigm | ⇒ | Confirmed through Cornelius – Gentiles welcome |
| Sovereign choosing of Saul | ⇒ | Confirmed through Ananias – 14 years of waiting |
| Holy Spirit setting apart of Paul and Barnabas for the Gentiles. Ministry confirmed | ⇒ | Jerusalem Council convened to discuss if Gentiles need to follow the law of Moses. Answer is 'no'. |
| Paul and Barnabas' missionary journeys | ⇒ | Establishment of the churches |
| Inspiration of letters to the missionary churches | ⇒ | Letters recognized as authoritative and 'God breathed |
| God reveals to Paul/John details regarding the end of time | ⇒ | Churches look for and 'long for' the 'Blessed Hope' – the second return of Christ |

Implications

1. God is sovereign and in charge of His mission strategy and direction.
2. God is 'in charge' of the duration and timing of His mission, as we see in the Exodus, entering into the Promised Land, the Incarnation of Jesus as redemptory, the choosing of Saul, etc.
3. God invites His chosen ones to participate in His mission strategies. To a degree, God accommodates His people's wishes and proclivities.

2.1.1 Evangelical Theology and the Authority of Scripture

Theology is described as the methodical interpretation of the contents of the Christian faith (Tillich, 1963:15, 28). Jaroslav Pelikan regarded theology as 'What the church of Jesus Christ believes, teaches and confesses on the basis of the word of God: This is Christian Doctrine' (Pelikan, as cited in Bird, 2013:30). Bird adds that theology, derived from 'Theos' (God) and 'logos' (Word), is an attempt to say something about God and His relationship to the world (Bird, 2013:30). Francis Turretin (1623-1687) viewed the task of theology as that of setting forth what can be known of God as He has revealed Himself in His word: a task that can be accomplished primarily by systematizing the teachings of Scripture (Grenz, as cited in Bacote *et al.*, 2004:28-29).

The Evangelical Alliance forged the following statement of doctrinal beliefs in 1847:

1. The divine inspiration, authority and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures
2. The right and privacy of private judgment in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures
3. The unity of the Godhead and the Trinity of the Persons therein
4. The utter depravity of human nature in consequence of the Fall
5. The incarnation of the Son of God, His work of atonement and His mediatorial intercession and reign
6. The justification of the sinner by faith alone
7. The work of the Holy Spirit in the conversion and sanctification of the sinner alone

8. The immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, the judgement of the world by Jesus Christ and the eternal blessedness of the righteous and the eternal punishment of the wicked
9. The divine institution of the Christian ministry, with the ordinances of the Lord's supper and baptism. (Massie, 1847)

Two diverse concerns have fed into the evangelical movement.

- a) The confluence of Puritanism in England and Pietism on the European continent that lay at the genesis of 18th century awakening of evangelicalism generated concern for the gospel of the transformed heart.
- b) Interest in right doctrine that was initially bequeathed by Protestant scholasticism but took form in the crucible of early twentieth century fundamentalism (Grenz, as cited in Bacote *et al.*, 2004:39)

Michael Bird suggests that 'evangelical' denotes those faith communities who hold to the catholic and orthodox faith and who possess a single religious affection for the Triune God. This is combined with a zealous fervour to proclaim the gospel to the ends of the earth (2013:11). Derived from the Greek word transliterated 'euangelion' (good news), 'evangelicalism' has always been associated with 'the gospel'. Bird goes on to describe six factors that led to the formation of modern evangelicalism:

1. The Protest Reformation with emphasis on the doctrine of grace
2. The convergence of Puritanism and Pietism that shared social and religious causes like revival and the abolition of slavery
3. The missionary movements of the last two centuries
4. The liberal vs. fundamentalist controversies over Christian doctrine
5. The separation from 'evangelicals' from the fundamentalists
6. Growth of the majority world churches and the interaction with groups such as Lausanne. (Bird, 2013:20, 21)

Meanwhile, Alistair McGrath notes six emphases that characterize evangelicals: (1) the supreme authority of Scripture, (2) the majesty of Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, (3)

the lordship of the Holy Spirit, (4) the need for personal conversion, (5) the priority of evangelism for the individual and the church and (6) the importance of Christian community (Bird, 1995:20-21).

In his much referred to analysis in his book *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, David Bebbington notes four pillars. We will focus our study on these pillars:

1. **Biblicism:** a particular regard for the Bible as inspired and authoritative while affirming schooling, reason, and science to assist in explaining Christianity;
2. **Crucicentrism:** a focus on the substitutionary atoning work of Christ on the cross and the resurrection of Jesus.
3. **Conversionism:** the core belief among evangelicals that human beings need to turn from sin and be converted to faith in Jesus Christ.
4. **Activism** - the belief that the gospel needs to be proclaimed to others and expressed in a commitment to service such as social reform because of their own experience with God. This activism has contributed to evangelicals constituting the second largest grouping of Christian believers in the world second only to Roman Catholics and more numerous than all other world religions except Muslims and Hindus (Noll, as cited in McDermott, 2010:19).

The starting point of evangelical theology is ultimately not the Scriptures, but God. Before we focus on the four pillars starting with Biblicism, we will examine the source of the Scriptures.

God as the Source of Scripture

Evangelical theologians assert that God reveals Himself through two major ways: (1) general revelation and (2) special revelation. Bernard Ramm posits that, in the broadest sense, 'revelation' is the sum total of the ways in which God makes Himself known. Jensen adds that general revelation is a divine activity that provides a universally accepted accessible knowledge of God (1992:104; 1961:17). Special revelation is commonly thought to mean 'the Scriptures'. In this section, we will discuss general revelation briefly, which ultimately is complimentary to special revelation.

In Article 2, after declaring in Article 1 that there is one God, the *Belgic Confession* states that there are two means by which God has made Himself known to us: (1) through the creation, preservation and government of the universe, and (2) 'more clearly and fully by His holy and divine word' (Berkouwer, 1955:265). The general revelation of God has been evidenced primarily in three areas: (1) nature, (2) history and (3) humanity.

- Nature is described as a witness to the glory of God (Psalm 19). Romans 1:18-32: God's invisible nature, namely His eternal power and deity clearly perceived in the things that were made, is plain to them'. The Greek phrase "plain to them' means 'visible, clear, plainly to be seen, open, plain, evident and known' (Bauer, 1979:852). It is not innate knowledge, which shows them God: it is God Himself who gives it to them – 'in nature itself we see nature's God' (Erickson, 2013:126; Morris, 1988:80).
- History (archaeology, Israel, the church, miracles). Early apologists like Justin Martyr (c.165) argued that Christians worshipped the one true God and that Jesus not only fulfils the OT expectation but is also the incarnate logos who embodies the true wisdom of Greek philosophers (xvii). An example of history notes the preservation of the people of Israel against all odds.
- Additionally, the Bible constantly refers to historical events, places, situations and the culture of that day which can be verified. The field of archaeology points to numerous authentications of the Biblical account. Porter notes that the archaeology in Galilee as well as anthropological and textual research now permits us to trace Jesus' development: enabling us to tell His story in the narrative terms that characterize true biography (Porter, 2007:160). One example among many is the account of Jesus healing the blind man in John 5 at the Pool of Siloam. The pool was excavated in 2005: demonstrating the veracity of the Biblical account (<https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-sites-places/jerusalem/the-bethesda-pool-site-of-one-of-jesus%e2%80%99-miracles/>).

- Humanity: John Calvin (whose given name was actually Jean) believed that, in spite of our sin, we have a sense of the divine implanted in our nature by God both in nature and in heart, but it is often suppressed, with one in one hundred nurturing that 'seed' (1987:28) rendering the person feeling guilty.

These three areas lead to the theological category of natural theology: how God's existence is known outside of the Biblical source (Erickson, 2013:121). Debate continues concerning if general revelation is sufficient for 'salvation' or merely leads to the fuller understanding of special revelation. Clearly, general revelation points to God as a communicator of His nature, His work, His love, and grace. Within this context of God as communicator through general revelation is the concept of God 'breathing' the Scriptures or special revelation. I suggest God as the source of Scriptures is the pivotal pillar of evangelicalism.

Biblicism: Authority and Centrality of Scripture

Evangelicals point to the central role of Scripture personally and in the church (Bacote *et al.*, 2004:192) and also lay at the centre of the intellectual and spiritual lives of Christians in the earliest centuries of the church (Carson, 2016:1158). Evangelicals take their cue from John Wesley, who in the collection of his sermons, declared tersely 'let me be 'home unius libri' – as a man of 'one book' (Grenz, as cited in Heitzenrater, 1984:149). D. A. Carson's tome on evangelical theology has a 'not so subtle' message in the title *The Enduring Authority of the Christian Scriptures* (2016).

A simple definition of authority is 'the right to command belief and/or action' (Erickson, 2013:212). The Scriptures start with 'In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth' (Genesis 1:1): thus appealing to an entity outside of itself. God is explicitly designated as the authority from the beginning and subsequently from which all things flow. Calvin indicated that God is the central theme of his work (Picken, 2012:92).

If God is the ultimate authority, how is that authority revealed? Revelation is God making His truth known to humankind (Erickson, 2013:215). The following discussion is a condensed synopsis of how North American conservative evangelicals approach

authority as revealed through special revelation (given in the Bible) (Morris, 1977:32) followed by challenges to Scriptural authority.

Special Revelation

Special revelation is typically categorized as the Christian Scriptures. It is seen as complimentary to 'general' revelation. When special revelation came, it awakened the realization of the general revelation's authenticity (Erickson, 2013:127) and demonstrated its 'God-breathed' quality (2 Timothy 2:16). Carl Henry notes the fact is clear that the general revelation of God does not stand next to the special revelation, but that special revelation opens our eyes to the greatness of God's works and points the way (1958:18).

This condensed synopsis points out what the Scriptures say about themselves: (1) Scriptures as self-authenticating and (2) the Scriptures confirmed by the Church.

1. What the Scriptures say about themselves:

- They are 'God Breathed' (2 Timothy 3:16). This entails the principle of 'Double Authorship' that is both human and divine, but inspired by divine using the personality, writing styles, and intellect of the human writer. The word 'inspiration' is that which joins two authors or agents (Blocher in Carson, 2016:500). That does not negate, as Luther stated, that the Bible is the 'Holy Spirit's own and particular book' (Blocher, as cited in Carson, 2016:511; Luther, 1965:340). Erickson defines inspiration as the 'supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit on the writers that rendered their writings an accurate record of the revelation or that resulted in what they wrote actually being the Word of God' (2013:169).
- Israel considered the Law, including the Decalogue and the Ten Commandments, and the writings of the prophets as Scriptures and authoritative (Exodus 20:1; 34:27-28; Deuteronomy 4:12-13).
- Jesus considered the Law, Prophets, and Psalms as Scripture (Luke 4:17-21; 24:44; John 13:18).

- Peter considered Paul's writing as Scriptures and authoritative (2 Peter 3:15, 16).

2. The Scriptures are self-authenticating

Three historical views trace how we are convinced of the meaning of the Scriptures and point to their divine origin and authorship:

- a. Roman Catholic view: Through the church, we come to understand the Bible and be convinced of its divine authorship.
- b. Human reasoning is the means of establishing the Bible's meaning and divine origins.
- c. There is an internal working of the Holy Spirit illuminating the understanding and comprehension of the hearer to the meaning and divine authorship (Erickson, 2013:216).

The Reformers linked the confession of the Spirit's testimony to the witness of the Holy Spirit (Berkouwer, 1975:55). I support the Belgic Confession (2017), which states in Article 5 concerning the authority of the Holy Scripture that:

We receive all these books, and these only, as holy and canonical, for the regulation, foundation, and confirmation of our faith. We believe without any doubt all things contained in them, not so much because the Church receives and approves them as such, but especially because the Holy Spirit witnesses in our hearts that they are from God, and also because they contain the evidence thereof in themselves; for, even the blind are able to perceive that the things foretold in them are being fulfilled.

Bernard Ramm notes a pattern of authority that constitutes authority for the Christian: the objective word, the written Scripture, together with the subjective word, which is the inner illumination and conviction of the Holy Spirit (1961:220). J. I. Packer adds the Holy Spirit evidences itself by means and prerogative of the inward witness of the Holy Spirit (1993:13).

The *Westminster Confession*, too, points to the role of the testimony of the Church in the esteem of the Scriptures, the efficacy of doctrine, the 'majesty of style' and other incomparable excellencies, but 'notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts' (*Westminster Confession*, 1641). God authenticates Holy Scripture to us by means of the searching light and transforming power, whereby Scripture evidences itself to be divine (*Westminster Confession*, 1641:14).

John Calvin adds, 'The Holy Spirit works internally in the life of the believer, witnessing to the truth and countering the effects of sin so that the inherent meaning of the Bible may be seen' (1960:225).

3. The Scriptures have been authenticated by the Church

From the earliest creed of the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4) to baptismal formulas (Matthew 28:18-20), the church has sought to clarify questions of faith such as worship, the Eucharist, and catechism inclusion (Fahlbusch *et al.*, 1997:637). Another important function of the church's authentication of matters of faith and practice – particularly concerning the nature of Christ and the Trinity – come through conciliar gatherings. A case can be made for identifying the early church as that period in the history of the church from which arose the only statements of faith (whether creedal or conciliar) that have been and are still acknowledged as binding (Pelikan & Hotchkiss, 2003:4).

All the creeds discuss the interpretation of Scripture, but most early creeds do not specify a doctrine of Bibliology. In 'The Creed of The Synod of Antioch' (325), we read the term 'Holy Scriptures' three different times (Pelikan & Hotchkiss, 2003:85-86). In 'The Creed of the Dedication Council' (Second Synod to Antioch 341), we read again 'according to the Scriptures'. In the 'Baptismal Creed of Jerusalem' (350), Cyril of Jerusalem mentions the Paraclete who 'spoke in the

prophets' (Pelikan & Hotchkiss, 2003:95). 'The Creed of Constantinople' speaks of the 'divine Scriptures' (Pelikan & Hotchkiss, 2003:99).

The influential council of Nicaea-Constantinople in 381 noted explicitly that, in speaking of the Resurrection, Jesus rose on the third day 'according to the Scriptures' and that God has 'spoken through the prophets' (Pelikan & Hotchkiss, 2003:158).

In its 'Article 7: The Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures', the Belgic Confession of Faith (2017) adds this statement to be the other rule of faith:

We believe that those Holy Scriptures fully contain the will of God, and that whatsoever man ought to believe, unto salvation, is sufficiently taught therein.

N.T. Wright notes that authority was vested in God, given to Jesus (Matthew 28:18) and then passed through the Holy Spirit to the apostles - the church. He argues that, when we speak of the authority of Scripture, it is not in rules and regulations, but in the transforming power of the Living Word through the Scriptures. The task of the church is to get the message of the Bible to the world so the story is impactful. He argues that the authority of the Scriptures is not static, but it is actualized in community

(<http://ntwrightpage.com/2016/07/12/how-can-the-bible-be-authoritative/>).

Challenges to the Authority of Scripture

In this section, we give a synopsis of two key historical and present challenges to the authority of Scripture: Biblical Criticism and the Inerrancy Question and Postmodernism.

1. Biblical Criticism and the Question of Inerrancy

Going back in history, Turretin's commitment to the full inspiration of the biblical documents led to the claim set forth in the Helvetic Consensus Formula (1675) that the

divine inspiration of the Old Testament extended beyond the consonants to the vowel points themselves or at least to the power of the points (Leith, 1982:29). Inerrancy, meaning 'without error', came to be the central if not the central hallmark of evangelicalism and the litmus test for full participation in the evangelical movement (Leith, 1982:37). Harold Lindsell claimed that those who no longer hold to inerrancy are technically not evangelicals (1976:210).

The rise in Biblical criticism from the study of Scripture texts and related contexts has had significant historical and present-day implications on doctrine and the rules of faith and practice and the need for evangelism, missions and prayer (c.f. Canadian Research Forum study). If Biblical study results in a greater understanding and appreciation of the Scriptures, it can be faith enhancing. If conclusions, particularly with either anti-supernatural presuppositions as a starting point, lead away from the historic gospel, and if humankind is not sinful, then why do we need a Saviour? If Christ is not raised, our faith is in vain and you are of all men to be pitied (1 Corinthians 15:17,19). As for behaviour, why not 'eat drink and be merry for tomorrow we die' (1 Corinthians 15:32).

As the stakes are high, evangelicals have had a complicated relationship with biblical or 'higher' criticism. Some have rejected the findings and others have embraced them.

Porter (2007) notes that, within the last several decades, there has been a multiplication of critical methods within the field of biblical studies, and that there have been both positive and negative results of this increase. The positive ones include: development of new methods, motivate and refine methods of interpretation, expanding scope of the historical-critical method, and finally walls coming down between the different disciplines. He notes some negative trends as well: for one interpreter to understand and master all ranges of approaches, a loss of the history of interpretation, and increasing difficulty arriving at normative interpretations (Porter, 2007:1-2).

Of particular note is the challenge that the rise in biblical criticism has a more traditional historical-critical method, particularly in the post-modern world of crumbling certainties.

Many of the assured results of the methods have been questioned or declared to be dead, but the method lives on (Davies, 2013:2; Porter, 2007:2).

Biblical Criticism Categories Summation

Erickson (2013:92-93) presents eight key categories of biblical criticism:

1. Textual criticism – determines the original text of the biblical books by comparing various manuscripts of that text
2. Literary – source criticism – determines the literary sources on which books of the Bible are based or from which they derive
3. Form criticism – the purpose is to get behind the written sources to the oral traditions
4. Redacting criticism – the study of the activity of the biblical authors in shaping or creating material for the final product they wrote
5. Historical criticism – draws on all the above as well as related archaeological and non-biblical historical sources
6. Comparative religion criticism - assumes all religions follow common patterns of development (usually from polytheism to monotheism) and explains the Judeo-Christian faith in terms of these patterns.
7. Structural criticism – attempts to investigate the relationship of the surface writing of the Scripture to the literary forms that predate it
8. Reader-response criticism – regards the locus of meaning not as the text, but as the reader who creates the meaning instead of finding it there.

With the exception of the last point, this paradigm of Biblical studies has and is facing a major paradigm shift – leading to our next topic of discussion.

2. Postmodern Theology

A key aspect of Reformation theology is that theology should commence with a description of the mode of God's self-communication of Himself to His creatures and derive doctrine using presuppositional truth. Karl Barth takes a step away from that

when he says the Bible 'becomes' God's word (Bacote *et al.*, 2004:56). As we move forward in history, we see an increasing step away from presuppositional truth – indeed, the very questioning of the capacity of truth to be objective. Postmodernity is the ultimate synthesis of the philosophical scepticism of all knowledge claims by Immanuel Kant and the nihilism of Friedrich Nietzsche, with no single reality. Truth become relative to its own circle of claims and constituents. Absolute truth is dead. Truth is pluralistic, regardless of political, economic, religious or ethical considerations. Postmodern theology tends to reject any prolegomena, as there are other realities (Bird, 2013:39-40).

Daniel J. Adams, a Presbyterian theologian, succinctly summarizes four key aspects of postmodernism (1997):

- Decline of the West – rewriting of history. The recent 150th anniversary of 'Canada' is a case in point – how can one celebrate the crushing of the indigenous culture?
- Legitimation questions: pluralism of values
- Intellectual marketplace: the information highway (internet, social media and other media) means that no longer is public thought controlled by a few
- Deconstruction: every text has no 'once for all' meaning nor is it necessarily authentic (Adams, 1997:paras. 8-14). Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, chief architects of the deconstructionist theory, have challenged the objectivity of history as well as theology (Baring, 2014:175-176), although Shakespeare defends Derrida from others imposing on him the 'worst pretensions and frivolities of postmodernism' (2009:2).

Erickson (2013) summarizes that postmodernists, including some post-conservative evangelicals, continue to decry objectivist thinking identified as 'modernist' or 'enlightenment'. Complete objectivity is an illusion. Meaning also does not reside exclusively within the text; rather the meaning is with the reader. Postmodernists also reject metanarratives – they believe all-inclusive theories and presuppositions are to be

treated with scepticism (Erickson, 2013:28-29). Here the issue is not so much whether Christian theology is true, but rather if anything ever was true (Erickson, 2013:28-29).

An archaeologist and academic, Ziony Zevit, challenges this optic. He grapples with Derrida's claims as it relates to the humanities, communication and archaeology. He argues against Derrida's claim less on theological grounds, but more on his foundational assumptions on language and communication. He claims Derrida and followers downgrade the factual impact of language and then make bold assumptions based on a faulty premise. This is further held in communication where he reads philosophy as literature and so applies to philosophy the conventional and unconventional decoding techniques of literature: ultimately leading to a misuse of language and interpretation (2001:65-66).

David Alan Williams seeks to bridge the gap between presuppositional truth and the postmodern world by suggesting that, just as Scripture uses metaphors to communicate concepts, so we can engage with our postmodern world by using story and metaphor to communicate divine truth (Bacote *et al.*, 2004:229-243).

Clearly, we have described a 'sea change'. Postmodernism has shifted the landscape significantly, making the subject of Biblical hermeneutics today both pertinent and challenging. Systems of theologies first lasted hundreds of years, now the 'life span of theologies is becoming shorter and shorter' (Erickson, 2013:47).

In summary, we have briefly examined the centrality of the Scriptures – particularly the source of the authority of Scripture. We additionally looked at the challenges to that authority. The next pillar of evangelicalism is focused on a central feature of the Christian tradition: the cross.

Crucicentric

'Evangelicals have a crucicentric gospel and for good reason' (Bird, 2013:385). For Martin Luther, theology was not a theology of glory but of the cross (Heidelberg Disputation 20-21). Leon Morris wrote 'The atonement is the crucial doctrine of the faith.

Unless we are right here it matters little, or so it seems to me, what we are like elsewhere' (as cited in Erickson, 2013:714).

Preceding any discussion on the cross is the discussion of sin. In Romans 5:12, the Apostle Paul claims Adam is representative of the human race, and from him 'all have sinned'. Packer notes Scripture diagnoses sin as a universal deformity of human nature found at every point in every person (1 Kings 8:46; Romans 3:23; 7:18; John 1:8-10) and more comprehensively defined as a lack of conformity to the law of God in act, habit, attitude, outlook, disposition, motivation, and mode of existence (Packer, 1993:82). Sin is defined as 'any evil action or motive that is in opposition to God' (Erickson, 2013:513). Original sin is the reality of that sin in our human nature derived as a continuous linkage from Adam. We were born in sin. Calvin coined the term 'total depravity' to make explicit the fall out of original sin.

There is also the sense of 'collective sin' as in oppression of people (Isaiah 1:18 – 'though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool'. The context is the oppressive conditions which he holds the society responsible for (c.f. Erickson, 2013:585).

The Doctrine of Original Sin in the Belgic Confession (2017: Article 15) states:

We believe that, through the disobedience of Adam, original sin is extended to all mankind; which is a corruption of the whole nature, and a hereditary disease, wherewith infants themselves are infected even in their mother's womb, and which produces in man all sorts of sin, being in him as a root thereof; and therefore is so vile and abominable in the sight of God, that it is sufficient to condemn all mankind. Nor is it by any means abolished or done away by baptism; since sin always issues forth from this woeful source, as water from a fountain; notwithstanding it is not imputed to the children of God unto condemnation, but by his grace and mercy is forgiven them. Not that they should rest securely in sin, but that a sense of this corruption should make believers

often to sigh, desiring to be delivered from this body of death. Wherefore we reject the error of the Pelagians, who assert that sin proceeds only from imitation.

This sinful state leads to a state of guiltiness, which is not just a feeling but a moral state of falling short of God's minimal standard: holiness before God. If humans fall short because of external forces, because of a lack of education or knowledge, unwholesome environment, poverty, or lack of opportunities, then there is no need for a cross. It is a question of encouragement and 'dialogue'. If there is no standard for feeling guilt, there is no need for a spiritual antidote. However, if humans are intrinsically rebellious at the core level, a greater force than these must be prescribed. Erickson notes that this conception of the cure for sin embraces the optimistic belief that the evolutionary process is carrying the human race in the right direction. However, the evangelical perspective states that, since the fall, we are sinful by nature and need divine help with conversion and regeneration that brings us into a relationship with God (Erickson, 2013:547).

Into this environment, the law was instituted with three purposes: to be a mirror and contrast for us of God's righteousness and holiness compared to our sinful tendencies, to restrain sin, and to point the person to good deeds. Requirement for appeasement of sin was a blood sacrifice. The law prepared the way for the Incarnation: the Second Person of the Trinity becoming 'in human form'; born of a virgin, with both a human and divine nature. He perfectly fulfilled the Scriptures and was God's plan to undo the Adamic curse of sin.

Bird calls the incarnation the 'extra – extra special revelation' (Bird, 2013:305). The Word became flesh (John 1:1). The Apostle John noted 'And we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten Son of the Father' (John 1:14). Ramm adds 'Jesus Christ is the supreme Word of God above all other forms of the Word of God' (Ramm, 1961:59). In the incarnation, Jesus fulfils Scripture with images, types, and patterns that helped illuminate their understanding of Him (Bird, 2013:309). He becomes the ultimate

mediator (1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 8:6) leading to the claims of exclusivity of Jesus as 'the way the truth and the life' (John 14:6).

John Stott in *The Cross of Christ* states 'Evangelical Christians believe that in and through Christ crucified God substituted Himself for us and bore our sins, dying in our place for the death we deserved to die, in order that we might be restored to His favour and adopted into His family' (Stott, 2006:7). With this in mind, for evangelicals, the atonement is the climax of God's project to put the world to right through the cross of Jesus (Bird, 2013:421) and will be developed more on the section on 'Soteriology'. The atonement at its core sacrifice, propitiation – appeasement to God, substitution (he was made sin for us) and reconciliation. Various emphasis and theories of the atonement seek to grasp the wide-ranging significance of the atonement. But is this being made right with God automatic with the death of Christ on the cross? In the ongoing debate about universalism – i.e. that everyone will be saved as a result of Christ's death – ultimately the words of the Apostle Paul weigh significantly as stated in Romans 10:14-15, which then leads us to the next pillar of evangelicalism: conversion.

How then can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news'. Romans 10:14-15

Conversion

Turning the heart of stone to a 'heart of flesh' (Ezekiel 36:26) has traditionally been used to foreshadow a direct result of the 'new covenant' regeneration. Probably this pillar has been linked more to evangelicalism than the other three.

Regeneration refers to the new birth wrought by the Holy Spirit in the person...restoring and recreating them for spiritual death to spiritual life, and God establishing a 'beach head in the shores of the human heart (Bird, 2013:533). This regeneration process is not human, but divine. Jesus referenced it to Nicodemus by saying 'you must be born

again'. This new birth is not dependant on human decision or will but 'born of God' (John 1:13). Peter adds that it is a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Christ (1 Peter 1:3) and that 'you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God' (1 Peter 1:23). Divine enablement as a gift from God enables this, as 'no one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit' (1 Corinthians 12:3), and as God gives repentance leading to life (Acts 11:38).

Original sin renders humankind naturally dead to God, but in 'effectual calling' (Westminster Confession, 1641: chapter x). As one hears the gospel message, the Holy Spirit illuminates and enlightens the heart before conversion of sin, righteousness and judgement to come (John 16:8-11) and he renews the heart (Packer, 1993:153-155). The Bible often conjoins belief and repentance with illumination. How then is this new birth 'actualized'?

George W. Peters conceptualizes this with the 'gradualism conversion scale', which starts with persecution against the gospel, to hostility, rejection, resentment, evasion, aloofness, suspicion, and then neutrality: a 'zero' mark. After that comes interest, sympathy, inquiry, association, acceptance, identification, and then acceptance (as cited in Pentecost, 1982:120). James Engel developed the 'Engel Scale' widely used by missiologists in understanding progression from No Awareness to Christianity to the Challenge to Follow Christ and Conversion to Active Sharing of the Faith (Pentecost, 1982:124).

The authority of the Scriptures which proclaim the necessity of Christ's atoning work on the cross for salvation and the challenge to be spiritually regenerated leads to the next pillar: activism.

Activism

We have seen in this brief synopsis that evangelicals believe in the orthodox Christian faith as represented in the Belgic Confession – specifically that the Bible is the Word of God, that Christ died as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world, and that there is a

need to respond to the offer of faith. The historical tendency continues today towards activism. Activism is defined by Bebbington as the belief that the gospel needs to be proclaimed to others and expressed in a commitment to serve (Bebbington, 1998:1-17). Evangelical Protestants now are the largest single religious demographic block in the United States (<http://www.newsweek.com/evangelical-christians-trump-religion-religious-liberty-640310>). American evangelicals tend to be more active in political matters than Canadians. However, the vast majority of American evangelical activism focuses on volunteering in the community, helping the poor and evangelism (Hankins, 2009:182-186).

- Activism is expressed at the local church level through serving the faith community.
- Activism is expressed at the community level by volunteerism, particularly addressing areas of the needy.
- Activism is expressed at the level of sharing the Christian gospel. Activism is expressed at traversing cross cultural boundaries of language, culture and geography.

Summary

We have looked at the four pillars of evangelicalism, namely Biblicism, Crucicentric, Conversionism and Activism as foundational for this study. As an addendum, Canadian theologian John Stackhouse, in considering the complexities of the Canadian mosaic showed Bebbington's four categories no longer fit new realities (particularly after polling data). He argued for two new categories:

- *Orthodox and Orthoprax*: Evangelicals subscribe to the main tenets—doctrinal, ethical, and liturgical—of the churches to which they belong.
- *Crucicentric*: Evangelicals are Christocentric in their piety and preaching and emphasize particularly the necessity of Christ's salvific work on the Cross.

- *Biblicist*: Evangelicals affirm the Bible as God's Word written, true in what it says, and functioning as their supreme written guide for life.
- *Conversionist*: Evangelicals believe that (1) everyone must trust Jesus as Saviour and follow Him as Lord; and (2) everyone must co-operate with God in a life of growing spiritual maturity.
- *Missional*: Evangelicals actively co-operate with God in His mission of redeeming the world, and particularly in the proclamation of the gospel.
- *Transdenominational*: Evangelicals gladly collaborate with other Christians who hold these concerns, regardless of denominational stripe, in work to advance the Kingdom of God. (Stackhouse, 2007:3)

2.1.2 Biblical Interpretation

Definitions

Within biblical interpretation, the term 'exegesis' refers to what the original author was intending to say, 'hermeneutics' refers to the understanding of the relevance of a text for today, and 'textual criticism' is providing a text most like the original authors actually wrote (Davids *et al.*, 2001:8).

The History of Biblical Interpretation

We see Jesus using and interpreting the Jewish Scriptures to explain His teaching and to combat the Pharisees. We see Jesus on the road to Emmaus unfolding the Law and the Prophets for the surprised walkers as he takes them on a tour of Scriptures that point to Himself. The New Testament interpretation of the OT was primarily typological and Christocentric (Dockery *et al.*, 2001:22).

When we come to the Fathers, Irenaeus is called the 'father of authoritative exegesis in the church' (Grant and Tracy, 1984:55). Tertullian shifted the issue from a right understanding of Scripture to whether the heretics had the right to read the Holy Scriptures or not (Dockery *et al.*, 2001:22-23). Origen became the premier exegete

during the schools of Alexandria and Antioch. He stated the Scripture had three senses: a literal or physical sense, a moral or psychical sense, and an allegorical or intellectual sense (Dockery *et al.*, 2001:24).

In the fifth century, a convergence emerged towards a textual canonical and theological interpretation of the Old and New Testaments. One significant contribution was to understand the text in its context as well as larger context of Scripture. In the Middle Ages, there tended to be four emphases: literal, allegorical, moral, and anagogical (pointing to the church's future expansion; Dockery *et al.*, 2001:25).

Erasmus became a giant in the interpretation of Scriptures: revising the priority of the literal sense and called the chief founder of biblical criticism and hermeneutics. Meanwhile, Martin Luther's careful study of the book of Romans contributed to the Reformation. Calvin is quoted by his rival J. Arminius as the greatest interpreter in the history of the Christian church (Dockery *et al.*, 2001:26): 'he stands above others, above most, indeed, above all' (as cited by Bangs, 1971:287-88). Calvin wrote a commentary on every book except Revelation and 2-3 John.

After the Reformation, a newfound pietism and historical critical method that stressed the importance of the historical criticism approach emerged. It was used to discover the historical situation, sources beyond the writings, literary style and relationships, the date of authorship and destination.

Jonathan Edwards assumed every passage had the possibility of multiple interpretations: a literal meaning about Christ, His church and last things (heaven and hell).

Textual Criticism and Trends

In addition to the huge rise in the various forms of Biblical criticism such as textual, form, redactive, comparative religions and structural, the following trends are noted related to Biblical interpretation:

1. The rise in the importance of understanding of literary genre.

2. The rise in postmodern approaches questioning neutrality of presuppositions and conclusions.
3. The locus of interpretation moving significantly for many from the text to the reader.
4. The rise in the understanding of community discernment as opposed to a single individual interpretation.

The Hermeneutical Triad

Kostenberger and Patterson (2011) have added significantly to the contributions to hermeneutical systems, from, among others, Stuart (2001), Maier (1994), Kaiser (1981) and Vanhoozer (2014). Building on Vanhoozer's work, with a hermeneutical system that is comprehensive, understandable and workable, they have attempted to synthesize the various exegetical and critical streams into a workable model. Their suggested hermeneutical triad is the combination and intersection of history, literature and theology (2011:67, 78-79).

History: the reality of history – God's revelation to humans conveyed by the biblical texts did not come into being in a vacuum, but were written by people with beliefs convictions and experiences. This firmly anchors the study in time and guards against subjectivity.

Literature: the existence of texts containing that revelation that require interpretation, such as canon, genre and language.

Theology: the reality of God and His revelation in Scripture (what the passage teaches about God, Christ, salvation and the need to respond to what is being taught or said).

One other significant trend that is germane for this dissertation is 'missional hermeneutics'. This is a relatively recent foray into the field to correct a felt need of the absence of mission in theology. Evangelical 'Forerunner' Arthur Glasser of Fuller Theological Seminary was convinced that the 'larger theological community too often

ignored the mission activity in Scripture', and so he dedicated his life to offering a missional understanding of Scripture – using missional hermeneutics (Redford, as cited in Van Engen, 2016:39). More succinctly put, missional hermeneutics is an 'essential skill in biblical theology of mission, founded on a mindset of perceiving the mission activity within a given text' (Redford, as cited in Van Engen, 2016:43). We now turn our attention to a grand narrative in the Scriptures – the theology of mission.

2.1.3 Mission of God

The Trinity

One very significant development in theology is the growing understanding of the centrality of the Trinity related to the 'mission of God'. The essential elements of the Doctrine of the Trinity are:

- The unity of one God in three persons

- The eternity of the three persons

- The shared and equal deity of the three persons

- The shared and equal essence of the three persons

- The Trinity includes distinction in roles and relationship within the Godhead

- The Trinity will always be ineffable mystery. (Bird, 2013:121)

David Bosch helped to articulate and perpetuate the growing understanding of the impetus and relationship of mission with the Trinity. Missionary activity was understood as being derived from the very nature of God. Put into context of the classical mission of the Trinity, God the Father sends the Son; God the Father and the Son sends the Spirit; and God the Father, Son and Spirit sends the church into the world (Bosch, 1991:390). Consequently, missions was seen as derived from the very nature of God and not originating in the church. The church was an instrument used by God to bring about His mission (Bosch, 1991:390).

Bosch goes on to point out the implications of this. We must distinguish between missions and the overall mission of God. The church stands subservient to the larger

mission of God, and it goes beyond the planting of churches or the saving of souls (Bosch, 1991:393). Missions has its origin from the heart of God, as God is a fountain of sending love: fundamentally God loves people (Bosch, 1991:392). Bird argues that ultimately the church can only comprehend its missionary purpose within a Trinitarian framework of sending and being sent out (2013:123).

This has had some very positive and also some unintended consequences. The Trinity has much to teach us on multiple levels related to how we flesh out the mission of God in the world: that being with and through mutuality, support, clarity of roles, interconnectedness, love and complimentary functioning.

The missionary effort was in effect removed from any colonizing mindset of the church. It could give confidence on the part of national churches around the world that missions was 'God's idea' born out of love and not with any other motive. It also produced a significant unifying event across the Protestant theological spectrum (including mainline and evangelical believers) and bridged the Catholic-Protestant divide. It is also helpful in promoting missions and can be demonstrated as the Bible's grand narrative. It encourages and motivates churches to be 'missional', that is, gospel focused, in seeking to see God and humankind reconciled. It encourages the ministry of compassion - seeking the mission of God as transforming civil society in addition to the 'saving of the soul' as well as the birthing and strengthening of the church.

From an evangelical perspective, there may be some potential negative consequences of the current Trinitarian emphasis of missions. It could lead to reducing the importance of the local church: in some cases, even bypassing the church in missionary effort. This occurs in prospective missionaries 'self selecting' (meaning 'choosing themselves') because of the mission 'God called them to' without the 'setting apart' of the church. In others doing humanitarian work, there is the potential for deliberately negating, ignoring, minimizing or resisting linkage to the local church. Additionally, some may not verbally proclaim the gospel message of the atoning work of Christ on the cross for spiritual reconciliation, claiming that it is not needed in the fuller mission of God.

Bird argues that if the gospel is the anchor point for our study of God, we must start with the Trinity, and only when we know who God is, can we properly pray to Him, worship Him, proclaim Him, imitate Him, and serve Him (2013:93). The affirmation of the Trinity at Jesus' baptism, the baptismal formula and several prayers of Paul point in this direction. One example is seen in 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5 where we see Paul linking the Trinity closely with the missionary endeavour: specifically, the proclamation of the gospel:

Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace to you. **2** We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. **3** We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. **4** For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, **5** because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction.

The importance of who Christ is in the Trinity is the focus of our next section.

Soteriology: The Doctrine of Salvation

Scripture states the fallen state of humankind, their separation from God, and the impossibility of establishing their righteousness before God (Romans 3:23, Romans 10:2-3). God hates sin, and sin must be punished. Into this mix, while we were yet sinners, God sent His Son to be born of a virgin. Jesus demonstrated to us who God is. He lived without sin in dependence on the Father in the power of the Spirit, and He died an atoning sacrificial death. This is a significant cornerstone of God's mission to reconcile the world to Himself.

J. I. Packer states that atonement means 'making amends', blotting out the offense, and giving satisfaction for the wrong done: thus reconciling to oneself the alienated other and restoring the disrupted relationship (1993:134). Evangelicals would adhere to the

Belgic Confession as stated in Article 21: Of the Satisfaction of Christ, our only High Priest for us, which states:

We believe that Jesus Christ is ordained with an oath to be an everlasting High Priest, after the order of Melchizedek; and that he has presented himself in our behalf before the Father, to appease his wrath by his full satisfaction, by offering himself on the tree of the cross, and pouring out his precious blood to purge away our sins; as the prophets had foretold. For it is written: He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and numbered with the transgressors, and condemned by Pontius Pilate as a malefactor, though he had first declared him innocent. Therefore: he restored that which he took not away, and suffered, the just for the unjust, as well in his body as in his soul, feeling the terrible punishment which our sins had merited; insomuch that his sweat became like unto drops of blood falling on the ground. He called out, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? and has suffered all this for the remission of our sins. Wherefore we justly say with the apostle Paul: that we know nothing, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified; we count all things but loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, in whose wounds we find all manner of consolation. Neither is it necessary to seek or invent any other means of being reconciled to God than this only sacrifice, once offered, by which believers are made perfect forever. This is also the reason why he was called by the angel of God, Jesus, that is to say, Saviour, because he should save his people from their sins.

But how is this possible? Because of the union and distinction of the two natures in the person of Christ. Article 19 of the Belgic Confession (2017) clarifies this in stating:

We believe that by this conception, the person of the Son is inseparably united and connected with the human nature; so that there are not two Sons of God, nor two persons, but two natures united in one single person: yet, that each nature retains its own distinct properties. As then the divine nature has always remained

untreated, without beginning of days or end of life, filling heaven and earth: so also has the human nature not lost its properties, but remained a creature, having beginning of days, being a finite nature, and retaining all the properties of a real body. And though he has by his resurrection given immortality to the same, nevertheless he has not changed the reality of his human nature; forasmuch as our salvation and resurrection also depend on the reality of his body. But these two natures are so closely united in one person, that they were not separated even by his death. Therefore that which he, when dying, commended into the hands of his Father, was a real human spirit, departing from his body. But in the meantime the divine nature always remained united with the human, even when he lay in the grave. And the Godhead did not cease to be in him, any more than it did when he was an infant, though it did not so clearly manifest itself for a while. Wherefore we confess, that he is very God, and very Man: very God by his power to conquer death; and very man that he might die for us according to the infirmity of his flesh.

How are the sins of humankind transferred? Article 20 of the Belgic Confession (2017) states that God has manifested His justice and mercy in Christ.

We believe that God, who is perfectly merciful and just, sent His Son to assume that nature in which the disobedience was committed, to make satisfaction in the same, and to bear the punishment of sin by His most bitter passion and death. God therefore manifested His justice against His Son when he laid our iniquities upon Him; and He poured forth His mercy and goodness on us, who were guilty and worthy of damnation, out of mere and perfect love. He gave us His Son unto death for us and raised Him for our justification, that through Him we might obtain immortality and life eternal.

The Kingdom of God

With the ground-breaking work of Herman Ridderbos in Europe and George Eldon Ladd in the U.S. a generation ago, the understanding of the kingdom and reign of God and its implications became very important in the understanding of Missio Dei. There is general

consensus among scholars that Jesus used the term kingdom to refer to God's saving and transforming reign – proclaimed and uniquely applied to Himself (Corrie, 2007:195) - both here but 'not yet'.

Foreshadowed in the Old Testament is the coming kingship of Messiah. Ridderbos (1962:5) states that the expectation of the future manifestation of God's kingship had such a prominent importance that it may be called the centre of the OT promise of salvation. At the time of John the Baptist's announcement that the kingdom was at hand and his exhortation to repent, the understanding of the kingdom to come was well understood by the people. It meant the return of the dispersed Jewish tribes to Palestine, the renewal of the covenant, vindication for sufferers, forgiveness of sins, rebuilding of the temple and ultimately the arrival of the messianic king Himself.

'The kingdom of God (or the 'Kingdom of Heaven' – often used interchangeably) was Jesus' favourite theme. Ridderbos (1962:69-83) gives a summary of the dynamic of the kingdom of God:

- Jesus' power over the Enemy.
- Jesus' power to work miracles ('power' here translated 'dunamis').
- Jesus preaching the Gospel. The kingdom was not only manifested in Jesus' miracles and power but in His preaching – where he claimed absolute authority and taught as one that had authority (Mark 1:22; Matthew 7:28, 29).
- The possession of salvation - it is a gift given (Luke 12:32), is likened to a treasure, and is also of great worth as the pearl of great price (Matthew 13:44-46).
- Jesus Himself is the Christ – the Messiah. His proclamation of the Kingdom ran parallel with His self-revelation as the Messiah.

Most ironically, the kingdom power at times could be limited because of lack of belief and augmented because of a faith quotient. Ladd adds a section on 'the mystery of the kingdom' where one cannot humanly explain the growth and functioning of it (1974:218).

The eschatological lens points to another time: a complete fulfilment of the kingdom reign. Until then, we see evidences of it. We participate in it through confrontation with the Enemy. We receive His kingdom power conferred upon us and we observe kingdoms clashing, proclaiming the gospel and seeing people transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light, as we grow in our understanding of the riches (spiritual) of the kingdom. We see the kingdom expand in part through our faith actions, through our prayers and ultimately as we grow in our relationship with the King Himself. This has significant implications for mission practice.

Although there are many interpretations concerning this critical theme in Scripture, we conclude this brief synopsis by quoting Ridderbos' analysis regarding the kingdom and the church: 'The *basileia* is the great divine work of salvation in its' fulfilment and consummation in Christ; the 'ekklesia' is the people elected and called by God and *sharing in the bliss of the 'baseilea'* (italics mine; 1962:354).

2.1.4 Church History Overview: Bosch's Six Eras of the Theology of Mission

In Donald J. Bosch's book *Witness to the World: The Christian Mission in Theological Perspective* (1980:102-141), he outlines several different eras of mission emphasis and theologies. These eras show the non-static nature of the faith and the attempt in some cases to make it meaningful in light of world events and culture. Table 3 is my summary of the eras based on his book, with the suggested addition based on a scan of the landscape since his writing and untimely passing.

Table 3. Eras of Missions Emphasis and Theologies in the Church.

| Era | Description |
|-----------------------|---|
| The Early Church | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a general despising of this world and anticipation of Christ's return. • Eschatology was spiritualized. • Persecutions reminded them of their pilgrim status in this world. • Noble behaviour in very trying circumstances led to respect. • Mostly, the Jewish Christians were cut off from their fellow Jews and from Gentile Christians. |
| The Constantinian Era | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few events were as far reaching as Constantine's victory over Maxentius in AD 312. Europe began here, as did 'Christendom'. |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Edict of Milan guaranteed religious freedom. • The church lost her pilgrim character. • The 'Kingdom' was spiritualized and internalized. • The Greek world view emphasized intellectual and rational knowledge. • The church became a bearer of culture and a civilizing presence in society. • The world was divided into fideles (believers) and infidels (unbelievers). • Mission was 'depaganization' and 'Christianisation'. • Missionary's responsibility focused on proclamation. • Conversion by coercion. • Monasticism and mission. |
| <p>From Alexander VI to Pius XII</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church and state were bound together. • The rise of Islam occurred. • There was a schism of Western and Eastern churches. • Exploration to the west, east and south occurred. • The Renaissance occurred (approx. 1300-1700). • The Protestant Reformation occurred (approx. 1517-1648). • No local church could do evangelism, as pagans were overseas. • Missions reached a low ebb, but there were some outstanding examples of faithfulness. • In 1622, a growing number of missionary enterprises were founded. • Rome put more emphasis on the visibility of the Church as the earthly kingdom. • There was a separation of theology from missionary concerns. |
| <p>From Martin Luther to Martin Kahler</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a new emphasis on the Sovereignty of God, the reality of grace and a re-discovery of hope as a reality in this world. • Calvin believed we are to make something of this world – the 'transformer of culture'. • The view of 'church and state' resembled Rome. • Reformers' successors were lost in church and theology. • Some felt the Great Commission had already occurred. • In some places, theologically, the church did not need to take mission initiative. • Some pagans were not worth missionary efforts. • The second Reformation began in the Netherlands – double work of the Holy Spirit and renewal of man's inner life and renewal of the face of the earth. • The Anabaptists ventured out – forerunners to the modern missionary movement. • The Great Commission was obligatory for all believers. Their goal was restoration of the early Christian local churches. Infant baptism was rejected. They were branded heretics by both Reformers and Roman Catholics. The main tenets were non-violence, separation of the church and state, and non-participation in government. • Every believer was a missionary. It was a 'movement'. • Pietism emerged as a protest against Orthodoxy and Enlightenment. |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus was on a subjective experience instead of ecclesiastic organization, conversion, and new birth. • The Moravians sent missionaries to 28 countries. Planting churches was not a goal. Emphasis was on conversion. They had little cultural mandate in mission, as cultural, national and social lives fell outside of mission. • The birth and growth of missionary societies and national churches. Mixture of missions and colonization in some quarters. • Kahler was one of the first theologians to occupy himself with missions. • Missions was focused on the atonement. He laid the tracks for Karl Barth. |
| From John Elliot to John Mott | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The English-speaking world has produced 4/5 of the Protestant world's total missionary force. • John Elliot was a Puritan who worked among the Indians in Massachusetts. He worked with Richard Baxter in the forming of a theology of mission – emphasis on God's sovereignty. • Jonathan Edwards – the spiritual father of the Great Awakening who focused on Puritan theology. Revival and missions focused. • The Puritans' arrival in the US was thought to be the ultimate reign of Christ over the world. The potential of annihilating the Indians – which eventually gave way to converting them. • The Great Awakening came through George Whitfield and Jonathan Edwards. • Individual conversion was emphasized. • In Europe, William Carey was confronted with extreme predestination. • In the early 1800s, missionary work increasingly became a specifically American Kingdom of God. • The Great Awakenings liberated America from the mould of a rigidified Puritanism. • The rise of the Social Gospel and the backlash against it in some circles. • John R. Mott became a figure of a new ecumenical spirit for the gospel. |
| Ecumenical Missionary Theology | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Mott was the chairperson of the first world missionary conference held in Edinburgh in 1910. • In the Jerusalem Conference of 1928, western civilization was in ruins and spiritually impoverished. • More dialogue occurred regarding Christianity's relationship with other religions. • Karl Barth challenged the motives of mission societies and theologies • Hoekendijk became influential. Reconciliation was key – three key words were proclamation, community and service. • Focus on Trinitarian mission in 1952: Missio Dei (God's Mission). • The World Council of Churches was formed and evangelism became a secondary concern. The launching of evangelical groups occurred, including Lausanne. In some circles, there was a convergence of ideas. |
| Continuing Paradigm Shifts in Missions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The growth and development of national, indigenous churches that are typically more conservative. • Rise in mega churches. Korea now has 7/10 largest churches in the world. Brazil and Africa have super-churches. |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>(Title and Category and Additions mine)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued diminution of the North American and European missionary force, with a corresponding rise in formerly mission posts now becoming national church sending agencies. • Evangelicals are now the largest religious demographic in the US, but this is not consistently translating into moral change. Conversion is emphasized at the expense of Biblical discipleship. • Rise in the 'prosperity gospel' around the world. • Holistic gospel/social concern very prevalent. • Among evangelicals, there is a concentrated focus on evangelism among the world's remaining unreached people groups. |
|--|--|

2.1.5 Current Issues in Missiology

Pluralism - World Religions

The postmodern mantra of 'There is no god but pluralism and diversity is his prophet' (Bird, 2013:22) is recounted 'tongue in cheek'. Netland notes that, during the past fifty years, a growing number of Christians, lay and clergy alike, have embraced the presupposition that Christianity is true for them, while other religions can be equally true (2001:13).

Bonk gives some helpful definitions:

Exclusivism is the view that only one religion is true – all others are false.

Inclusivism is the view that one religion contains the highest truth, but that elements of that truth may be found in other traditions. These elements prepare adherents of those traditions to accept fuller revelation when they encounter it, and sincere devotion to those truths may prove saving for those in other religions despite a lack of explicit Christian confession. Pluralism is the view that all major religions are independently and separately valid: none depends on any other and none is more or less true than the other. (Bonk, 2007:343)

In the book *Four Views on Salvation in a Pluralistic World*, John Hick, Alister McGrath, Clark Pinnock, Timothy Phillips, Douglas Okholm, Douglas Geivett and W. Gary Phillips square off by presenting four different categories of their view of pluralism and salvation, receiving comments from everyone else, and then responding to the criticisms and comments (Okholm, 1996). What made this debate particularly interesting was that the

main proponent of pluralism was a former clergyman who left the historic faith. Also notable was that, even though the debate took place with 'dialogue' in a respectful academic context, the sensitivities were still very high with offense sometimes taken. The four categories of 'salvation debate' were:

- *Normative Pluralism*: All Ethical Religions lead to God
- *Inclusivism*: Salvation is universally available, but is established by and leads to Christ
- *Salvation in Christ* – Agnosticism regarding those who haven't heard the gospel
- *Salvation in Christ Alone* (Self Evident Exclusivism)

The debate inevitably boils down to two things as evidenced by conciliar councils over Christian history: namely the person of Christ and the one's view of the Scriptures.

Te-Li Lau argues that, despite rival claims of other faith traditions claiming their sacred texts, Christians can adjudicate between them by the following three methods: 'through the explicit claims of the Bible to be the Word of God; through its supporting implicit claims and through the testimony of the Holy Spirit' (Carson, 2013:989).

Ultimately, it is the Holy Spirit, often conjoined with the Christian Scriptures, which convicts of sin, righteousness and judgment to come (John 16:8). We, however, need to have an answer (1 Peter 3:15), be prepared in season and out and imitate Paul who 'reasoned from the Scriptures' (Acts 17:2). The central affirmations of other faith's sacred texts are so fundamentally different and opposed to each other that the law of non-contradiction would say they cannot be all true (unless you are fully postmodern). A growing field, therefore, is the study of the theology of religions, leading us to the topic of postmodern missiology.

Postmodern Missiology

Postmodern missiology is the daughter of postmodern thought and theology (briefly discussed earlier in this dissertation).

An early forerunner of understanding postmodernism from a missional perspective was Leslie Newbegin, theologian and former missionary to India. In his 1993 article 'Religious Pluralism: A Missiological Approach' (231), he notes that postmodernism's main feature is

the abandonment of any claim to know the truth in an absolute sense. Ultimate reality is not single but diverse and chaotic. Truth claims are really concealed claims to power, and this applies as much to the claims of science as to those of religion.

Newbegin was an early advocate of an apologetic based from within the tradition of Christianity instead of 'outside of it – that is, by telling the gospel story. Using the story of Peter and Cornelius that unleashed a new mission paradigm, he suggested that:

The messenger (the 'angel' of Acts 10:3) may be a stranger, a preacher, a piece of Scripture, a dream, an answered prayer, or a deep experience of joy or sorrow, of danger or deliverance. It was not part of any missionary 'strategy' devised by the church. It was the free and sovereign deed of God, who goes before his church. And, like Peter, the church can usually find good reasons for being unwilling to follow. But follow it must if it is to be faithful. For the mission is not ours but God's. (1995:64)

Pascal D. Bazzell, in using the same analogy in an article asking 'Who is our Cornelius?' insightfully details the challenge entailed of being in the 'in between stage' of old paradigm and new (2007:107-124). The larger question begs for an answer: will the orthodox Christian faith as understood by the Belgic Confession, for example, be a thing of the past in one hundred years?

In analysing Newbegin in the framework of Pluralism, Alister McGrath points out a wider cultural issue: that is to defend Christianity in postmodern thinking is to belittle non-Christian religions (which is unacceptable in a multicultural society). The Christian doctrines that are most in dispute from other religions are the Incarnation, the Trinity,

and who Christ is. These doctrines are dividing lines (<https://www.bethinking.org/truth/religious-pluralism>).

I resonate with George Yip in his analysis on postmodern missiology when he states:

Postmodern anthropology may have gone too far. The concept of culture is still needed and is important in understanding self and the other. In conclusion, since modern and postmodern missiologies are problematic, we need a post-postmodern missiology, which accepts the postmodern critique of modernism, but avoids postmodernism's relativism and incoherence, and which takes seriously into consideration the changes in today's world. (2016:262-270)

Why has modern missiology a problem and in his opinion failed? Modernism divorces reason and faith and elevates reason beyond faith; it has encouraged secularism and attempts to use the natural world to grasp spiritual truth.

So then not all is lost! What have been the marks of postmodern missiology?

- To rightly critique modernism
- It has pointed out the illusion of transparency and complete objectivity
- It has pointed out certain biases
- It has abetted the focusing on contextualization – in some cases transferring ultimate meaning not to the text but to the reader.

An example of the potential of is when Marion Grau asks the poignant question, 'Is the gospel what the missionaries say it is or what local interpreters glean?' She answers her own questions by suggesting that if missionaries and indigenous peoples are both recipients of the gospel, the truly good news 'may be found in the interactive space of their encounter' (Grau, 2011:117).

This could be taken two ways: one the necessary work of contextualization, and two, in the desire to be relative and contextualized, the original message is lost or diminished.

The following are some of the approaches Yip (2016) advocates for in a post-postmodern missiology:

- A nuanced understanding of culture
- A more comprehensive understanding of community
- Careful understanding of the issue of power in mission work.

In David Bosch's ground-breaking book *Transforming Mission* (1991); he challenged the world to think broadly about the work of mission in the world, giving thirteen indications of an emerging postmodern paradigm. Part of that challenge had to do with thinking through pluralism in new ways, which certainly is continuing.

Nash opined in 1999 'it does seem at least possible that Foucault, Derrida and company are going to have an influence on the next couple of centuries comparable to Locke, Spinoza and company on the generations that followed them' (1999:163-164). A rhetorical question one can ask, especially in the context of the five hundredth anniversary of the Reformation, was 'how much of the historic gospel message 'rediscovered' - then hard fought battles by the Reformers - will be left in one hundred years?' Reading the chapter by Walter Rowe entitled 'Is there a Post-Modern Gospel?' was instructive. He concludes by saying 'a Christian gospel which dissolves such social dichotomies as master and slave might be received as prospectively good news for anyone, modern or postmodern, who shares the legitimate concerns of the general-good' (Ward, 2001:490). Of course, those committed to the modern (Enlightenment) principle of constant tone will judge unacceptable any disturbance of natural processes and the presumed continuity of history. ...but those mindful that any tone is already a disturbance have the wherewithal to image the possibility that one might receive this Christian apocalyptic as being simultaneously profoundly other – thus new – and liberating – thus good (502). Then I asked myself: 'Who then defines liberty'? Much

more dialogue is needed to understand and effectively communicate the gospel in our postmodernism societies.²

Perhaps the last word should go to Leslie Newbegin, with an excerpt from his book *Foolishness of the Greeks* (1986):

And finally, it follows that the missionary encounter of the gospel with the modern world, will like every true missionary encounter, call for radical conversion. This will be not only a conversion of the will and of the feelings but a conversion of the mind – a paradigm shift that leads to a new vision of how things are, and not

² The following are some effective strategies based on personal experience related to training evangelical missionaries as well as in their proclamation 'on the ground' in postmodern contexts:

1. The training of missionaries before departing for any mission endeavor:
 - a. Cultural sensitivity training (understanding of host culture, avoidance of cultural superiority)
 - b. Partnership development training (avoids colonialist tendencies – your success depends on the cooperation of the other – national church is in the 'driver's seat'. This process is much more complex but helps favours indigenization of theology and church polity.
 - c. Servant leadership training ('how can I serve you, rather than how can you advance my agenda?')
 - d. Excluded middle missiological concept training (based on Hiebert's work).
 - e. Ensuring there is a strong understanding of contextualization, Christology and principles of Biblical interpretation.
2. In proclamation:
 - a. Serve in humility and openness (i.e. act as a 'guest' in the culture)
 - b. Focus on the person of Christ and the story of the gospel in proclamation
 - c. The need to go beyond lecture and unidimensional teaching to process implications from Biblical teaching in community
 - d. Work in something related to social justice in the community, even if your key role is gospel proclamation or theological education.

Example 1: A missionary colleague, while serving as a theological educator, won a significant environmental award from his host country for his protection of the nearby endangered eco-structure. Additionally, he also passed on the vision of this 'creation care' and worked with national believers to ensure the structural continuance from nationals for the environmental protection long after his departure. This also helps to build credibility in the community.

Example 2: In one major city in a country where my personnel successfully planted an evangelical church amongst an Unreached People Group – in this case, an upper middle-class community – when affluent people who never heard the gospel before would connect with church members, or attend a church service, their first question was almost always 'what are you doing for the poor?' They were satisfied with the church's extensive and contextually relevant outreach to the poor, paid for by the local church's considerable financial resources.

once but gradually, to the development of a new plausibility structure in which the most real of all realities is the living God whose character is ‘rendered’ for us in the pages of Scripture. (Newbegin, 1986:64)

Christian/Muslim Tension

Both ancient and modern history are filled with much antagonism between Christianity and Islam. The Crusades are still fresh in the mind of many Muslims. The events of September 9, 2001, the Gulf War, Middle East conflicts, the rise of ISIS and a host of other incidents continue to nurture that antagonism.

Table 4 depicts some of the similarities and distinctives between the two religions that go beyond the basic theological differences (adapted from Baker, 2004:270). The divides are very significant. In spite of the significant differences, ironically, Christianity and Islam also make ‘strange bedfellows’ on various social issues particularly facing the western world.³

Table 4. Similarities and Distinctives between Christianity and Islam.

| Issue | Christianity | Islam |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| A missionary religion for all people | Common yet competing | Common yet competing |
| Claim the ‘final’ messenger | Common yet competing- Jesus | Common yet competing- Mohammed |
| Followers are to be witnesses | Common yet competing | Common yet competing |
| Human nature | In the image of God, but fallen | Neutral or good |
| Forgiveness and the law | Insufficient - A transforming new life is necessary | Sufficient – the kingdom can come by following it |
| Crucifixion | Necessary – the means by which we are saved | Unnecessary: God forgives whom he pleases. Did not happen. (NB: Most Muslims do not know that most commentators allow for a real crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus). |
| Family | Common Pro-family | Common Pro-family |

³ In several countries, evangelical missionary personnel have personally recounted to me that another Christian group has done more harm to them than the Muslims have.

Particularly in cultures/belief systems where there are major divides, the goal is to minimize other cultural differences. In essence, it is to imitate the Apostle Paul in 'becoming all things to all people so I might win some' (1 Corinthians 9:22). Current contextual issues in Muslim communities are related to the contextualization level regarding meeting together as believers, as well as Biblical translation issues.

*** Contextualization Level: New Paradigm or Syncretism?**

Given the fact that to be a Muslim is more than a belief system, but intertwined totally with life and culture, in one sense it is the question raised in Acts 15 at the Jerusalem Council: Does one have to become a cultural Jew in order to be a follower of Christ? Where does one draw the line between contextualization and syncretism? Participating in this debate in these contexts gives new appreciation for the implicit challenges. Table 5 outlines the different levels of contextualization (Parshall, 2003:62).

Table 5. Different Levels of Contextualisation.

| Level of Contextualization | Meaning |
|----------------------------|---|
| C1 | Traditional church using outsider language (local non -Muslims). Reflects western culture. There is a wide cultural gap between these churches and the local Muslim people. |
| C2 | Traditional church using insider language (the local Muslim population's language). The same as C1 except for a different language. |
| C3 | Contextualised Christ-centred communities using insider language and religiously neutral insider cultural forms. Religiously neutral forms may include folk music, ethnic dress, artwork, etc. |
| C4 | Contextualized Christ-centred communities using insider language and biblically permissible cultural and Islamic forms. Similar to C3, Biblically permissible forms are practiced (i.e. praying with raised hands, keeping the Fast, avoiding pork, alcohol and dogs as pets, using Islamic terms, garb, etc). They identify themselves as 'followers of the Messiah' or something similar. |
| C5 | Christ-centred communities of Messianic Muslims who have accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Viewed as Muslims by the Muslim community and refer to themselves as Muslims who follow ISA the Messiah. |
| C6 | Small Christ-centred communities of secret, underground believers...C6 believers worship Christ secretly. |

Contextualization: Familial Language Debate

This issue concerns how the Biblical term '*son of God*' is translated into Arabic. In 2012, a controversy erupted with Wycliffe Bible personnel regarding a translation of the term that was deemed to undermine the orthodox nature of the Trinity. This interpretive issue created a firestorm in North American evangelicalism and also illustrated wider contextualization questions. Supporting churches and groups discontinued their finances. I was drawn into the controversy as well and asked to take a side – it was as if orthodoxy was on trial.

It is a complex issue that goes beyond linguistics to the study of anthropology, missiology, biblical and systematic theology described in Norris (2017:191-203) and Naylor (2016).

The Bible speaks of Jesus as the Son of God: the second person of the Trinity. It also uses the term 'son of God' in the Old Testament (referring to kings of Israel, the nation of Israel, saints, and especially describing and identifying Jesus as the second person of the Trinity; Norris, 2017:192). In English, one commonly can use the word 'son' to depict three situations: a biological offspring, a 'chosen' or 'adopted' child, or someone who has a special relationship, such as a friendship, with someone who is younger. In Arabic, there is no such understanding. If the phrase is translated literally in Arabic, it is offensive to the Muslim ear with sexual connotations that the Scriptures did not intend. Furthermore, it is extensively used as the 'final nail in the coffin against Christianity by Muslim apologists...not surprisingly, seekers and believers from Muslim backgrounds regularly single out the term 'Son of God': as the biggest obstacle to reading the Gospel' (Brown, 2005, as cited in Norris, 2017:192-193).

The 'son of God' translation controversy was heightened by a lack of understanding of the various approaches to Bible translation. The lexical or literal approach translates the word or phrase as a direct or lexical approach. The difficulty with the lexical approach is direct translation words do not always communicate what is intended by the source. In fact, the literal translation can also be slightly or vastly different. The 'dynamic

equivalence' translation method takes the original intention as well as the receptor language and culture into consideration with the ultimate goal of communicating for maximum understanding.

Wycliffe appealed to The World Evangelical Alliance to adjudicate, who in turn gave ten recommendations, which Wycliffe accepted and has implemented (Naylor, 2016:loc.4459). Critical recommendations included the exhortation to remember four contexts: the Old Testament, the New Testament, translators and the receptor culture. Naylor adds a fifth context: the global Christian framework supporters, promoters and financiers of the project and secondary audiences impacted in the receptor cultures (2016:loc.4459-79). These partners are often overlooked, and his suggestion is a substantial step forward.

Although the controversy with Wycliffe Bible Translators has diminished, the translation of the Scriptures and related apologetic issues related to the Trinity remain as fresh as the morning newspaper. These two issues concerning contextualization demonstrate the substantial challenge of communicating the Gospel in Muslim contexts.⁴

2.1.6 Summary and Implications

We have offered a brief synopsis of the Biblical understanding and theology of mission, including the authority of Scripture and Biblical interpretation through the lens of four pillars of evangelicalism. We have also briefly examined *Missio Dei* focusing on the kingdom of God, soteriology and an overview of different epochs of theology of mission and practice throughout church history. Finally, we have examined some contemporary issues in missions: pluralism, postmodern missiology and Christian/Muslim tension.

⁴ My understanding of the complexity of these translation issues has also been augmented by interviews with two Bible translators in a Muslim country, as well as a trainer of these linguists. Additionally, it was instructive in that context to hear first-hand Muslim people's objections to Christianity based on the Trinity. The Christians explained the 'son of God' as a metaphor, and then to illustrate it with a comparative metaphor, they gave an example of one from the Muslim world. This had the effect of immediate understanding and removed the stumbling block and the conversation about the gospel continued.

One key implication from our foray is the dynamic nature and fluidity of both the understanding and interpretation of Scripture as well as the theology of mission and practice. This continues the trend in Scripture of a Sovereign God either initiating or permitting new paradigms and methods while keeping the message the same. Another implication is that missions will probably not look the same as it has since the Reformation time. A third implication is that, not only does one's theology make a substantial difference in present practice, but it also makes a difference down the historical road as well. The next section focuses on Biblical understanding and the theology of prayer.

2.2 BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING AND THE THEOLOGY OF PRAYER

Beckman defines religion as 'the totality of beliefs and practices within a particular society that structure the relationship of men and women to (each other and) to the unseen but ever-present beings and powers with whom they share their world' (2007:366). Meanwhile, prayer in its simplest form is seen as a dynamic form of communion with the deity or transcendent other (P. Lefevre, as cited in Hunter, 1990:937). Typically, prayer is common to each religion, albeit with major differences to the Christian paradigm of prayer to the God of the Bible. The following is a brief synopsis of prayer systems and beliefs compared to the evangelical Christian worldview.

2.2.1 Prayer in Other World Religions

- **Hinduism**

Hinduism is a way of life, a highly organized socio-religious system (Corwin, 1972:21) and a highly organized system of chants and requests. Generally speaking, to the Hindu, all religious convictions are the paths to the same goal,⁵ self realization is the

⁵ Although the 'many paths' is the stated belief, the practice of accepting other belief systems is not always welcomed. My Christian translator in India was beaten and almost died when he refused to give his personal funds for the construction of a statue for a parade float representing a neighbourhood 'god'. When I asked his wife if she regretted his decision not to contribute and the resulting damage to his eye,

supreme goal and the land of India is the custodian of the spiritual message for the world (Sumithra in Carson, 2002:179).

Although there are many streams of Hinduism, some tenets are held in common such as: transmigration (rebirth of souls); the law of 'karma' which means an action whatsoever is the effect of a cause and becomes the cause of something else; and time is like a revolving wheel and that there is neither purpose nor salvation in history. There is no sense of a 'personal' God and it is the duty of every Hindu to escape from the wheel of time and action (Corwin, 1972:21-23).

Prayers are found in hymns – chants especially entreating the many deities to listen to the prayers, to harm enemies, for the removal of sins and praising various foods. The correct repetition of prayers is very important, with mantra meaning 'magic'. Accompanied with heat, burning, austerity or religious penance moves the gods and unlocks the hidden energy stored up. The form of 'bhakti' prayer is the kind that helps to merit salvation, with confessions as part of it. Another form of prayer is sacrifice, given through offerings to the gods (Sumithra, 2002:182-187).

Whereas bhakti prayers are distant and formal, New Testament praying is based on communion with God. It is not identification with God but rather glorification of God. Whereas the New Testament require transformation and not outward piety, mechanical repetition of prayers (mantras) is discouraged in the New Testament and has not been accepted in the history of the church. The goal of praying in Hinduism is to coerce the gods to do what you want, such as 'help me to get rich'; whereas the New Testament standard is 'have mercy on me a sinner' and 'not my will but Yours be done'. The doctrines of God are very different and affect how one prays (Sumithra, 2002:188-189).

she answered with incredulity that I would even ask the question and stated that, for her husband to contribute to the statue, meant denying their Christian faith.

- **Buddhism**

Buddhism is a broad family of religious and philosophical traditions starting in India and spreading rapidly, changing with various locations. It has been gaining in popularity in the Western world as well. Key features are the 'four noble truths': the noble eight-fold pathway which lead to the breakage of the cause and effect and allow one to attain a state of nirvana (Netland, 2015:73).

Various celebrities have embraced the Dalai Lama and his teaching of Tibetan Buddhism. Origins of this form of Buddhism are a hybrid of pre-Buddhist animistic and shamanistic practices combined under the major form of Chinese Mayahana Buddhism (Wan & Pocock, 2009:152).

In order to begin to understand the Buddhist approach to prayer, one needs to define the larger sphere of 'spirituality'. One astute observation is 'the transcendence and finitude meet in our experience through some religious or sometimes psychological means' and that 'prayer links the physical and spiritual realms' (Uenua in Carson, 2002:194). In Buddhism, there is no clear object or person to whom to pray to and prayer is a way to attain spirituality. The repetition of mantras in Buddhism effectuate this attainment. Powers defines mantras as 'short prayers that are thought to subtly alter one's mind and make a connection with a particular buddha or enlightened being' (in Wan & Pocock, 2009:161).

Buddhist prayer is fundamentally different and incompatible with most Christian beliefs. For example, the first noble path of Buddhism which states that desire is the root cause of suffering is vastly different from Jesus' dictum that our sinful nature is the root problem.

In Christianity, the object of prayer is God Himself, and through prayer, God works by His Spirit to transform us (Uenua, 2002:204). McDermott suggests we can learn from Buddhism by praying not just with the mind but with the body itself, and we can borrow from these techniques without 'buying in' to the accompanying metaphysics (2000:155).

- **Islam**

Prayer is an important part of Islam. Ritual prayer (Salat) is to be done five times a day and is an essential obligation of Muslim worship. It is the second pillar of Islam, showing its' importance. Daily prayer is to occur at dawn, after midday, mid-afternoon, after sunset and after nightfall. These prayers must be accompanied by ritual washing and facing toward Mecca. The unmistakable call to prayer rings out in Muslim countries or in a Muslim majority area. They are encouraged to come to the mosque to pray and the Friday noon prayer time has a sermon. An added dimension to prayer in Islam is Ramadan: the month of fasting that accompanies prayer.

Ritual prayer consists of seven specific actions:

- Reciting the phrase 'God is great'
- Recital of the Quran while standing
- Bowing from the hips
- Standing erect again
- Sliding to the knees and prostrating with the face to the ground
- Sitting back on the haunches
- Prostrating oneself again

At the end of the pair of bowings, the worshipper recites the Shalada and ritual salutations. He can pray for personal needs or intercede with Allah on behalf of others. He raises his hands as high as his shoulders and offers a final supplication and then draws his hands over his face and often recites 'O God have mercy on Mohammed and on his descendants, as You had mercy on Abraham and his descendants. You are to be praised and You are great!' (Parshall, 2003:213).

It is distinct from Christian praying in the following respects:

- Christian prayer is encouraged while Muslim prayer is legislated
- Christian prayer is based on what has already been done through Christ, while Mohammed, while revered, is less pronounced in prayer.

- Christian prayer is seen as a response to God's work, while Muslim prayer is seen as meritorious before Allah.
- As it relates to prayers by evangelicals, while affirming the Biblical postures of prayer as 'God breathed', there is little adherence to them. For example, kneeling, lying prostrate and the raising of hands is sporadically practiced. For Muslims, it is part of the very essence of prayer as they stand, kneel and bow down.
- For the Christian, fasting is affirmed and assumed as a Biblical form of prayer, but it is voluntary compared to the strong emphasis on fasting in Islam, particularly through the entire month of Ramadan.

2.2.2 Prayer Among Israel's Neighbours

The Old and New Testaments were not written in a historical, cultural or religious vacuum. The setting of Israel's ancestors has traditionally been Ancient Mesopotamia. Now modern day Iraq stretches from the Tigris to the Euphrates Rivers. Typically, two dates are used in labelling this period: either the beginning of the third millennium B.C. ending with either the conquest of Alexander the Great or the death of Cyrus in 330 or the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus (Schneider, 2001:3).

The understanding of their history has seen many new developments in the last years. Archaeological finds such as an inscription invoking the blessing of both Asheroth and YHWH in the Negev, found close to Hebron in 1975 and 1976, and the publishing of Mario Liveran's book *The Ancient Near East: History, Society and Economy* offers a more detailed description of Israel's past based on recent findings (Stravropoulou & Barton, 2010:24).

Two fundamental principles are important to keep in mind related to prayer to deities. The first one is the polytheistic paradigm. Second, humans were created on earth so the gods did not have to work. Each deity had different responsibilities which fluctuated over time (Schneider, 2001:1).

Table 6 is a brief synopsis of the prayer categories of neighbours and contributing cultures in the Old Testament (adapted from Miller, 1994:5-39).

Table 6. Synopsis of the Prayer Categories of Neighbours in the Old Testament.

| PRAYER CATEGORY | NEIGHBOURS/CULTURES: OLD TESTAMENT | <i>They Cried to the Lord: Theology and Form of Biblical Prayer</i> by Patrick D. Miller (1994) |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| Lament | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Powers lost, death, and desire to recreate in the mind that which was lost • The purpose was to influence the divine to make them favourably inclined to the petition • Inscribe objects with the lament in the temple or place of worship • Explanation of causes and consequences of the problem • Emotional duress • Also includes congregational laments | <p>p. 15</p> <p>p. 16</p> <p>p. 24</p> |
| Hymn | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Praise is a significant part of Mesopotamian prayers • Paves the way for other prayers – especially petition | <p>p. 25</p> <p>p. 27</p> |
| Thanksgiving and Praise | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before petitioning, the supplicant would stand before the deity with thanksgiving and praise • Use the name of the deity in praying ‘My god I am alone’ • Extol the deity’s power and position | p. 9 |
| Petition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used long letters for request • Prayer for dealing with financial setback, oppression, abandonment, rejection by friends, withdrawal of protection from the deity, unjust treatment, deliverance from evil, health and prosperity • Determination of destiny, for compassion and grace | <p>p. 10</p> <p>p. 17</p> |
| Confession | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Penitence, anger of deity may be appeased, release from guilty and punishment | p. 21 |

| | | |
|--------------|---|-------|
| Ritual acts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four aspects • Preparation of the place • Bringing gifts for appeasement • Some ritual activity • Proper wrap up of prayer, object included in ritual act | p. 22 |
| Intercession | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determination of going to a higher god to get the job done • Asking the spouse of the deity to intervene • The prayer 'sends' the deity to intercede | p. 23 |

Some significant differences between Israel’s prayers and that of their neighbours concern their praying to a monotheistic God rather than many gods. There is the suggestion of modern scholarship that we do not see pure monotheism until the time of Deutero-Isaiah (Matthews, 2005:55). There is an impersonal element to the prayers of Israel’s neighbours to their deities. There is an additional element of fear of consequences if there is not appeasement. In his comparisons, Patrick Miller concludes on a unifying note: there seems to be common human ways belonging to the ‘creatureliness’ of every human being and the imperfect and partial effort of the creature to communicate with the divine (1994:31).

2.2.3 Foundation of Theology of Prayer for the Dissertation

This dissertation builds on the seminal work of J. Gary Millar in his landmark book *Calling on the Name of the Lord: A Biblical Theology of Prayer* (2016). Deriving his understanding from the Scriptures and Calvin’s writings, Millar develops the fundamental premise of prayer in the Scriptures as twofold: firstly, that all prayer is Gospel centred, connected to the gospel, and secondly, all prayer is linked to God’s covenants and focus on reminding God of His promises and the need to fulfil them. He reports reading the chapter of prayer from *Calvin’s Institutes of the Christian Religion*: specifically, 3.20:1-3 where the unbreakable link between prayer and the gospel was sealed (2016:17).

D.A. Carson, in his forward to the book, comments:

'The approach of Dr. Millar is unique: he combs through the entire Bible do discern the focus of prayer in each book or corpus of the Bible: this is Biblical theology of prayer...the vast majority of biblical prayers are tied up in one fashion or another to God's purposes across the sweep of redemptive history, culminating in Jesus and the gospel...it drives us to prayer that is in line with God's saving purposes...and suddenly it becomes clearer what it means to pray in Jesus' name. (Carson, cited in Millar, 2016:10)

Millar defines prayer at its core as 'calling upon the name of the Lord' and prayer in the Bible is intimately linked with the gospel: God's promised and provided solution to the problem of human rebellion and its consequences. He traces the first mention of prayer to Genesis 4:26 when people 'called upon the name of the Lord' right through to the last book of the Bible (Revelation 22:20) where the church prays 'Come Lord Jesus' (Millar, 2016:17).

The inspiration for this study by Millar was given by John Calvin. In the chapter on prayer in his *Institutes*, Calvin points out the interplay between the sovereignty of God and the Spirit that inspires the Spirit of God to pray in and through us: pointing to the "Spirit of Adoption" which seals the testimony of the Gospel to our hearts, urging us not to be sluggish but to pray in faith for God's promises' (Calvin, 1987:205, 209-210).

Additionally, Calvin suggests a fuller expression of intercession with the New Covenant realities compared to the Old Covenant. While the Old Covenant intercessory prayers feature individuals close to God interceding for the nation and situations, the Trinitarian involvement with our prayers features a new level of impact. For example, Calvin states 'as faith springs from the Gospel, so by faith our hearts are influenced to call upon the name of the Lord (Romans 10:14) . . . prayer digs up the treasures which the Gospel reveals to the eye of faith' (1987:203, 204). He goes on to say 'to help us in our prayers, to show us what is right and control our desires, because "The Spirit Himself intercedes with us with groans that words cannot express" (Romans 8:26) ...He arouses in us

sighs and longings and assurance which our natural powers could never bring about...these are prayers made under the guidance of the Spirit' (Calvin, 1987:207).

While Old Testament models and examples are still instructive and helpful related to the prayer life of the individual and community (for example, Paul's exhortation to utilize the Psalms in many facets of worship, c.f. Ephesians 5:19; Bible, 1984), this study will focus more on Trinitarian and New Covenant teachings and examples of intercession as it relates to the furtherance of mission.

There are many types of prayer found in Scripture. These include prayers of confession, lament, petitionary prayers, and prayers of worship such as adoration, thanksgiving and praise. There are blessing prayers as well as imprecatory type prayers, which are little studied but relevant for today (see Barker, 2016:65-87). Many dissertations could be written about each type of prayer. This thesis, however, will focus on the intercessory prayer thrust of Scripture: specifically, those prayers related to furthering God's redemptive purposes or mission. If there was not divine intervention in answer to these prayers, there would be significant implications to God's purposes, redemptive mission or fulfilment of a covenant.

To illustrate this, Figure 2 shows the diagram of a prayer tree with the basic tenet of prayer as 'Call upon the name of the Lord'. Various themes and sub themes flow from 'Calling upon the name of the Lord'. The intercessory theme or branch has many sub themes such as praying for our daily bread, various personal needs, wisdom, etc.

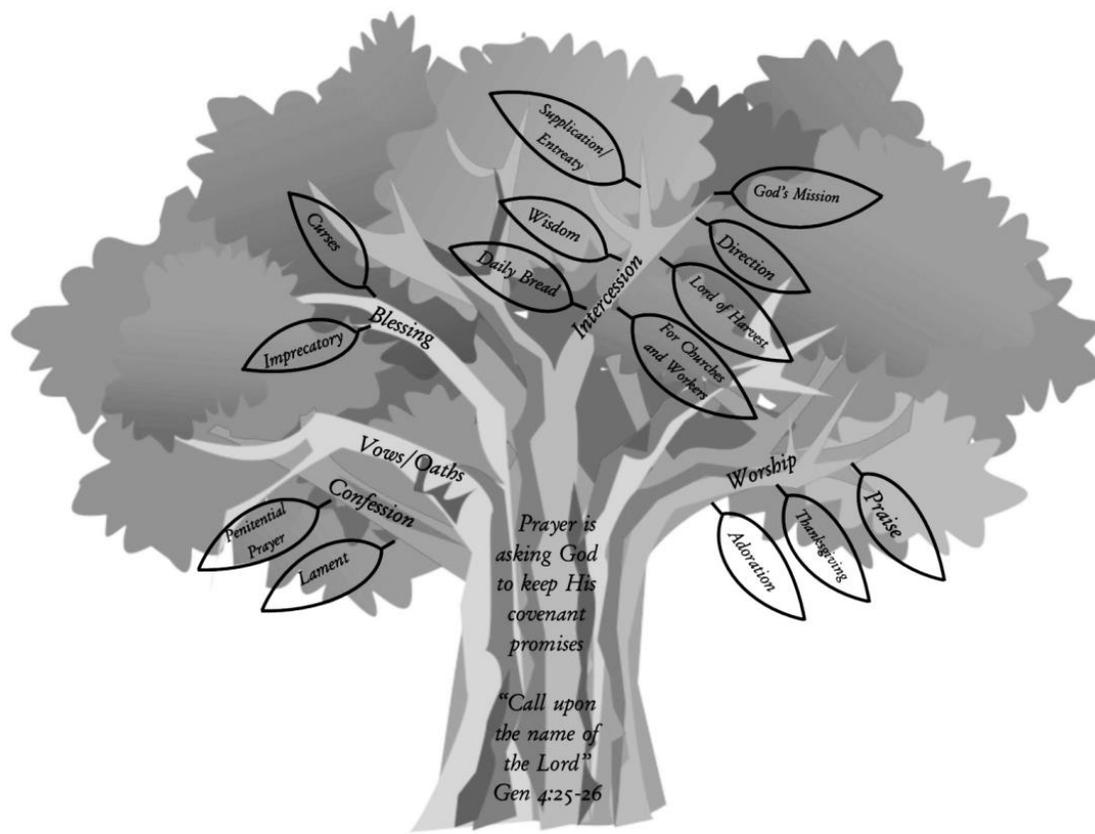


Figure 2. The prayer tree.

Additional criteria were applied to the choosing of certain passages out of the many passages about prayer that could be chosen to focus on the 'branch' of God's mission:

1. The encounter/account reveals something about the character of God.
2. The encounter/account reveals something about the interaction between God and humans.
3. The passage/account reveals something about the nature or theology of prayer.
4. The passage/account reveals something about the **process** of how the prayer was granted.
5. The passage/account reveals something potentially instructive for missions' practice.

2.2.4 Prayer in the Old Testament

Intercessory Prayers in the Old Testament

Abraham – Genesis 18

One of the pivotal figures in the Scriptures, Abraham, is the centrepiece of Judaism and later Christianity. The patriarch is called by God in Genesis 12 (Bible, 1984), and he responds by moving toward Canaan. The promise of innumerable descendants has been made to him and has been sealed with a covenant. This passage details the fifth of six divine encounters between Abraham and Yahweh (YHWH), an encounter of unprecedented divine revelation and human audacity in response (Fretheim, 1994:268). In Genesis 17, the covenant of circumcision has been demanded by YHWH and obeyed by Abraham. The obedience was total and radical, including Abraham's entire household. R. R. Reno notes that this radical 'sign' of obedience paved the way for further intimacy/trust with Abraham, which we see in Chapter 18 (2010:185). The events of Genesis 18 are also linked to the earlier promise of descendants. Yahweh clearly states that the reason He shares what He is doing with Sodom and Gomorrah is because Abraham is to be the father of a great and powerful nation and all nations will be blessed through him, as seen in Genesis 12:1-3 (Bible, 1994). This context paves the way for understanding the unprecedented and counter-cultural audacity of Abraham and the events detailed in Chapter 18.

After Abram's call to leave 'Ur' in Genesis 11, we see the patriarchs staking out their claim to the land that was promised. The importance of Abraham is noted in Matthew 1 with the opening verse of the New Testament, 'A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the Son of David, the son of Abraham' (Matthew 1:1; Bible, 1984). The Apostle Paul further amplifies the importance of Abraham by stating in Galatians 3:29, 'If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, according to the promise' (Bible, 1984).

There has been much debate related to the historicity of Genesis (Abraham in particular). Until the 1970s, the archaeologist William Albright and his school of thought upholding and celebrating the historical values were largely unchallenged. Those

deconstructionists who have rejected the biblical testimony are called 'minimalists' while those having appreciation for the Hebrew texts are called 'maximalists' (Matthews, 2005:25,1b). The major challenge is that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are not known in any ancient sources outside of the Bible. These revisionists call for a new history of Israel to be penned without the Scriptures (Matthews, 2005:33). Matthews points out that, even if we were to find much extrabiblical evidence, the interpretation of that might be suspect as well (2005:26). Von Rad feels the 'Yahwist' wrote in a very different period than the Deuteronomist and doubts the historical veracity of Genesis (Von Rad, 1972:16).

Genesis concerns God's promise to Israel's ancestors, with the chief question being 'the seed' accompanied with the question of 'the land'. In some circles, Genesis was rejected as a source of Israel's pre-history (Matthews, 2005:29). Several expositors point out that there was no extrabiblical evidence of David either until a ninth century stela from Dan was found. Of course, circumstantial evidence such as 'Absalom's monument' point strongly to the existence of David. Other collaborating historical evidence that points to the accuracy of the Genesis Chapter 14 account of Abraham's military excursion to retrieve Lot, accounts that include names of persons and towns, migration of the Terah clan from Ur to Haran, settlements of Canaan and so forth (Matthews, 2005:32).

Regardless of their approach to Genesis, scholars have noted with admiration the rich complexity of parallel language, theme and motives entwined in Chapters 18 and 19 – as if authored by a single hand (Matthews, 2005:209). This is because of the continuity of the characters, the interest in time of day for the events, the notice given of events to occur, and logical movement from problem to resolution (Matthews, 2005:210-211).

In Genesis, the lives of Abraham and Lot are repeatedly contrasted. The comparisons portray Lot as less competent and the author of bad choices, although Peter calls him a 'righteous man' (2 Peter 2:5-8; Bible, 1984). In Genesis 18, three visitors approach Abraham at noontime, which is unusual timing because the sun is at its hottest and

outdoors activity is limited. The expectations of the Middle Eastern hospitality dictate gracious invitation. At some point, Abraham understands he is now talking with divinity. When Sarah laughs at the assertion of her giving birth in her old age, the visitor exclaims in verse 14, 'Is there anything too hard for God?' (Bible, 1984). Fretheim asserts that the phrase 'is anything too hard' commonly refers to the fact that God's wonderful deeds will not fail and that God will always find a way into the future (1994:465). This question about if anything is too hard for God is also asked in the context of Elizabeth wondering if she could have a baby at an advanced age as well as Jesus' statement in Mark 10:27 that 'with men things are impossible but with God all things are possible' (Bible, 1984). The rhetorical question directed to Sarah regarding God's capacity and power sets the stage for the drama of intercession to come.

After the meal, two of the mysterious visitors leave their 'leader' and Abraham alone. Using the form of a soliloquy, YHWH is unsure about sharing His intentions towards Sodom and Gomorrah with Abraham. Cotter *et al.* observe that this reticence, as part of the Hebrew style of narration, betrays 'authorial intentions' – meaning that He does want to share the information (2003:117). Amos 3:7 adds light to this decision when the prophet states: 'Surely the Lord God does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets' (Bible, 1977).

The decision for the divine visitor to share is also made based on 'knowing' as seen in verse 19. The Hebrew *yada* is like saying 'I have singled him out' and the true connotation is 'I have entered into a special relationship with you' and involves loyalty and obligation (Sarna, 1989:129). This knowing is due to the covenants God made beforehand with Abraham, which included promising Abraham many descendants and promising that all nations will be blessed through him.

In the conversation between Abraham and his visitor, the Lord shares with Abraham about the cry coming to Him about Sodom. The words 'cry' and 'clamour' are used interchangeably and mean 'a plaintive cry for help'. The same word for 'cry' is used when the 'blood of Abel cries out to God' and for the cry that results in divine judgment

on Egypt (Exodus 11:6, 12-30; Bible, 1984). The word is also used in Nehemiah (5:6 and 9:9) to describe the cry of the afflicted people. In Jeremiah 18:22 and Isaiah 65:19, it is linked to weeping and great distress (Bushell *et al.*, 2008).

The sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was 'great and grievous', or literally, 'very heavy'. The Hebrew word transliterated kabeda is equal to the sin of Noah's day (Matthews, 2005:225).

The context in the next chapter in Sodom describes the sin of unbridled homosexuality. The cry that comes to YHWH entails a meaning that is broader as well: the cry of the widow or orphan who has been oppressed. Sarna describes the sin of Sodom as 'heinous moral and social corruption - an arrogant disregard of elementary human rights, a cynical insensitivity to the suffering of others' (1989:132–135).

As Abraham 'stands before the Lord', he is cognizant of his nephew Lot and family, especially after having rescued him from the marauders as described in Chapter 14. 'Standing before the Lord' is a 'posture' specific to intercession, with nuances seen in other passages of worshipping, entering His presence or serving (Jeremiah 9:10; Deuteronomy 19:17; 1 Kings 17:1). The conversation resembles a courtroom drama, with Abraham's negotiations including a judicial tone and question in Genesis 18:23: 'Will You sweep away the righteous with the wicked?' (Bible, 1984).

Abraham's brazen negotiation ends with the Lord agreeing not to destroy the city for the sake of ten righteous. The number ten should be viewed as the lowest unit number, not necessary as a literal number of ten people (Sarna, 1989:135). Barker (1994a) propounds that Abraham points out the incongruity and inconceivability of treating righteous and wicked people alike three times. His negotiation tactics come to the fore when he says in verse 25, 'Will not the judge of the earth do right?' while pleading for justice (Bible, 1984). Passages of Scripture with the same Hebrew words include Deuteronomy 10:18, 'He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing' (Bible, 2010); and 2 Samuel 8:15, 'So David

reigned over all Israel. And David administered justice and equity to all his people' (Bible, 2010). Justice is linked with equity and righteousness (Bushell *et al.*, 2008).

As Abraham negotiates down to ten people, he seems to know he has reached his limit and one of the most incredible human-divine encounters is concluded.

We see that Abraham's prayer was answered by the rescuing of Lot found in Chapter 19. Sailhamer *et al.* (1994:31) postulates that the basis of God's saving him was not of his own righteousness, but because the Lord was merciful in response to Abraham's prayer (with an emphasis on God's compassion).

From this passage we learn:

- The graciousness of God.
- The invitation to enter into intercession for mission.
- The courage that is needed to boldly ask, which is suggested because of the assurance of a personal relationship.
- The understanding that there is a limit to what one can ask.
- The understanding that God may be open to changing judgments or delaying the timing of judgment based on intercession.

Moses' First Intercession on the Mountain of God - Exodus 32:7-14

The context of the dramatic intercession of Moses in this passage is one of the most dramatic depictions in the Bible. When Moses is absent for 40 days on the mountain of God while he is receiving the Ten Commandments, the children of Israel grow tired of waiting. A failure of leadership on the part of Aaron leads to debauchery and the fabrication of the golden calf. Exodus 32:7-14 describes the tense attempt of Moses to save the Israelites from being destroyed by God.

Stuart acknowledges that scant corroborating evidence exists that confirm or deny the Biblical accounts but argues for historicity based on the reliability of the text (Stuart, 2006:23). Exodus is based on the Masoretic Text with the most commonly used manuscript being the Leningrad Codex of AD 1008 (Stuart, 2006:26). The book

describes a period of eighty-one years, with the author Moses describing himself in the third person. Deuteronomy 31:24 states that Moses wrote 'in a book the words of this law from beginning to end'.

The book of Exodus is presented to the reader as part two of the Pentateuch and as containing two parts: (1) Chapters 1-19 about the bringing of the people of Israel to Mt. Sinai and (2) Chapters 20-40 describing God's covenant. White (2016:vii) divides the book into five parts:

1. 1-12 Deliverance of Israel from Egypt
2. 13-18 Experience of Israel in the wilderness
3. 19-24 Mt. Sinai – giving of the Law
4. 25-31 Cultic rituals of the people of Israel
5. 32-40 The fall and restoration of Israel.

Bruckner notes that diverse classical literary forms abound in Exodus: weaving compelling narrative and legal texts in the richest combination of theologically based literature in the Near East (2008:3). Legal material includes case law, prohibitions and commands and weaves them together in a theological narrative of God's will and Israel's will (2008:3).

Different expositors count different themes in Exodus. Fretheim counts six; Brueggemann counts four; while Durham counts only one main one: the presence of Yahweh in the midst of His people (Bruckner, 2008:4). Stuart points out nine major theological themes in the book:

1. Salvation and deliverance from bondage – going from oppressive slavery to God's leadership. 'The threat of bondage to a hostile great power is one of the curses of the Old Testament' (Stuart, 2006:35). Freedom from bondage is accomplished by God and He alone.
2. The oft repeated phrase 'You will know I am the Lord your God' points to the God of Exodus taking a personal interest in His people, not just corporate interest.

Stuart refers to the German Lutheran reformer Melanchthon who said 'To Know Christ is to know His benefits' (Stuart, 2006:37).

3. A Covenant People 'I will take you as my own people' (Exodus 6:7).
4. The promise of the Promised Land.
5. The limited presence of God in the midst of the people.
6. Visible symbols representing an Invisible God.
7. The Necessity of the Law.
8. The Necessity of Following God.
9. Only One God has the Power (34-49).

God is very upset at the people of Israel, and Moses seeks to 'find favour with God'. The term 'find favour' is often used as a synonym for 'entreaty' or 'beseech, implore'. Thirteen out of 16 times it refers to favour for the Lord – for mercy or for His help in times of danger (Bushell *et al.*, 2008; Exodus 32:11).

Moses uses the technique of anthropomorphism: describing God's feelings in terms that are understandable to us (Cole, 1973:216). Curiously, God rhetorically says 'leave Me alone' in a similar vein as He did with Amos (Chapter 7). Stuart suggests that it is similar to the prophet Jonah in Nineveh, who reluctantly gave the message of 40 days of judgment because he knew that, if repentance happened, disaster would be averted (Stuart, 2006:672). Additionally, he feels it is a rhetorical question: challenging Moses rather than commanding him as Moses had no power whatsoever to stop God rather than saying, 'Here is what I will do unless you intervene' (Stuart, 2006:670). Kaiser points out that God deliberately changes the possessive pronoun from 'My people' to 'your people' (2008:540). In turn, Moses complies with a direct rebuttal: 'Your people that You delivered'.

After Moses' rebuttal, God responds 'leave me alone so that my nose may flare and I may finish them off' (Propp, 2006:554). Ryken suggests that the word used for destruction (*kalah*) is absolute. God threatened the ultimate sentence, but nonetheless, God is asking permission of His prophet (2006:986). Jerome feels that the prayers of

His servant hindered God's power, similar to the Apostle Paul who said, 'I could wish that I myself were accursed for my brothers' (Lienhard, 2001:145).

This is the first time that the phrase 'stiff-necked people' is used. A stiff-necked animal refers to a beast of burden that is too stubborn to wear its master's yoke or do what the master says (Ryken, 2005:985).

Moses challenges God to 'relent' – which does not only imply the acknowledgement of sin, error or mistake, it also means that grief and sorrow for what has been leads to a new course of action (Dunham, 1987:353). Ryken adds that 'relent' can also mean not only to change one's mind but being moved to have compassion on others (2005:989).

Propp believes that this moment constitutes Moses' greatest temptation. Instead of fathering a somewhat obscure line of Levites, God has offered Moses the opportunity to supplant Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as the national ancestors (2006:554). In essence, it was also a test for Moses. Moses chooses God's glory over his own. Perhaps this is why verses 11-14 are the rule for Torah reading on fast days other than Yom Kippur (Sarna, 1991:205).

Moses gives five different reasons why God should not wipe out the Israelites (Ryken, 2005:990): (1) God's fatherly affection, (2) God's past investment in the Israelites, (3) God's public reputation (what would the Egyptians say about God's good name?), (4) God's merciful compassion ('turn from Your "fierce anger"'), and (5) God's everlasting covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Moses' intercession here is quite different to Abraham's intercession that we saw in Genesis 18. Here, everyone is guilty. In contrast to Abraham's intercession, Moses acknowledges that no one is innocent or righteous. After Moses appeals to His love, His plan, His faithfulness and His character, God relents. The ancient commentator Ambrose adds a thought-provoking statement to this intercession: 'The greater the sin, the more worthy must be the prayers that are sought' (Lienhard, 2001:145).

Moses' Second Intercession on the Mountain of God - Exodus 32:30-35

Ironically, the golden calf was to be a symbol of God's presence, but instead it became THE object of God's alienation. While Moses intercedes on behalf of the people to avoid their extermination by God in Exodus 32:11-14, he seeks to obtain their forgiveness in verses 30-35.

Sarna notes from the Jewish tradition that there can hardly be a more impressive example of the selfless love of Israel than what Moses expressed here. Typically, when a community grew larger, in order to track the inhabitants accurately, their names were written down and then removed at death. In terms of the spiritual connection, Jewish tradition speaks of three different kinds of books (Sarna, 2009:210): (1) the book of life (Psalm 69:28) where God inscribes the names of all living, (2) the book of divine decrees in which the destinies of men and women are recorded, and (3) the book of deeds as found in Malachi 3:16 where both the good and the bad are written up – the 'scroll of remembrance'.

Moses' intercession starts with his explanation to the people of what he will be doing with God - that perhaps he can make atonement for their sin. He then acknowledges clearly what they have done (Exodus 32:31) and boldly asks for forgiveness. Then Moses leverages his relationship with YHWH by saying, 'If You won't forgive them, then blot me out of Your book' (vs. 32; Bible, 1984).

Moses begins by repeating to God what he told the Israelites. Literally, 'You have sinned a great sin' (Bruckner, 2008:288). Moses would see if he could make atonement, which is literally translated 'maybe I can get your sins covered' (Stuart, 2006:684). The killing of the 3000 was only the beginning of the process. Moses was refreshingly honest with YHWH: he did not try to gloss over their grievous sin.

Exodus 32:33 is one of the Bible's most clear directives of the need for forgiveness. What is unique about this encounter is that Moses' offer and entreaties are flatly rejected. The persons who acted in the golden calf affair are held accountable for their sin. It is as though Moses is playing 'brinkmanship with God' and God shows He will not

be intimidated or even blackmailed – even by Moses (Brueggemann, 1982:934). Moses goes a step further than refusing to be a great nation in place of Israel: he offers his own life to be blotted out in exchange for Israel's.

It appears the Levites killed only a percentage of those who were guilty of worshipping the golden calf. 'When I visit, I will visit their sin upon them' (Bruckner, 2008:289).

This episode also points out the corporate nature of sin ('your sin'; Dozeman, 2009:712). Ryken sees in this passage that Moses was starting to catch on – that just as Israel sinned, they need a Saviour (2005:14), and a foreshadowing of Jesus' substitutionary atonement appears. Moses had the greatest of loves for the Israelites, which Jesus speaks of in John 15: he is willing to lay down his life for his friends.

Dozeman suggests that the major problem in this passage is not the golden calf itself but the absence of the divine presence (712). There is a change in divine practice here. Whereas God previously led the children of Israel with Moses only being God's servant, from now on Moses and an angel are to lead (v. 34). However, the phrase 'lead these people' also points out that Moses' intercession has been effective: the people will not be wiped out. Yes, 3000 die, but it is a 'one time' ad hoc punishment. God's original intent will live on.

Moses' Third Intercession on the Mountain of God - Exodus 33:12-23

In Exodus 32, after refusing Moses' intercession to forgive the people, many Israelites die from a plague (v. 35). The Lord gives the command to leave 'this place' and go to the Promised Land. But then comes God's stunning declaration, 'But I will not go with you; because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way' (Exodus 33:3). Stripping their ornaments off, the people wait outside the 'Tent of Meeting' while the Lord ponders what judgment to render. Dohmen (as cited by Dozeman, 2009:718) states that the Tent of Meeting is central to the story, as it accentuates the intercessory role of Moses and is crucial in resolving the central problem of the presence of God in the midst of His people.

Having lost their distinction as the people of God, the Israelites strip off their ornaments, which is an ancient sign of mourning (Propp, 1999:597). Exodus 33:12-17 is an intercession for the renewed presence of God among the Israelites (Dozeman, 2009:727). Moses seeks to reclaim God's leadership and presence with the Israelites.

Moses' extraordinary favour is described as one who speaks with God as a friend would speak with a friend 'face-to-face'. According to John Mackay, for God to 'know someone by name' is to embrace that person in a relationship of acceptance and friendship (as cited in Ryken, 2005:1029). In Numbers 12:6-8, it is said that God communicated with Moses 'mouth-to-mouth' (Sarna, 1991:212). This term encompasses qualities such as contact, intimacy, concern, relatedness and mutuality. Conversely, not to 'know someone' signifies indifference, alienation and estrangement (Sarna, 1991:212).

'If I have found favour in your eyes' is best translated 'grace'. Sometimes, the NIV translates words from the same root as 'mercy', such as in verse 19 (Bruckner, 2008:294).

In this intercession, Moses leverages his own personal relationship with YHWH. The success of Israel against the world would be a sign of God's presence. Without God's presence, Moses would have been 'on his own' (Stuart, 2006:702). Moses wanted assurance that the people would have the Lord as much as he did (Ryken, 2005:1029). God demotes Israel to be like any other nation. In contrast, Moses argues that Yahweh's presence will positively separate Israel from all other nations. The lesson Moses learned at Sinai at the time of his 'call' was that he was not equal to the task, but that his role in challenging Pharaoh was the direct result of God's presence (Durham, 1987:447). Now, in Exodus 33, Moses asks, 'What else will distinguish me and the other people from all the other people on the face of the earth?' (v. 16). Furthermore, in this intercession, Moses is asking God not to abandon Israel to Moses' own human leadership (Propp, 1999:602).

In verse 12, Moses had started out, 'You have been telling me.....you have said'... and he recounts his favoured status with God. Ryken perceives that Moses asks something

for himself as a mediator (12-14), for Israel as the people of God (15-17) and again something for himself as a man who wants to know God more (Ryken, 2005:1029). In the middle of his prayer, Moses reminds God of His covenant promises (v. 13b).

For Moses to mention that God has singled him out by name literally means, 'I know you by name'. This is a Hebrew idiom denoting a close, exclusive association with God, and it is applied to no one else in the Old Testament (Sarna, 1991:212). When God says 'you have found My favour', the only other one spoken of in those terms is Noah in Genesis 6:8 (Bible, 1984).

Moses perseveres and seeks to gain a promise of YHWH going with Israel. When YHWH says, 'I'll be with you', Moses replies 'with us' so that the people will not be left behind. Moses explicitly reminds the Lord, 'Remember that this nation is Your people'. Moses also reminds God of His covenant promises (v. 13b). The word translated 'remember' might be better translated 'consider' as the latter is closer to the Hebrew (Bushell *et al.*, 2008). The Lord acquiesces and grants Moses' requests, because He is pleased with Moses and 'knows him by name' (33:17). Bruckner suggests that friendship is the foundation for the restoration of sinful Israel here (Bruckner, 2008:294).

Moses requests God to 'teach me Your ways' with the inference that he needs knowledge of God's character so that he can live pleasing to Him (Ryken, 2005:1028). The ancient Maximus of Turin states that 'God is more familiar, intimate and friendly with the person in whom he sees more of his works' (Lienhard, 2001:148).

In verse 18, Moses adds, 'Now show me Your glory'. Glory speaks of God's awesome, shrouded, and magisterial presence that appears sometimes like an overpowering light. Moses' request for God's glory is to draw even closer, more dangerously and more intimately to the very core of God's self (Brueggemann, 1994:939, 940). Fretheim suggests that 'glory' includes a 'proclamation' of the very nature of God Himself (1991:299).

Sarna observes from a Jewish perspective that 'show me Your glory' is the Hebrew kavod, which often signifies God's self-manifestation: a visible sign of His presence.

Throughout the Scriptures, the kavod is characterized by ‘a mass experience, distant from observers, God initiates the manifestation and freely chooses the time and place’ (1991:213, 214). Astoundingly, here, Moses pleads for an exclusively individual experience. Yahweh agrees, but only on His terms, which is a statement of His sovereignty (Durham, 1987:452).

When God shows Moses His hand and back in the cleft of the rock, they are anthropomorphisms or descriptions of the reality of God in human terms (Kaiser, 2008:546). God continues to demonstrate creativity in making Himself known to His servant.

What do we learn about intercession from Moses?

1. We learn that God is a gracious and forgiving God.
2. We learn that God at times invites negotiation or dialogue about His judgements
3. We learn that answers to prayer can be a several layered process.
4. We learn that God was perhaps more lenient than He might have been otherwise because of His desire to protect the covenant people’s role in the salvation of the world. His forbearance was linked to His covenant promise made earlier to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
5. Perhaps God is more open to answering prayers with a particular people group when the requests are in line with his overall redemptive purposes.

2.2.5 Prayer in the New Testament

The following section provides an overview of the New Testament emphasis on prayer. The historical and cultural context of the New Testament is the starting place of this section. With Jesus as the ‘author and finisher’ of our faith, we look at Jesus’ practice of prayer, followed by the role of the ‘Trinity’ in prayer. Jesus’ teaching in prayer is often overlooked in missions circles, except for the Lord’s Prayer.

The Gospels

Jesus' Practice of Prayer in Relation to the Trinity

No study of prayer in Scripture would be complete without examining the prayer life of Jesus. Yet it is impossible to understand Jesus' prayer life and teachings apart from an understanding of the Trinity. His private prayer life, His public prayers and His teaching on the subject all heavily reflect on and are influenced by His profound and yet intimate relationship with the Godhead. In this section, we will analyse the interrelationship of each member of the Trinity and their roles and contributions related to the prayer process and answers.

A major preoccupation of Jesus' discourse is the union of Christ with believers, and the fruit of that which is closer than a simple connection. This is modelled after the union in the Godhead. Cyril of Alexandria stated that 'everything proceeds from the Father by the Son in the Spirit' (Elliott, 2007:160). This same unity and functioning is to be the example of our unbroken union with Christ, otherwise called 'abiding'. This relates to prayer not only because of the life giving 'sap', which implicitly refers to the Holy Spirit, but as Augustine said 'abiding in Christ governs what we desire, which in turn brings glory to God as we live out the faith and life given to us by God' (Elliott, 2007:165).

It is critical to understand the Trinity as a complex adaptive system. According to Levin, complex adaptive systems are the study of the interplay among processes operating at diverse scales of space, time and organizational complexity (2002:3-19). The interplay and relationship of the Godhead comes into focus through prayer. We will commence with a focus on the gospels, then focus on the Son's relationship with the other Members of the Godhead and Roles, then to the Father's and finally with the Spirit's. We will then focus on the Jesus' practice then teaching of prayer.

- **The Gospels**

Much of what we know about the Trinity is found in the Gospels – particularly Matthew, Luke and John.

The Gospels are all narratives of Jesus that concentrate on the beginning of his life until his death. They are not impartial accounts, as they enthusiastically endorse Jesus and are negative about his opposition. There has been considerable debate in the last forty years as to their likeness to Greco-Roman literature – particularly biography (Green *et al.*, 1992:278).

Guelich notes 'much confusion surrounds the discussion of the Gospels from the standpoint of literary genre' (Stuhlmacher, 1991:173) and concludes it is its own genre (Stuhlmacher, 1991:205).

The gospels consist of Jesus' birth accounts and genealogies, biography, parables, miracle working stories, and passion stories. Burridge notes that an unusually high proportion of verbs in all the gospels have Jesus as their grammatical subject (Loveday, 2006:14). The gospel is a loose knit, episodic narrative relating the words and deeds of a Galilean holy man called Jesus, culminating in his trial and death in Jerusalem and ending with discrete and various reports of resurrection appearances.....there are four of these gospels...and a significant literary phenomenon in its own right (Loveday, 2006:17).

The first reference we have to the gospels is found in Justin Martyr's apology, where he notes the 'memoirs' called the Gospels (Young, 2006:206). In his famous 'Against Heresies' (c.180), Iraenus points out that the worldwide church acknowledges four gospels, no more no less (Watson, 2006:35). More than one hundred years ago, Martin Kahler spoke of the gospels as 'passion narratives with extended introductions' (Green, 2006:139). The Gospel of John particularly starts with an explanation of who Jesus is and his relationship with the Trinity (1:1-14) with an apologetic side related to John's explicit theme (that they might know He is the Christ [Messiah]).

Copies of John were available by the beginning of the second century. The Church Fathers Polycarp, Iraneus, Clement and Justin Martyr all refer to the epistle. It is generally agreed that it was the Apostle John who wrote the book in his old age. The date of writing ranges from the end of the first century to as early as AD 50.

John wrote in everyday koine Greek with long narratives interrupted by a question. There is much unique material in John that is not found in the Synoptic Gospels, with very little material from Mark. The story of the woman caught in adultery appears to be a later addition.

An outline of the book has variations of the same theme: the coming of the Eternal Word (1:1-18); Jesus begins his public ministry (1:19-5:47) Jesus' continuing ministry and the rise of opposition (6:1-8:59); the closing of Jesus' public ministry (9:1-12:50); the Upper Room discourse (13:1-17:26); the Lamb of God slain (18:12-27); the resurrection (20:1-29) and concluding remarks (20:30-31; Bible, 1984; Mounce, 2007:431).

The theology of the Trinity found in John is rich in Christology, the Holy Spirit, and how the Son reveals the Father – to the point where Jesus does not speak His own words, but those of His Father. The disciples were slow to grasp the concept of the Trinity – as it was only after the Resurrection that Jesus 'breathed' on them. This is representative of the Holy Spirit - who leads us into all truth.

Matthew, however, was written to a Jewish audience. Probably written in Antioch, the authorship never had the kind of debate as some other books had. Major themes of the book include: prologue and origins, the gospel of the Kingdom, the glory and the shadow, opposition and eschatology and passion and resurrection (Carson, 2010:50-64).

Luke, meanwhile, by the mid second century, is mostly affirmed as the writer of the gospel bearing his name and as an eye witness or friend of Paul's by the Church Fathers Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Tertullian (Geldenhuys, 1988:16). The date of the book is around AD 85 (Mounce, 2000:82) with Garland suggesting three main possibilities: (1) the AD 200s (mostly German expositors from one hundred years ago or more and based on textual criticism issues); (2) AD 61-63 and (3) AD 75-90 (Garland, 2011:33). The latter range is the most commonly accepted date for the book today (Garland, 2011:33). The oldest extant copy of Luke we have is from around AD 200 and says 'according to Luke' (Garland, 2011:21).

Luke's unique writing style is likened to the style of a master painter. He describes stories and events in pure literary Greek and then switches over to a more Hebraistically tinted language (Geldenhuis, 1988:36). He is the only gospel writer that asserts his purpose at the beginning of the book so that Theophilus (1:4) might know the certainty of that which he has been taught, using a high level of Greek and almost a scientific approach (Garland, 2011:51).

Thus, although not immediately evident, as the genre spills over into various categories, the gospel largely falls into the realm of historical gospel genre. In the introduction, Luke uses a formal literary tone, and throughout the book, Luke portrays the grand story of the power of redemption through Christ.

Therefore, with their unique lenses, each gospel gives a different perspective by which we see the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit interacting with mankind and then people 'calling upon the name of the Lord'. The next section expands on each member of the Holy Trinity and their interaction with each other, their roles and their relation to prayer.

The Son's Dependence on the Father

John 5 records the healing of a man who was an invalid for 38 years. The drama occurred on the Sabbath, and it created controversy and pivotal instructional teaching concerning the Trinity. In the chapter, Jesus declares that His Father is always working and so is He (John 5:16). Furthermore, Jesus describes His dependence upon the Father (19-22). Borchert points out that Jesus' dependence upon God is connected by the Greek preposition *gar* found in John 5:19, 20, 21, and 22 used in the following ways:

- The first *gar* reminds the reader that the Father is the model for the Son's activity.
- The second *gar* identifies the basis for the Son's dependence – namely, 'the Father loves the Son'. Inherent in the love of the Father is the desire of the Father to reveal to the Son the activity of God.
- The Son is the giver of life.

- The absolute decision-making process or evaluation has been given to the Son: judgment (Borchert, 2006:237-239).

The Son declares His dependence upon the Father in four aspects: (1) for mission direction, (2) for determining the Father's will, (3) for determining where the Father is working, and (4) for determining what to say.

Regarding Jesus' dependence on the Father for mission direction, John 3:16 makes it clear that, for the love of the world, God sent His Son for the dual purpose of not perishing and inheriting eternal life. While Israel had been the recipient of God's special grace, the sending of Christ broke down all barriers (Mounce, 2007:400). Additionally, John 3:17 adds that the purpose of the Father sending the Son was not to condemn the world but that the world would be saved via the Son. Thus, the very essence of Jesus' ministry was 'Father-initiated'. Borchert insists that verses 16, 17 and 18 must be taken together to understand the full meaning of the coming of Jesus and the Johannine message of salvation expounded here (2006:183). Verse 16 describes the agency God uses (the Son); verse 17 expands on God's intention and God's purpose in sending the Son while verse 18 concludes with the reality of judgment.

In John 3:16, the words 'He gave' are given and then followed up with 'He sent' in verse 17. Both phrases refer to Jesus' mission. Ramsey Michaels (2010:202) points out that the Greek word *agapao* implies not so much a feeling but a conscious choice and that 'sent' is the operative word for the mission in John. A. M. Hunter notes the importance of *agape* by contrasting *eros* (all take) and *philia* (give and take) with *agape* (all give) (Mounce, 2007:400).

The three persons of the Godhead are involved in one great mission: the revelation of God Himself to humanity and the redemption of humanity for God (Kostenberger & Swain, 2008:155). Furthermore, mission is the 'nexus' and focal point of John's presentation of the Trinity (156).

In John 8:16, Jesus, while sparring with the Pharisees and claiming He is the light of the world, has His words rejected for lack of witnesses. In response, Jesus fulfils the requirements of the Law from Deuteronomy 17:6 in establishing a matter with at least two witnesses by claiming His Father as a witness. He clearly intimates that 'I stand with the Father, who sent me' (v. 16). Borchert poignantly points out that the Pharisees were ignorant of two realities: (1) the sent one and (2) the Father who sent Him (1996:298). In the next verse, Jesus repeats the fact, 'I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me' (Bible, 1984). In speaking of the Father, Jesus testifies that 'He who sent Me is reliable' (John 8:26; Bible, 1984). This is similar to Jesus' statement in John 5:17 where, after Jesus heals on the Sabbath, He claims that the Father is working on the Sabbath, and so is He. Again, in speaking of the Father in John 8:29a, Jesus affirms 'The One who sent Me is with Me' (Bible, 1984).

The Apostle Paul affirms that in the fullness of time, God sent His Son (Galatians 4:4). This may have been an early confession of faith from the Christian churches (George, 2004:500). In making a tentative reconstruction of the passage and linking together the three persons of the Godhead in six coda, F. F. Bruce (1982:195) suggests:

God sent forth his Son,
Born of a woman,
That we might receive our instatement as sons
Now, because you are sons,
God has sent forth the Spirit....
Crying 'Abba, Father!'

Regarding Jesus' dependence on the Father in determining the Father's will, Jesus sought the Father's will through prayer on multiple occasions. First, He sought the will of the Father in the choosing of the 12. The relationship between Jesus' prayer life and the choosing of the twelve disciples is clearly demonstrated in Luke 6:12 and 13. Luke records that Jesus spent all night 'praying to God'. This marks Jesus' role as the Son of the Father and intercessor and the importance of Jesus seeking the will of the Father

before acting (Bock, as cited in Jeffrey, 2012:80). Craddock points out that this prayer night was not a reference to a single instance, but a pattern of repeated behaviour (1990:72).

Bovon shows that, based on the pattern of the Hebrew Bible parallel, Jesus 'speaks to God not for the sake of talking but to listen' (2002:208). In other words, the choice of the twelve had divine impetus and the disciples had not applied for the job. R. Kent Hughes suggests that, as Jesus had numerous disciples, it was conceivable that, during some of those ten hours, He presented them individually to the Father, so that the nod would be given to those who would become the twelve (Hughes, 2012:213). Pope Benedict XVI commented, 'The calling of the disciples is a prayer event: It is as if they were begotten in prayer, in intimacy with the Father' (Ratzinger, 2007:170). Three years later, just before the cross, Jesus would lift the twelve to God in prayer again in a sense affirming the Father's choice of them by saying, 'I have manifested Your name to the people whom You gave Me out of this world...Yours they were, and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word' (John 17:6; Bible, 1977). This is consistent with Luke/Acts demonstrating that every major decision or crisis in the life of Jesus or the early church was preceded by prayer (Stein, 1992:192).

Second, the raising of Lazarus in John 11 uniquely shows the Son's dependence upon the Father. Jesus receives the word that His friend Lazarus has died. Instead of hurrying to Bethany, Jesus lingers. The death of Lazarus had a dual purpose: 'so that the Son of God may be glorified' (John 11:4) and that the 'disciples would believe' (v. 15).

Mounce states that it is noteworthy that John does not record a prayer in which Jesus asks that Lazarus be raised from the dead. Rather, He thanks God for hearing him. Apparently, He had been in prayer all along (Mounce, 2007:522).

At Lazarus' tomb, Jesus prays a prayer to the Father (John 11). His spoken prayer is not for His own benefit, but for that of the bystanders. It will be clear that what He is about to do is not done on His own, but it is something the Father has accomplished

through Him as His Father's agent and representative (Michaels, 2010:645). Ironically, the prayer of John 11:42 is close to the purpose statement of the Gospel: 'In order that they might believe in You who sent Me' (Bible, 1984). Borchert points out, that unlike other prayers, this one focuses on thanksgiving and is similar to Psalm 118:21 (Bible, 1984) and presupposes that Jesus knew the Father's will beforehand (1996:362).

Third, the intercessory prayer of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane is a vivid example of Jesus seeking to determine the Father's will for Him at the most extenuating part of His earthly life. First, He chooses the same three disciples who accompanied Him at the transfiguration and who saw the healing of the little girl: Peter, James and John. This same three were willing to 'drink the cup' (Matthew 20:22). Jesus takes them a certain distance, asks them to keep watch and then goes on to pray.

In an act demonstrating His humanity, Jesus falls to the ground. This is a common posture in special circumstances of worship, fear or submission (Hagner, 1995:783). He prays, 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow', reflecting Psalm 42:9-10 and Psalm 43:2 (Bible, 1984). Some translations that use 'distressed' and 'troubled' are far too weak, as the Greek means 'overwhelmed with sorrow'. The Phillips translation 'terrible distress and misery' and Weymouth's rendering 'crushed with anxiety' more correctly capture the sense (Blomberg, 1992:394). The GNB translates it aptly, according to Mounce: 'the sorrow in my heart is so great that it almost crushes me' (Mounce, 1991:243). Bruner adds that 'Jesus' depression teaches important truths to the church: Jesus' true humanity, his obedience and his real courage' (1990:979-80). The gospel writer Luke in 22:44 adds that Jesus is in anguish and that His sweat is like drops of blood falling to the ground (Bible, 1984).

The point of mentioning His emotional extremity in Gethsemane is not only the demonstration of His humanity in not wanting to 'drink the cup' (a metaphor of the suffering and death He will soon face [Hagner, 1995:783] as well as God's wrath [Barker, 1994b:122]), but that He presses on. Jesus is tempted to seek an alternative to

sin bearing 'via the cross' as the route to fulfil the Father's redemptive purposes, but He learns the cross is unavoidable (Barker, 1994b:122).

Witherington points out that verse 42, when Jesus goes away a second time and says, 'If it not be possible', suggests that He has been wrestling in prayer and is now closer to accepting that it is God's will for Him to drink the cup. We are meant to see the progress of His soul (2006:492). Jesus here demonstrates that His prayer is progressively answered as He continues.

The sleepy disciples fail in supporting Jesus in His greatest time of need. Jesus provides an insight into our frail natures as well as the antidote ('Watch and pray that you do not fall into temptation – the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak'; Matthew 26:41; Bible, 1984). Hare aptly points out that only in prayer can this uneven conflict be resolved in favour of God's Lordship (1993:303).

Regarding Jesus' dependence on the Father for determining where the Father is working, the Scriptures show clearly that the Son can do nothing of Himself on His own initiative (John 5:30). Mounce, quoting Barrett, takes this verse to mean that Jesus did nothing without the "prompting" of the Father' (1991:427). Carson opines that, when Jesus says the 'Son can do nothing of Himself', it is better to say 'on His own initiative' (1991:250). Michaels suggests Jesus does nothing on His own because one who speaks on His own does it for His own glory (2010:321). In this sense, he continues, He behaves in the tradition of prophets, but even more like a son who does what he sees his father doing as in a trade (Michaels, 2010:321).

After the controversial healing of the lame man on the Sabbath, and the command to 'pick up his mat' (John 5:8), Jesus then affirms in John 5:17 that 'My Father is always at His work this very day and I too am working' (Bible, 1984). Jesus places His own activity on the Sabbath on the same level as that of the Creator: meaning that, if God is above Sabbath regulations, so is Jesus (Kostenberger, 2004:185).

Finally, regarding Jesus' dependence on the Father, He depends on the Father for determining what to say. 'The Son does nothing on His own but speaks just what the

Father teaches the Son' (John 8:28b; Bible, 1984). Michaels suggests that, in this respect, Jesus behaves like a prophet who seeks the glory of the One who sends Him – but even more so as a son who imitates his father (Michaels, 2010:321). Carson goes on to say that, by the Son's submission to the Father in all things - doing the Father's deeds performing the Father's will - the Son is 'exegeting' or 'narrating' the Father (1991:251).

What can we observe about intercession from Jesus?

1. The answer can be granted before the answer is actually seen in the physical realm.
2. At times, the answer to prayer is a process.

The Son's Love and Honour toward the Father

One way in which the Son's love and honour toward the Father is shown is through calling Him *Abba*. *Abba* is the Aramaic way of affectionately saying 'Father': demonstrating Jesus' close relationship with the Father (Hare, 1993:302). This is far from a 'one off' description of their relationship, as the Apostle Paul applies this intimacy with the Father - only this time for us. In Romans 8:15, Paul states: 'The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by Him we cry, "Abba, Father"' (Bible, 1984). Additionally, Paul continues on this theme in Galatians 4:6, 'Because you are His sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba Father"' (Bible, 1984). Just as Jesus modelled 'sonship', Paul explains that He opened the door for us to have the same relationship with the Father as adopted sons. As the relationship between Jesus and the Father was developed through prayer, so is ours.

The Son's love and honour toward the Father is also shown by giving thanks. Jesus honoured and showed deference to the Father by giving thanks before eating meals, at the miracles of feeding the four thousand and five thousand and just before raising Lazarus. Giving thanks to someone is indicative of where the originator of the blessing

is. It means to express gratitude, appreciation or acknowledgment to someone (www.dictionary.com).

Jesus is often pictured looking up to the heavens while giving thanks. Normally, a rabbi would look up, not down (Witherington, 2006:288).

Giving thanks is also firmly rooted in Jewish tradition. The traditional Jewish blessing prayer was 'Praise unto Thee, O Lord our God, King of the world, who makes bread to come forth from the earth' (Witherington, 2006:288). From the Talmud, we learn that 'a man is forbidden to taste anything before saying a blessing over it' (Ber.35a, as cited in Morris, 1992:379). When Jesus gives thanks, the word is 'to speak well of, to praise' (Morris, 1992:658). It reveals His dependence upon His Father, and it is expressed through prayer. It reveals His utmost confidence in His understanding and acting on His Father's will to give the command for Lazarus to 'come forth'.

Michaels points out that this prayer is to demonstrate that Jesus is not acting as a miracle worker, but as His father's agent and representative (Michaels, 2010:645). Von Wahlde emphasizes that the prayer is intended to express the conviction that this 'work' is meant to witness that Jesus has been sent of God (2010:506).

Finally, the Son's love and honour toward the Father is shown by cleansing the Temple ('My Father's house'). Jesus' cleansing of the Temple shows that Jesus was offended by the abuse of the Temple and the dishonouring of the Father. 'My Father's house shall be called a house of prayer...for all nations' (Mark 11:17). Stein strongly suggests that the denigration of the court of the Gentiles by the commercialism surrounding the sale for the sacrifices and exchanging of money conflicted radically with its intended purpose of prayer and worship (2008:518). The declaration of Jesus shifts the emphasis of the sacrificial system to intercessory prayer (Stein, 2008:531). The two cleansings of the temple – one at the beginning of Jesus' ministry and one near the end – clearly suggest that the Son honours as well as seeks to restore His Father's honour by His actions.

The Son's Role with the Father in Fruit Bearing/Answered Prayer (John 15)

The chapter on 'abiding' is a key one for understanding Jesus' concept of prayer. It is part of the Upper Room discourse where He discusses an interrelationship between the Father and the Holy Spirit. As it relates to prayer, Jesus gives an astounding promise of 'greater works' that His disciples will do followed by 'if you ask anything in my name, I will do it' (John 14:14; Bible, 1984).

When we come to John 15, Jesus introduces the metaphor of the vine (Jesus), the vinedresser (the Father) and the branches (believers). Key themes in the passage as it relates to the Trinity and prayer include: the function of the Trinity as a model for our union with Christ leading to friendship with Christ, Jesus' choosing us, promises related to answered prayer and fruit bearing through praying in the name of Jesus.

The Son's Choosing Us

- For Friendship

'I no longer call you servants, but friends' (John 15:15; Bible, 1984). Reciprocal friendship of the modern variety is not in view, and it cannot be without demeaning God. This verse suggests the sense is more of a friend informing another of his thinking and obedience with a full understanding of their master's heart (Carson, 1991:522).

- For Fruit Bearing

Barrett points out that a normal disciple chooses who he wants to be his rabbi, but Jesus calls and appoints His disciples (1978:478). The purpose of the appointment is clear, however: to bear fruit that will last. The pruning process works in such a way to ensure that there is a double benefit: fruit production and lasting fruit (John 15:16).

The exhortation 'apart from Me you can do nothing' (John 15:15; Bible, 1984) sets the stage for promises of answered prayer as a result of spiritual union with Christ. Mark the Hermit's soberly warning is worth noting: 'When we do something good, we should remember the words "apart from Me you can do nothing"' (Elliott, 2007:165).

In contrast to this clear statement of spiritual poverty without Christ, in verse 7 Jesus makes the audacious claim that ‘if you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you’ (Bible, 1977). Repeating the theme in verse 17, Jesus mentions that, as the believer goes and bears fruit, whatever he asks the Father for in His name, Jesus will do. Fruit bearing is a by-product of our union with Christ (Burge, 2000:427).

Carson opines that the fruit in the vine represents everything that is the product of effective prayer in Jesus’ name – obedience to Jesus’ commands, experience of Jesus’ joy and witness to the world (1991:516).

Barrett goes too far when he suggests that the prayer of a truly obedient Christian cannot fail, since he can ask nothing contrary to the will of God (1978:470). James makes it clear, in writing to believers, that we can and do ask, but we do not receive because we are asking with the wrong motives (James 4:3).

The Son’s ‘High Priestly Prayer’ to the Father (John 17)

The longest prayer of Jesus recorded in any gospel is part of the upper room discourse and sounds climactically like a final will and testament before the Passion. It is a passionate prayer that gives us a glimpse of His heart. A commentary written in 1898 contains these words that still ring true: ‘No attempt to describe the prayer can give a just idea of its sublimity, its pathos, its touching yet exalted character, its tone of tenderness and triumphant exaltation’ (Milligan & Mouton, as cited in Morris, 1992:634). The prayer is a summary of Jesus’ earthly ministry, and it reviews and consolidates His mission (Burge, 2000:461). It cannot be compared with any other prayer uttered in a situation of farewell (Ridderbos, 1997:548). While at the wedding in Cana as recorded in John 2:4 (Bible, 1984), Jesus told His mother ‘My time has not yet come’. But here in the upper room, His ‘time’ had come (Mounce, 2007:598).

The high priestly prayer of Jesus can be broken down into four sections: (1) Jesus prays for Himself; (2) Jesus prays for His disciples; (3) Jesus prays for all believers and (4) Jesus prays for those not yet believing.

- **Jesus Prays for Himself**

Jesus uses the term 'Holy Father' only here in the Gospels. Almost uncharacteristically, He asks the Father for a return of His glory. He petitions the Father to reverse the self-emptying entailed in the incarnation and to restore the pre-incarnate splendour that He had with the Father (Carson, 1991:554). The Apostle Paul in Philippians 1:7 eloquently describes this intentional humility by Christ by saying He emptied Himself (NASB) or 'stripped Himself' (Amplified) or 'emptied Himself' (NIV) of that glory. Now, in Jesus' prayer, He asks the Father for a return of that glory. John 1:14 speaks of the disciples having a glimpse of that glory: 'glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth' (Bible, 1977).

Everything is traced back to the Father: He has assigned the work, He has given the people, He is the one to whom Jesus is returning and He is the recipient of Jesus' petition (Kostenberger, 2004:490).

- **Jesus Prays for His Disciples**

Three themes emerge from Jesus' prayer for His disciples. The first is protection by the power of God's name (John 17:11). Having received these specific disciples from the Father, Jesus reports that they have been protected and He prays for their further protection against the world.

The second theme is possession of the full measure of joy (v. 13). Jesus prays that the disciples would receive the full measure of joy.

The third theme is sanctification by the truth of God's Word (v. 17). The believers' consecration serves the purpose of preparing them for their God-given mission in the world (Kostenberger, 2004:496). Ridderbos points out that they do not consecrate themselves to service for God away from the world, but rather they consecrate themselves in the act of entering into the world (1997:555). Jesus was uniquely consecrated by the Father and sent by Him into the world (10:36) to bring the world into revelation of the Father and His saving sovereignty. His entire ministry was a fulfilment

of that calling, and now He stands in the hour of the final accomplishment of both ends. He therefore hands over the mission to His men whom He has prepared for the task (Beasley-Murray, 1999:300).

- **Jesus Prays for All Believers**

He prays for those not yet believers that they may be one. He also prays that the believers may be brought to complete unity. Once unified, believers will be able to bear witness to the true identity of Jesus as the Sent One of God (Kostenberger, 2004:499). The basis of this prayer is rooted in the being of God and is revealed in Christ and in the redemptive action of God in action. The prayer 'that they may be one' accordingly is defined as 'that they may be in us' (Beasley-Murray, 1999:302). Furthermore, He prays that the world may believe through that unity. Finally, He prays that the love of the Father for the Son may be in the believers. This is the fulfilment of the ancient hope that God would dwell in the midst of His people (Carson, 1991:571).

The Son's Relationship to the Spirit

Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit, reminding the reader that the Spirit overshadowed His mother (Luke 1:35), descended upon Him at His baptism (3:22), led Him into the wilderness (4:1), anointed Him for His mission (4:18) and directed His activities (Vinson, 2008:331). Jesus maintained a sinless life as He relied day by day on the power of the Holy Spirit given Him through the agency of prayer.

The Son's Role in Intercession

Jesus prayed to the Father on our behalf. When Jesus said to Simon, even repeating his name, 'I have prayed for you that you might not fall', He gives us a glimpse into His pre-glorification intercessory role. Concerning after His ascension, we know from Hebrews 7:25, 'He always lives to make intercession' (Bible, 1977).

Because of the mediatory work of Christ on the cross (John 16:23), we can ask the Father directly in the name of the Son, and in doing so, Jesus says, 'your joy will be complete' (John 16:24; Bible, 1984).

In John 14:12, Jesus makes an audacious promise that ‘greater things than these’ will occur because Jesus goes to the Father. Then Jesus reminds us that ‘I will do whatever you ask in My name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask Me for anything in My name, and I will do it’ (John 14:14), because in this context, He is ‘going to the Father’ (14:12). Putting Jesus’ statement regarding Simon together with Job 1 and 2, we glean that the Son is an advocate for us, along with the Spirit, to the Father. This reality increases the potential for greater spiritual victory.

The Father’s Relationship to Son and Role in Prayer

Everything proceeds from the Father. He sovereignly rules the world. Specifically, He decides where to work, chooses disciples and commissions, and sends and sanctifies workers in addition to assigning the work. He put the plan of salvation into motion all on the basis and in the context of unconditional love. Prayer rises to the Father about all these things, and His role is to grant requests based on His sovereign will, the advocacy of the Son, intercession of the Spirit and union of the believer with the Son. He takes the lead on the functioning of the Trinity as a model of human relationships leading to intimacy in prayer.

- **Affirmation of the Father’s Voice at Baptism**

The Trinity is evident and active in the baptism of Jesus by John. The Spirit descends on Jesus in the form of a dove – partially as a sign to John that this, indeed, was the Son of God. ‘Then a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased”’ (Luke 3:22; Bible, 1984).

- **Affirmation at the Transfiguration**

We unambiguously see the love and affirmation of the Father to the Son during the transfiguration. Prayer is the context for the miracle of the transfiguration. Through the use of the participial form, Luke records that ‘while Jesus was praying, He was transfigured’ (Green, 1997:380). Luke identifies Jesus as the Son and the Chosen One,

while Matthew and Mark's versions record an additional command to 'listen to Him' instead of public opinion (Garland, 2011:395).

The Spirit's Role and Activity in Prayer

Ultimately, the Spirit's role is to mediate the presence of the risen Christ (Hunt, 2011:367). To that end, the Spirit performs several functions as it relates to prayer according to Romans 8:26, 27. In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. Moreover, He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

The first function of the Spirit is He intercedes for us:

- **With deep interaction.** According to Romans 8:26, the Spirit intercedes for us with groaning too deep for words: the intermingling of the Holy Spirit's indwelling in our human spirits.
- **With empathy:** The Spirit empathizes with us, because in our weakness, we do not know how to pray.
- **With intelligence:** He searches our hearts and minds to know if our actions and intercessions are in accordance with the will of God (Romans 8:27).

It was the Spirit that led Jesus into the wilderness (Reference).

Jesus' Practice of Prayer

Jesus not only taught much about prayer, He modelled it. In this section, three areas of His personal modelling of prayer will be examined: (1) giving thanks in prayer, (2) praying all night, (3) Jesus' prayer vigil in the Garden of Gethsemane.

- **Giving Thanks in Prayer:** As mentioned above, giving thanks is part of the traditional Jewish blessing 'Praise unto Thee, O Lord our God, King of the world, who makes bread to come forth from the earth' (Witherington, 2006:288). To give thanks means 'to speak well of, to praise' (Morris, 1992:658). Jesus is also adhering to Jewish tradition, as we learn from the

Talmud that 'a man is forbidden to taste anything before saying a blessing over it' (Ber.35a quoted in Morris, 1992:379).

Jesus also gave thanks to the Father before raising Lazarus in appreciation and acknowledgement that the prayer for raising His friend was already answered (John 11:41-42).

- **Praying all Night:** Instances of Jesus spending all night in prayer are found in two gospels: Matthew (14:23) and Luke (6:12-13). Stein points out that the tense of the verb translated 'often withdrew' (imperfect periphrastic) emphasizes that this was His regular practice (1992:173). Bock notes that the term used in Greek designating the 'all night' prayer time is unique in the NT and that a technical term for an all-night prayer vigil is found in the Septuagint (Job 2:9c) and Josephus (Jewish Antiquities 6.311; Bock, 1994-96:1.540). The Greek words 'all night he continued' express persevering energy (Hughes, 2012:212). Carroll adds that the periphrastic participle 'He was withdrawing' following the imperfect tense of v. 15 suggests that this was not a singular occurrence but a customary pattern of Jesus' ministry (2012:129). The church father Ambrose opines, 'He passed the whole night in prayer. A model is given to you. A form is prescribed which you must imitate' (cited in Just, 2003:101).

Luke's recording of Jesus' prayer is also unique in that it was a 'prayer to God'. This is an objective genitive and it conveys that the prayer is given to God (Bock, 1994:478).

Why did Jesus need to pray in the first place? Hughes points out that, although Jesus was God, He placed the exercise of His attributes at the discretion of His Father (2012:213). Prayer is how Jesus dealt with both decisions and opposition. His all-night prayer time in Luke was held just before the choosing of the twelve disciples. Pope Benedict XVI insightfully comments, 'the calling of the disciples is a prayer event: it is as if they were begotten in prayer, in intimacy with the Father' (Jeffrey, 2012:90). Reflecting on the choice of disciples three years later, Jesus states in prayer to the Father in John 17:6, 'You gave them to me, and they have kept Your word' (Bible, 1984). Augustine

wrote ‘Judas the traitor is chosen, not unwittingly, but knowingly – for Christ has indeed taken to Himself the weakness of man, and therefore refused not even this share of human infirmity. He was willing to be betrayed by His own apostle, that you, when betrayed by your friend, may more calmly bear your mistaken judgment, your kindness thrown away’ (cited in Jeffrey, 2012:80).

- **Prayer in the Garden**

Jesus’ experience of agonizing prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane is an exceptional demonstration of theology in action. As Jesus approaches the cross, He is tempted to seek an alternative to the sin-bearing function of the cross. Jesus brings the disciples with Him to Gethsemane, and then for a pivotal moment, He brings His ‘inner circle’ (Peter, James and John) further along. These three disciples were also with Him to see the transfiguration and the healing of the little girl. After leaving the three, Jesus goes on alone to pray. He falls to the ground, which is a common posture in special circumstances of worship, fear or submission (Hagner, 1995:783). His personal well-being is at the lowest ebb. As mentioned previously, while some translations describe Jesus as ‘distressed’ or ‘troubled’, Blomberg suggests these adjectives are too weak as the Greek means literally ‘overwhelmed with sorrow’, suggesting more appropriate translations might be Phillips’ ‘terrible distress and misery’ and Weymouth’s ‘crushed with anguish’ (1992:394). Mounce suggests that a more accurate translation is ‘The sorrow in my heart is so great that it almost crushes me’ (1991:243). Nolland adds that this ‘grieving unto death’ is not literal but a marker of intensity (2005:1098) in spite of Luke’s account in 22:44 of sweat as ‘drops of blood’ (Bible, 1984).

What is the cause of this pain? Jesus asks for the ‘cup to be removed’: metaphorically referring to the ‘cup of God’s wrath’ (Witherington, 2006:490), as the judgment for sin of the world is placed on Christ at the cross. Thus begins His wrestling in prayer.

Jesus addresses the Father as ‘*Abba*, Father’, a most intimate title that Paul later uses (Romans 8:15). Jesus prays to the Father three times with an increasing, albeit difficult, acceptance of the Father’s will. Three times is a common number around the crucifixion

and resurrection of Christ. For example, Peter denied Christ three times and Jesus questioned Peter's love three times.

There is disagreement as to whether the three prayers of Jesus are the same or if they show an increasing acceptance of the will of God to go via the cross. Blomberg states that Jesus' second time of asking, 'If it be possible, can I not drink this cup' is a negative adverb, meaning that Jesus is now closer to accepting the suffering mapped out for Him (1992:396). Mounce (1991:244) suggests that Matthew's working indicates a growing acceptance of the cross as God's pre-determined will: 'May Your will be done'. Turner adds that Jesus' second prayer implies a deeper resignation to the Father's will, as there is no request for the cup to pass away, only agreement with the Father that the cup can pass away only if Jesus drinks it (2008:632). Meanwhile, D.A. Carson, while acknowledging other scholars' noting of the progression of acceptance, states that Matthew said that Jesus said the same thing, and the variations between verses 39 and 42 must be incidental (2010:610).

Throughout the three prayers, Jesus is supernaturally strengthened. He models what the prophet Isaiah said in Isaiah 40:30-31 that upon 'hoping' or 'waiting' on God, He renews our strength (Bible, 1984). Jesus has received His answer, and His resolve has been strengthened through prayer (Nolland, 2005:1005). Barker aptly points out 'Jesus prays in agony, but now rises with poise and advances to meet His betrayer' (1994:122).

The inner circle included those most enthused and confident about 'sharing the cup' as found in Matthew 20:22, 23. Gethsemane revealed them as colossal failures as supporters of Jesus and demonstrated their sinful self-confidence and the weakness of their flesh. After their performance in Gethsemane, the disciples' desertion at Jesus' arrest is no surprise (Turner, 2008:632). However, both despite and because of their failure, Jesus shares three rich seminal teachings on prayer with the weary disciples.

The first teaching is recorded in Matthew 26:40 in the form of a question to Peter: 'Could you not tarry one hour'? (Bible, 1984). This rhetorical question to Peter carries with it a

stern rebuke (Hagner, 1995:783). While directed to Peter, the tense is plural and includes all of the three disciples (Carson, 2010:610). The time limit given within the rebuke suggests a benchmark that could be attained – and one that was not a long time by Jesus' standards (Blomberg, 1992:395).

In Matthew 26:41, Jesus says to His disciples, 'Watch and pray, that you do not enter into temptation' (Bible, 1984). To what temptation is Jesus referring? Jesus was battling the temptation to avoid the cross (Witherington, 2006:492). The disciples' challenge was the temptation to fall away from Him. Kierkegaard says Peter has not yet learned to 'will one thing' (Hare, 1993:302). The verb tenses of 'watch and pray' are present imperatives implying continuous action (Mounce, 1991:244). Dickson states that, seeing we have no strength of our own to resist temptation, the only recourse is to prevail and ask God for His assistance (1981:368).

In Matthew 26:41, Jesus also says, 'The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak' (Bible, 1984). Jesus is clearly speaking here of the human spirit, not the Holy Spirit. Jesus' proverb is often casually reapplied as an excuse for human shortcoming. Instead, Jesus' intended meaning is an incentive for His disciples to resist temptation (Blomberg, 1992:396). The word 'temptation' is the same one Jesus uses in the Lord's Prayer where the goal is not to escape but to attain victory: 'be on guard and pray for divine help that you may resist temptation when put to the test' (Hare, 1993:302). Jesus models putting this into practice by 'praying through' His temptation.

What can we observe in Jesus' practice of prayer?

Jesus' Teaching on Prayer

In addition to practising prayer, Jesus was a master teacher of the many facets of prayer. Categories of His teaching in this study include The Lord's Prayer, the prayer and command of faith, persistent prayer, discreet prayer and fasting and prayer for the sending out of labourers. These have been chosen because of their potential significance to the furtherance of mission, the birth and strengthening of the church, and impact upon civil society.

- **The Lord's Prayer**

The Lord's Prayer has been and remains the greatest prayer of the church (Hughes, 2001). Both in Matthew's and Luke's rendering of the Lord's Prayer, the overall context is the Lord's stand against hypocrisy. Whether it be giving to the needy or praying (standing on the street corners, which is normally a very busy place and not normally a site for religious activities; Morris, 1992:140), the message is clear: pretention and show related to praying is anathema to the Lord. Prefacing Jesus' teaching on the Lord's Prayer in Matthew, the preferred context for prayer is to go into a prayer closet in private. The secret of act of praying, as opposed to the grandstanding hypocrites who have their earthly reward of being noticed, will constantly engender favour and reward in heaven. Morris articulately states that prayer is to be in communion with God, not a means of increasing ones' reputation (1992:139).

The prayer closet in a Near Eastern home would be similar to a pantry for food storage: the only room with a latch on it so that a person could have total privacy (Witherington, 2006:143). This is polar opposite to the praying for public show and adulation that Jesus so despised.

Babbling was not the way to impress God either. Gentiles thought that praying longer was the way to be heard by a deity (Morris, 1992:141). While Jesus prayed all night, and repeated His prayer, the motive of praying long so that God will hear was actively discouraged.

The context in Luke, in addition to the anti-hypocrisy message, has Jesus being approached by the disciples and them asking Him to teach them how to pray (Luke 11:1; Bible, 1984). It is ironic that they did not ask for more help in exorcism or more effective miracle working powers! The disciples' association with Jesus, and their watching of His own prayer life, spurred them to ask 'teach us to pray'. Jesus responds with: 'He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be Your Name, Your kingdom come'"' (Luke 11:2; Bible, 1984).

Hughes suggests that the Matthew and Lucan versions are two separate teachings on prayer and that Jesus was seeking to set a pattern for prayer rather than a rigid insistence on form (2001:414). Most scholars, however, agree that it is the same teaching with a greater emphasis on community in Matthew's version.

Jesus prefaces His talk by saying literally 'whenever you pray', and Luke saw this as the pattern for all Christian prayer: all occasions of prayer should be approached in this manner (Stein, 1992).

Nolland points out that the prayer is clearly communal, in conscious identification with or on behalf of a corporate body. Nevertheless, the prayer in verses 5 and 6 can be individual as well (2005:286). The prayer includes five petitions. The first two affirm divine honour as power and the last three ask for the divine provision of food, mercy and protection (Carroll, 2012:250).

Matthew starts with 'Our Father' while Luke records the prayer just starting with 'Father'. 'Our Father' is Greek for the Aramaic '*Abba*'. The more informal '*Abba*' in Luke characterized Jesus' prayers and was a great contribution to Jewish prayer theology, which was more formal (Osborne, 2010:227). The concept of God as 'Our Father' (as a daddy, dear father or papa) was revolutionary in Jesus' day, with the Old Testament writers seeing God in a more sovereign–Creator way (Hughes, 2001:154). The word '*Yahweh*', the covenant name of God, was never to be repeated, and so the name Jehovah was invented. Jews were focused on the sovereignty and transcendence of God. Meanwhile, Witherington notes that this way of addressing God is unprecedented in the period before Jesus: showing not only Jesus' intimate relationship with the Father, but His expectations that His disciples should have an intimate relationship, too (2006:145). Calling God 'Father' harkens back to the original announcement of the angel Gabriel to Mary concerning Jesus: 'He will be called the Son of the Most High' said Gabriel to Mary, and 'the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David' by virtue of promises to Abraham and David (Luke 1:32; Bible, 1984).

'Hallowed be Your Name' (Matthew 6:9; Bible, 1984). Names in the East were much more significant than they were in Western culture. The names and qualities associated with it were bound together (Morris, 1992:144). Hallowing God's name refers to God's reputation and honour: that God might receive the honour and prayer He deserves (Stein, 1992:325). At the end of a typical Jewish synagogue service, the following is said, 'Exalted and hallowed be His great name in the world which He created according to His will....may He let this kingdom rule in your lifetime and in your days and in the lifetime of the whole house of Israel speedily and soon. And to this say: Amen' (Garland, 2011:204). One can see the similarities between this prayer and the 'Disciples Prayer', as many commentators prefer to call the Lord's Prayer. Interestingly, the early church forbade non-Christians to pray this prayer (Garland, 2011:204). Osborne says it is like saying 'May your name be kept sacred' (2010:228). To keep your name holy is a prayer for people to do the right thing, and therefore for God to do whatever God can do to make that happen (Vinson, 2008:369).

'Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven' (Matthew 6:10; Bible, 1984). Luz contributes to the thinking on this phrase when he suggests that this is not only a petition, but also the intercessor actively associating himself with this will (2007:320). The kingdom of God, one of Jesus' favourite themes, is 'here' and breaking in under Christ's reign, but not yet fully consummated until the end of the age (Garland, 2011:204). Praying this prayer aligns ourselves with this will and promotes the fulfilment of that specific will. Osborne adds that this prayer asks for the present kingdom to manifest itself in new ways and bring the kingdom to its fullness and completion (2010:228).

Green (1997:442) helpfully mentions that only God can overturn the owners at work in the world and establish His universal reign, so the faithful do well to join persons like Simeon and Anna in their hopeful anticipation of the decisive divine intervention. At the same time, with the advent of Jesus, the kingdom is already present and advancing. Nolland suggests that this petition is eschatologically oriented with no parallels to the

reference to the 'coming' in Jewish literature (1993:614). France notes that this is the most futuristic reference to the kingdom in Matthew's gospel (2007:247). A neglected point concerning the kingdom is that, in context, the hidden presence of God's kingdom is preparing for a more public demonstration, as shown by the mustard seed and the yeast (France, 2007:246). The doxology added to the end of the prayer points out the reality that the disciples who have just prayed that God's kingdom may come declare immediately afterward that it is a reality (246). It is a prayer for God's kingship not to be a reality per se, but to be fully implemented: highlighting the 'already- but not yet here' tension of the kingdom. Hughes more specifically says that the tense of the verb 'come' refers to a decisive time in the future when the kingdom will come once and for all: the second coming of Christ (2015:419). So there is a future dimension, but also a present one, for Jesus brought the kingdom with Him (Hughes, 2015:419). To pray "your kingdom come" is a commitment to keeping on following Him' (Hughes, 2015:420).

'Give us this day our daily bread' (Matthew 6:11; Bible, 1977) reflects the lifestyle of many first century workers who were paid one day at a time – living literally day by day. A missed day of work could mean no food to eat (Garland, 2011:205). The general consensus among scholars is that bread was a word meaning not only 'bread', but also all that is needed in the physical realm. Antiochian interpreters and Gregory of Nyssa interpreted the bread literally as the food necessary for life (Luz, 2007:320-321). Osborne shares that Jews prayed in the morning for today's bread (2008:229). France doubts that there is any eschatological significance to the Lord's Prayer: in general, discounting those who would make reference to a messianic banquet of a return of manna (2007:249) by saying this bread is literal elsewhere in the gospel. Hughes, however, disagrees and suggests that 'give us this day our daily bread' is also a request for the spiritual bread characteristic of our eternal state (2015:423), citing the context of other futuristic parts of the Lord's Prayer.

'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors' (Matthew 6:12; Bible, 1984). This is the only clause in the Lord's Prayer. Some suggest the debts are literal:

rejected by the fact that forgiveness is asked by God, not by man. To ask to be forgiven without forgiving others is rejected by the parable of Matthew 18:23-25 (Bible, 1984). There the servant who had his substantial debts ‘forgiven’, subsequently demanded repayment from another servant, resulting in harsh condemnation from the Master.

Nolland points out that debt is an image for sin in Matthew 18:23-25 and Luke 7:41-43 (1993:620). Witherington suggests that the real gist of the matter here is ‘forgive us, just as we on a lesser scale forgive our debtors/trespassers’ (2006:147), and that an unforgiving Christian is an oxymoron with a vital connection between the horizontal and vertical aspects of our relationship with God.

‘And lead us not into temptation’ (Matthew 6:13; Bible, 1984). The word ‘temptation’ can mean trial or testing (Hughes, 2015:426). The word ‘lead’ means ‘to carry something into a place’ so that lead does not do justice to the weight of the word (Vinson, 2008:373) . . . ‘don’t let us succumb to temptation or give us strength to resist’ (Osborne, 2010:230). Witherington says this petition is asking that God will protect a person from entering into a situation of temptation (2006:146). Stein suggests the rendering of ‘Do not cause us to enter into temptation’ or ‘Keep us from yielding to temptation’ (1992:327). Marshall notes that the verb reflects a Hebrew causative and that the negative qualifies the idea of entry, meaning ‘cause us not to succumb to temptation’ (1978b:462). Matthew adds ‘from the power of evil’ (Bible, 1984). Green adds an informative thought when he says that Jesus advises His disciples to ask God for the favour of being excused from ‘further testing’ (1997:444). Vinson says it is ‘asking God not to plunk us down in dangerous territory’ (2008:373). Hughes suggests the prayer is to deliver us from ‘overpowering temptation’ knowing that we are liable to succumb to such enticement and assault (2015:426).

- **Jesus’ Teaching on the Prayer and Command of Faith**

Throughout the Gospels, we see a remarkable amount of material associated with ‘faith’. As the New Testament continues, we find the meaning of the word ‘faith’ is expanded to include additional meanings. Three main categories of faith are: (1)

'trust/belief' (i.e. Matthew 9:9, 'According to your faith let it be done to you'; Bible, 1984); (2) as a description for trusting in Christ for salvation, (i.e. Romans 3:22, 'This righteousness is given through faith in Christ to all who believe'; Bible, 1984) and (3) as a synonym for Christianity (i.e. 1 Timothy 6:10, 'For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs'; Bible, 1984).

Jesus' teaching on faith related to prayer is critical for understanding mission advancement. Jesus speaks distinctly about the 'command of faith' and the 'prayer of faith' although they are closely connected. Two incidents provide a backdrop for Jesus' teaching: the transfiguration and the triumphal entry.

In the first account, Jesus and the three disciples accompanying Him come down the mountain and encounter a disturbance (Mark 2). The father of a seemingly epileptic boy has suspicions that his son is possessed by demonic forces. He asks the disciples to exorcise them from him to no avail. Exasperated, Jesus rebukes them for being an unbelieving and perverse generation that seemingly blocks the exorcism from happening. Then, with a word from Jesus, the boy is delivered and healed.

All four gospels record the transfiguration, but only two of them describe the incident of a desperate father bringing his epileptic son to Jesus for healing. Additionally, it appears as though Mark's version is redacted from Matthew's, with France suggesting it is one-half the length and eliminates the father's struggle with faith (2007:658). Nonetheless, Jesus expounds upon the importance of the command of faith and links the prayer of faith in this story.

Key elements of this story include: (1) the father's description of his own faith, (2) the disciples' inability to exorcise the demon and Jesus' diagnosis of it and (3) Jesus teaching on the importance of prayer and faith. First, regarding the father's description of his own faith, the father of the afflicted boy and Jesus have two discourses. In the course of them, we find that the boy has been afflicted since childhood, and it is a

particularly nasty condition. The father says 'if' you can heal the boy (Mark 9:22). Jesus takes exception to this and appears exasperated. He claims that the 'unbelieving' and 'perverse' generation has contributed to this hard-heartedness and lack of faith. Then He adds this staggering promise, 'All things are possible to those who believe' and 'Nothing is impossible to those who believe' (Mark 9:23). To which the father cries out, 'I believe, help my unbelief'. Perhaps the disciples' inability to exorcise the demon contributed to the father's lack of faith. The father's "mustard like seed faith" is exhibited and he pleads for Jesus to help him with his unbelief' (Stein, 2008:434).

In this situation, the father recognizes he needs Jesus' assistance to go further in his faith, as the disciples did when they said, 'Lord, increase our faith' (Collins, 2007:438). The father's trust is the crucial factor in the healing of his son. This response is an exhortation and an expression of 'assurance' that evokes faith. 'All things are possible to him who believes', Jesus responds (Mark 9:23; Bible, 1984). According to the Markan Jesus, trust or faith is a quality that can endow human beings with divine power (Collins, 2007:438).

The father's reply gives insight into the nature of faith. The 'I believe, help my unbelief' statement is paradoxical, but not really contradictory. He has shown a measure of faith by bringing his son to Jesus in the first place as well as by uttering a cry for help. He has come to Jesus not because he trusts Him, but because he is willing to try anything (Williamson, 1983:165).

Second, privately after the crowd leaves, and upon going to a house, the disciples ask Jesus why they could not exorcise the demon. Jesus replies 'prayer' in Mark and 'lack of faith' in Matthew. Jesus had previously expressed His disgust with this generation because of their desire for a sign. This time, He directs His criticisms against the disciples because they associate the power that Jesus gave them to exorcise demons with providing such a sign. This misuse of power made it impossible to cure the man's

son (Hauerwas, 2006:158). Jesus describes the 'miracle blockers' as the culture of unbelief, impurity and lack of prayer and faith.

Third, Jesus makes the following statement about faith/trust/belief: 'Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, "Go, throw yourself into the sea", and it will be done' (Matthew 21:21; Bible, 1984).

The expression 'the moving of mountains' was proverbial amongst Jews to accomplish something of very great difficulty (Morris, 1992:449). Paul speaks of it in 1 Corinthians 13:2, 'If I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love...' (Bible, 1984). O'Donnell is categorical by stating that what is needed is not more 'gumption', but humble faith in Jesus (2013:486). John speaks of Jesus' words that 'apart from Him you can do nothing (John 15:5) but if you abide in Him and His words and His power abide in you, ask whatever you wish [according to God's will and for His glory], and it will be done for you' (John 15:7; Bible, 1977).

- **Jesus' Teaching on Persistence in Prayer**

One of the key themes of Jesus' teaching concerning prayer is persistence. He continues after His *magna carta* teaching on the Lord's Prayer to further the principle of persistence to relate to all facets of prayer. He uses the teaching of 'ask, seek, and knock'; the parable of the friend at midnight and the reason for persistence (because of God's benevolence) and the parable of the persistent widow – which is unique only to Luke.

Luke 10 is full of action where Jesus sends out the 72, tells the parable of the Good Samaritan and has a social visit at the home of Mary and Martha where He seizes on the occasion to teach about 'a better thing'. Luke then chooses to insert Jesus' pivotal teaching about prayer after this.

In Luke 18, the context is decidedly different. Jesus purposefully heads into Jerusalem for the Passion events. He finishes a discourse on the 'end of days' and the signs which

will accompany that day. Jesus links Chapters 17 and 18 by asking the question at the end of the parable: 'When the Son of Man comes back, will he find faith on the earth?' (Luke 18:8; Bible, 1984). By doing so, He links persistent, justice-seeking prayer to prayer for the return of the Son of Man.

There are four key passages regarding Jesus' teaching on persistence in prayer. The first has to do with the friend at midnight. Jesus now applies the teaching of the Lord's Prayer with an illustration of the friend in need. A visitor has dropped in unexpectedly at midnight, and according to the dictates of Middle Eastern hospitality during the Palestinian culture of Jesus, the host must greet his/her guests with kisses, wash their feet and feed them, or be considered a no-account, uncivilized inhospitable lout who shames his/her mother (Vinson, 2008:378). In the host's world, bread was baked daily in ovens and the houses were usually small houses that backed on to one another. So the host goes to his neighbour and pounds on the door asking for three loaves of bread. The door would have had a wooden or iron bar placed through rings. In addition, the children are asleep with him in bed: a reply that reflects the likelihood that the whole family was sleeping on one mat, as was the custom. The neighbour expresses not so much a lack of ability to provide the food, but an unwillingness to do so because of the chaos it would cause (Bock, 1996:1058-59). Eventually, however, the neighbour gets up and gives the host what he asks for. Arnold (2010) suggests that this story is heavily influenced by the shame and honour culture of the day. Everyone's honour is at stake: the honour of the host, the sleeping friend and the entire village (Garland, 2011:469).

The point is that, if our friends answer importunate appeals, how much more will God who desires to give us the kingdom answer us if we ask Him persistently? (Luke 12:32; Craddock, 1990:154).

The parable does not have an explicit application. Two possible applications are: (1) God gives and (2) do not hesitate to go ahead and ask (Bovon, 2002:103).

Jesus encourages boldness in prayer. He teaches that prayer is founded on the goodness of God and lays hold of God's willingness. Prayer is not a spiritual crowbar or a jackhammer that pries open God's willingness to act. Fathers are supposed to give their children bread (Garland, 2011:473). On that theme, Bock adds that answers to prayer are not wrung out of the Father with much effort, as is water from a towel. He gives willingly (11:9-13) and His disciples are to make their requests boldly to God (Bock, 1996:1060).

Liefeld and Pao suggest an alternative thought by saying that persistence may have little to do with the ultimate meaning of this parable, but rather it should be interpreted as 'if in human circumstances a person pressed hard enough will respond to a request, even though reluctantly, surely God will answer and do so more graciously' (2005:206).

What is unique in this parable is that Jesus adds boldness to persistence. The word is difficult to translate, as it is a combination of boldness and shamelessness. The emphasis is less on persistence and more on boldness or the nerve of the request (Bock, 1996:1058-1059).

The second key passage emphasizes the imperatives of asking, seeking and knocking. Immediately after sharing the parable of the persistent neighbour, Jesus launches into a teaching concerning the principles of the parable. The verbs asking, seeking and knocking are all in the present imperative tense: implying a command of constant and repeated asking, seeking and knocking. Additionally, the three verbs come in complimenting pairs: (1) asking and receiving; (2) seeking and finding and (3) knocking and the door opening.

Stein contradicts conventional thinking by suggesting that it is not an imperative of the condition of asking (you must ask in order to receive), but an imperative of condition (if you ask, you will indeed receive), for the saying is an invitation to prayer, not an order to do so (1992:327).

Related to searching, Karl Barth poignantly asks: 'so why search? Searching is the sign that human beings stay in their place and remain aware of their dependence upon God' (as cited in Bovon, 2002:110).

Knocking could be portrayed as a picture of coming into God's presence and the door being opened (Bock, 1996:1061). In the knocking, Bock sees a picture of coming into God's presence and receiving blessing with the response that the door will indeed be open (1996:1060-61). The image of the door appears elsewhere in Luke and refers to salvation. Jesus warns that it is a narrow door and can be shut tight (Luke 13:25-26). John, in Revelation 3:20, refers to Jesus standing at the door of a believer and asking if He can come in. Dietrich Bonhoeffer aptly comments 'He closes and opens. But the disciples must ask, they ask, seek and knock and then God will hear them' (as cited in Bovon, 2002:110).

Interestingly, there is no mention of God's sovereignty in this passage. The responsibility for the answer lies in the initiative of the pray-er. Augustine comments that the parallel assurance of the next verse is explicit: God would not so encourage us to ask where He is not willing to give (Sermon 108, as cited in Jeffrey, 2012:157).

While Marshall and Stein both refer to the three pairs as synonymous parallelism in which the same essential thought is repeated rhythmically (Stein, 1992:327; Marshall, 1978a); Hughes suggests that the verbs are an increasingly intensive cascade and the present imperative tenses adds power (1998:420). To asking, one adds seeking, which requires action. To seeking, Jesus adds knocking, which with the imperative tense implies constant knocking (meaning perseverance; Hughes, 2015:420, 421).

The third key passage reveals the benevolence of God. To frame the 'why' of asking in such a bold and relentless manner, Jesus switches again to an illustration of paternity to demonstrate God's willingness to answer such a request.

While the parable earlier was on friendship, now the image has moved to kinship. We sense a crescendo: God is our friend, and He is above all our Father. To friendship,

kinship adds begetting, authority, responsibility and permanent protection (Bovon, 2002:106). Garland adds that the parable argues from the lesser to the greater. The point is that no parent will give what is deadly to a child (2011:470). Fitzmeyer gives a different angle by suggesting that the implication is that a father would not deceive a child by giving him a serpent (1985:915).

Vinson opines that the promise of the Spirit is a surprise. One suspects that Luke has introduced the promise of the gift of the Spirit to look ahead to where Jesus promises the Spirit. This means Spirit-filling and prayer are mutually causative and result from fervent prayer (Acts 4:31; c.f. Vinson, 2008:377).

Garland adds that the Holy Spirit is the channel of God's grace and blessing (1:15, 1:35; 4:18; 10:21), and that God's best gift to those who pray is the Holy Spirit (2011:471).

Ultimately, the reason we can pray in the first place; ask, seek and knock and be almost shameless in our asking is that we have a Heavenly Father who loves His children and wants to give good gifts to them.

The fourth key passage contains the story of the persistent widow. In Luke 18, Jesus tells the parable of a widow who initially cannot get justice, but who perseveres until she does. The widow represents the incarnation of dependence and social fragility. She is alone and at the mercy of the excesses, self-interests and pressures exerted on her by others more powerful. The widow is part of the triad of 'alien, orphan and widow' who are emblems of the most vulnerable parts of the society (Bovon, 2002:533). She keeps coming to the judge – the imperfect implies repeated action in the past (Vinson, 2008:583). She must go into the forbidding male realm of the public courts. Persistence is her only weapon.

The typical court scene in the Middle East was not marked by sombre decorum but by a great din of shouting and pushing. This woman would be heard only because she was the shrillest (Garland, 2011:710). This parable is similar to the parable of the friend at

midnight, which presents prayer as continual and persistent: hurling petitions against long periods of silence.

The judge in Jesus' parable disobeyed the two primary commandments to love God and people, but he neither feared God nor had respect for people. On an established Jewish principle, judges are to defend widows, especially against an unjust adversary as found in Exodus 22:22-24 (Jeffrey, 2012:214). It is clear from these Old Testament injunctions that this judge was flagrantly ignoring these principles of justice and behaviour.

He changes his mind, however, in verse 7, and grants justice. He states that the widow will 'keep coming and wear me out' by using the Greek word *upoplazo*. Literally, it means "hit under the eye" - or "a black eye" - an expression borrowed from boxing' (Bovon, 1992:535). Paul uses the word in 1 Corinthians 9:27 when he speaks of his personal discipline and says 'I pummel my body'. The judge wants only peace and to be freed of the widow's constant nagging. Figuratively, it means 'wear down or browbeat – bring someone into submission'. It could also mean 'slander'. The judge finally submits to the widow to avoid external discomfort and to avoid being personally humiliated.

It is important not to allow the interpretation to become trapped in a simple equation: unjust judge = God. Rather, the movement of the parable is from the lesser to the greater. If a cruel judge will give way to the unrelenting pressure of the widow, how much more will God listen to the prayers of the saints? The point of the parable as a whole is, 'if even a dishonest judge can be prevailed upon to do justice, how much more will the upright God listen to the persistent prayer of his own?' (Craddock, 1990:209).

The context for this exhortation is the danger that Christians might become disheartened in the midst of allocation before the return of the Son of Man to deliver them. It applies to the generation of Jesus' disciples who will endure tribulations because of their faith and those who enter the reign of God through many persecutions.

The verb 'disheartened' in Luke 18:1 can also mean to grow weary and used. In 2 Corinthians 4:1, 16, Paul says he does not lose heart though he is afflicted in every way.

Luke recognizes that God is going to delay. The parables compensate for this feeling of helplessness by clinging to Jesus' legacy: there is prayer and we are behooved to pray. God is faithful and He will intervene in the end.

The point of the parable as a whole is 'if even a dishonest judge can be prevailed upon to do justice, how much more will the upright God listen to the persistent prayer of his own?' (Fitzmeyer, 1985:1180). Tying the lesson into eschatology, Christians may become discouraged because of the Son of Man has not come to deliver them. Vinson suggests three main lessons from the parable: (1) 'Pray and not lose heart', (2) 'Will God not bring vindication and be patient to them?' and (3) 'Will the Son of Man find faith when He returns?' (2008:565).

Paul uses the same word 'disheartened' in 2 Corinthians 4:1–16, where Paul says he does not lose heart even though 'we are afflicted in every way' (verse 8; Bible, 1977).

Ironically, Jesus turns the table on those who might express exasperation with God's delay. When the Son of Man comes back, will He find faith? Will He see people praying for God to do something? Thus, the consoling message shifts to a warning of judgment (Garland, 2011:712).

- **Jesus' Teaching about Discreet Prayer and Fasting**

Few things triggered Jesus' anger like hypocrisy. In Matthew 23, Jesus unleashes a tirade against those who are either different on the outside than they are on the inside or those who do religious acts for selfish motives rather than as acts for God.

Witherington points out that doing acts of self-glorification that should be reserved for God are particularly offensive to Jesus (2006:141).

On the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus addresses a triad of religious observances that had degenerated into public shows of personal piety: (1) almsgiving, (2) prayer and (3) fasting. Regarding prayer and fasting, He warns in Matthew 6:7 against public prayer for the sake of being seen and also for the sake of 'being heard' (Bible, 1984). The antidotes for this temptation for human approbation of our acts of devotion to God are simple: discreetness and secrecy.

With insight and humour, Morris says people who pray (pray-ers) should have a single eye on God, not a side-glance at people who could be impressed (1992:141). This contrasts sharply with both 'Gentiles' and Pharisees who prayed loudly on street corners to be heard (Matthew 6:5-8), who prayed lengthy prayers as if to be especially heard by deity (Mark 12:40) and who drew attention to their haggard physical appearance while praying and fasting (Matthew 6:16).

Synagogue prayer was led by a member of the congregation who stood before the Ark of the Law, raised his hands and held forth. It was easy to become preachy and use all the right clichés, dramatic pauses and voice variations to impress the crowd (Hughes, 2001:149). Jesus gives an example of this kind of prayer in Luke 18:11,12: 'God I thank you that I am not like other men – robbers, evildoing, adulterers - or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get' (Bible, 1984).

Jesus is not against public praying. Rather, He is against public praying for showing off spirituality manifested in different forms. Bayly wryly points out that 'no person can foster the impression that he/she is great, then exalt a great God' (1993:174). Lane comments that giving attention to oneself indicates a loss of perspective of the honour of God, which in turn exposes a person to the searching judgement of God (1974:441).

The antidote for this prideful showing is discreet or secret prayer. Jesus encouraged the sincere pray-er in Matthew 6:6 to go into his or her prayer closet in secret (Bible, 1984) - typically the only 'locked room' in the house that ensured privacy (France, 2007:239). He promises that what is done in secret will be rewarded by the Father.

Fasting is a voluntarily restricting of food for the sake of some kingdom benefit. It is usually connected with prayer. Related to fasting, Jesus condemns a haggard appearance that would mark the physical fast (Matthew 6:16). Fasting was a practice seen throughout Jewish history. Pious Jews fasted voluntarily during times of religious devotion and especially prayer. Jesus fasted for forty days in the desert (Matthew 4:2) and spoke of the appropriateness of fasting after His death. He defended His disciples for not fasting when He was with them (Matthew 9:15). Witherington adds that, during Jesus' lifetime, His followers are in an eschatological era that calls for joy (2006:148). We read that the early church fasted and prayed during two occasions as found in Acts 13:2 (future direction and personnel) and Acts 14:23 (leadership). Other benefits include fasting as strengthening self-discipline. Hauerwas insightfully shares that to be drawn into a life of fasting is to learn to live without what one assumes one could not live without (2006:80). France observes that Jesus assumed that His disciples would fast, so the issue was not whether or not to do it but rather how to do it (2007:254).

Evidently Jesus saw some who sought to elicit sympathy and draw attention to themselves during their times of fasting. Fasting seems like a spiritual discipline particularly prone to hypocritical and exaggerated shows. Jesus' antidote to drawing attention to one's self during fasting is again for the discreet practice of the discipline. He directs His listeners in Matthew 6:17 to wash their faces and 'put oil on your head' (Bible, 1984) so it will not be public knowledge. Over one hundred years ago (1909), Plummer commented on fasting: 'The light of a Christian character will shine before men and win glory for God without the artificial aid of public advertisement. Ostentatious religion may have its reward here, but it receives none from God' (cited in Blomberg, 1992:122).

- **Jesus' Teaching on Praying for Labourers**

Matthew 9 is full of dramatic healings by Jesus, including the healing of the blind and mute man, the raising to life of a dead girl and the healing of the sick woman who

touched His garment. Jesus also issues a challenge of faith: the faith to believe in Him to do mighty works.

As we approach Matthew 9:35, we note the logical progression of Jesus' progression from going to seeing to feeling compassion to praying. Later, in the 'Great Commission', Jesus instructs His disciples to go, but first He models it here. He goes into the towns and villages, and upon seeing the needs of the people, has compassion on them and heals them. In light of the great need, Jesus instructs His followers to pray for additional workers (Matthew 9:38).

Jesus starts out as the sole missionary. Later, in Matthew 10, He makes His disciples partners in the work of preaching the gospel (Hare, 1993:109). Perhaps He seeks to arouse the same compassion He Himself felt by using two metaphors to describe those He was in contact with: sheep without a shepherd and fields white unto harvest.

Several Old Testament passages portray God's people as a flock neglected by shepherds (1 Kings 22:17; Jer. 23:1-6; Ezek. 34:1-10; Micah 5:2-4). In addition to their neglect, Jesus pointedly states in Matthew 9:36 they were 'harassed' and 'helpless' (Bible, 1984). Harassed means 'to torment, to oppress, to throw to the ground' (Luz, 2001:64). The pure number of needs was overwhelming – like a harvest. The solution to the helpless state of the sheep and the overwhelming needs was for Jesus to multiply His healing ministry through additional labourers. That came about through prayer.

Jesus shifts agricultural metaphors rapidly from Matthew 9:35 speaking of sheep to 9:38 speaking of crops. The harvest analogy was not new in Scripture, as it had been used, for example, in Numbers 27:17 to infer judgment (Witherington, 2006:207). With Matthew elsewhere using the harvest analogy related to judgment, commentators disagree if Jesus' words here are a veiled allusion for judgment or if is strictly related to missionary initiatives. It would appear to be more focused on the missionary endeavours (Turner, 2008:275).

What can we observe from Jesus' teaching on prayer as it relates to mission?

2.2.6 Prayer in the Early Church

How did the fledgling church respond to Jesus' example and teaching concerning prayer as individual church members and as a communal group? This section will examine the prayer life in the early church – the period of Christianity from commencement to the First Council of Nicaea in 325. The following categories will be examined: prayer in the Acts of the Apostles, the apostles at prayer, the Apostolic Fathers and the Anti-Nicene Fathers.

Prayer in the Book of Acts and the Jewish Influence

The books of Acts or the Acts of the Apostles (a commonly accepted and early title) is most likely written by Luke. Several 'we' passages point to the eyewitness verification of events. In the historical narrative genre, the date of writing is probably in the mid-60s AD to the mid-century (Chance, 2004:4). Notable themes include: Christianity connects with Judaism, the universal gospel, the community of faith and the providence of God as the mission of God is fleshed out.

Prayer as the basis for the work of the Spirit in Acts is a common theme in Luke. Twenty of the twenty-eight chapters speak of prayer in one context or another (Fernando, 1998:74). Notably, at almost every important turning point in the narrative of God's redemptive action in Acts, we find a mention of prayer (Acts 1:24; 8:14-17; 9:11-12; 10:4; 9, 30; 13:2-3; Peterson, 2009:118). Dunn believes that we should not be surprised about Luke's emphasis concerning prayer. Jesus was a man of prayer and He taught His disciples that prayer was a fundamental part of the Christian life (2009:201). Wall reiterates this point by stating that true believers gather to wait on the Lord and pray at critical junctures of the church's history in Luke's narrative in Acts (2002:44).

The key players of Acts continue with the Jewish prayer template and practices. We see fragments of their worship throughout the New Testament (Bradshaw, 2008:27). We read in Acts 3:1 about Peter and John going to the temple at the hour of prayer, most likely at 3:00 p.m. (Bible, 1984). The normal prayer times were morning, afternoon and

evening. In the first and last prayer times, the believers repeated the Shema (the blessing) as found in Deuteronomy 4:6-9 (Bible, 1984). The temple was a favourite place for the new believers to congregate, and they did not see this practice as contradictory to their belief in Jesus. At the same time, there is a growing emphasis on meeting/praying in believers' homes, with the house-based church seemingly taking on increasing importance as an equivalent for synagogue worship and prayer. Bruce adds that the community's prayers would follow Jewish models, but their content would be enriched because of the Christ-event (1988:73).

Prayer and the Birth of the Church

The church was birthed in prayer, with the disciples obeying Jesus' command not to leave Jerusalem but to stay there until they received 'power from on High' (Acts 1:4; Bible, 1984). It was while they were praying that the Holy Spirit fell on them, birthing the church. Luke states in Acts 1:14 that they joined together constantly in prayer (Bible, 1984). The meaning of the Greek verb *proskartwoew* means to be 'busily engaged in, devoted to'. The imperfect periphrastic tense both underscore the persistent and continuous nature of their prayers and the unanimity of the group (Schnabel, 2012:84). Polhill, quoting A.T. Robertson, says, 'They stuck to praying' (1992:27).

A noteworthy sidebar is that the disciples were focused on the task and not on their own interests (Schnabel, 2012:84). This single-minded focus on God, demonstrated through their obedience, had nurtured this unity - seemingly, a welcoming environment for the Spirit's birthing of the church. The word translated 'together' literally means 'with one mind or passion' and it is a favourite of Luke's (Fernando, 1998:74). 'Constantly' is often connected with prayer (Acts 1:14:2:2; 46, Romans 12:12, Colossians 4:2). It means 'resolute, sometimes obstinate, persistence', with the idea of 'prevailing prayer' coming from this word (Fernando, 1998:74). Can it be said that future 'movements' of the Spirit that are to be birthed are most optimal to happen with the combination of obedience, unity and focus of the participants in prayer?

Prayer as Part of the Fabric of the Church

In Acts 2:42-47, we see the first description of the early church. We see that the church was 'devoted' to prayers (2:42; Bible, 1984). 'Devoted' here is the same word that is used to describe the action of disciples at prayer in 1:14 (Fernando, 1998:119). The use of the definite article indicates that the literal meaning of 'The Prayers' likely means the Jewish set prayers, as would be repeated in the Temple. Additionally, since their eating together in households involved praising God, they doubtless prayed together in these groups, petitioning God about their own needs and those of others (Peterson, 2009:162).

The characteristics of the apostles teaching, the fellowship, breaking of bread and prayers are repeated throughout the Acts as the hallmarks of the ever-expanding people of God (Wall, 2002:71).

In Acts 3:1-11, we read the account of the lame man who is healed. The aftermath is that Peter and John are hauled before the Sanhedrin and are told in no uncertain terms to stop talking about this 'Jesus'. With Spirit-led boldness and wisdom, they reply, 'We cannot help but speak to what we have seen and heard' (4:20). The Jewish leaders are afraid of the crowd, for the man who was healed is over 40 years old (4:22). Upon their release, Peter and John return to the church.

In response to this significant development, the church responds by 'raising their voice to God' (Acts 4:24; Bible, 1984). Their prayer is composed of three parts: (1) words of praise to God (Acts 4:24); (2) narration of what has happened (Acts 4:5-29) and (3) the community's petition (Acts 4:29b-30).

Several points bear noting. First, the Sovereignty of God and their request are placed side by side in their petition. God's sovereignty is to be trusted and celebrated, not 'figured out' (Chance, 2004:79). Biblical positive thinking takes into account the enmity of the evil one to the things of God and the consequent suffering – but God will turn it to

good (Fernando, 1998:174). Part of God's sovereignty is for Him to notice their suffering: denoting God's concern (Schnabel, 2012:254).

Second, their confidence and unity in prayer are obvious marks of the Spirit's presence in their midst (Peterson, 2009:97). They speak unanimously with 'one voice' (Schnabel, 1998:254). Fernando, quoting J. A. Alexander from the nineteenth century, says 'one person prayed and the whole company gave audible assent – being together or in "one accord"' (1998:168).

Third, one would think they would petition God to be spared persecution, but instead they prayed for the advancement of the gospel and that they would have the same boldness as Peter⁶. Specifically, they prayed that God would 'stretch out His hands' – used only here in the New Testament but frequently in the Old Testament (Exodus 6:8; Numbers 14:30; Jeremiah 1:9; Zephaniah 1:4; Schnabel, 2012:260). What did they ask God to do? To perform signs and wonders.

Fourth, the response of God is immediate and noteworthy. It is a divine approbation of their prayer. The shaking of the room is reminiscent of the Pentecost experience. A further filling of the Spirit is another dramatic response: a divine empowerment so they could indeed speak the Word in the manner requested (Chance, 2004:80). They were already 'filled with the Spirit' at Pentecost, so this was a subsequent filling – giving them empowerment for witness and indicating confirmation of God's presence and help for the task of evangelism. Ephesians 5:18 is noted here with Paul's injunction to 'be filled with the Spirit' a present imperative that is referencing continual fillings.

In Acts 6 comes the first internal division of the church. It was said that the Greek-speaking widows were being felt to have been neglected in the daily distribution of food. Our concern here is the analysis of the apostles of their stated priority: the ministry of the Word and prayer.

⁶ I have found this to be a common experience in countries where believers are persecuted for their belief in the gospel.

Several points are worthy of observation. First, they were to be 'devoted to prayer' and the ministry of the Word (Bible, 1984). The TNIV translates it as, 'we will give our attention to' (Peterson, 2009:234). The 'logos' is a catchword for the full range of the prophet's tasks – interpretation of Scripture, the persuasive proclamation of the gospel and performance of the Spirit's signs and wonders (Wall, 2002:113). This 'devotion' expresses dependence on the Lord to receive boldness in speaking the Word, to protect His agents and to provide opportunities for the Word to be heard and believed (Peterson, 2009:234).

Second, in order for there to be devotion to these two tasks, there had to be 'subtraction': the waiting of tables. The result was the 'multiplication' of the church (Acts 6:7). One can presume that the opposite might have happened if the apostles had not outlined and acted upon their priorities. The church could have had a preoccupation with administrative details, and thus would have experienced the gradual weakening of spiritual power in the church and her diminished witness in the community.

Third, the task was dignified by the pre-requisite of having men filled with the Holy Spirit and wisdom to fulfil it (Acts 6:3, 5). The Spirit's filling was seen as necessary for the practical duties of solving the problem of the distribution of food for widows.

Fourth, the laying on of hands in commission is a significant act deriving from the Old Testament example of Moses transferring his authority to Joshua (Deuteronomy 34:9). In the New Testament, the laying on of hands is typically used for receiving the Spirit, healing, commission for ministry, baptism, receiving a special ministry gift, restoring a person to the church or the ordination of elders (Schnabel, 2012:334-335). Bruce notes that the prayer did not impart the gift of the Spirit as the Seven were already 'filled' with the Spirit (2008:122).

A direct result of this division of responsibilities was the 'multiplication' of the church (Acts 6:7): the further growth of the number of believers. In this sense, the structural change unleashed the furtherance of the gospel message.

Acts 6:9-7:60 recounts the stoning of Stephen and his eventual death. In this event, the Christ values of forgiveness and prayer are demonstrated. Stephen utters two significant prayers: 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit' (7:59) and 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them' (7:60). They correspond closely to Jesus' prayer of forgiveness on the cross (Luke 23:46). While Jesus commits His spirit to God, Stephen commits himself to Jesus: reflecting a developed Christology in the church (Bruce, 1988:160).

In Acts 12, we read about the release of Peter from prison. Peter had just been released in a miraculous way. Being led by the angel, he is directed to the place where the church is holding a prayer vigil at the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark (a noteworthy but ambiguous figure in the New Testament; Wall, 2002:180). After Peter knocks on the door, the servant girl Rhoda (literally 'Rose') is so shocked by his appearance that she leaves him at the outer gate and goes to tell the others gathered. The church refuses to believe it is Peter, saying it must be his angel (12:15; Bible, 1984).

There are three noteworthy points here. First, the church was earnestly praying, echoing James 5:16, which states: 'The fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much' (Bible, 1984). Their communal response to the crisis was to pray together. Second, their refusal to believe while praying is ironic: to be earnestly praying while at the same time giving evidence of doubt related to the answer. Pervo notes that, in spite of the church's earnest prayers, they seem to lack any hope, as they believe Peter has been killed (2009:307). This is reminiscent of the healed epileptic boys' father who cried out, 'I believe, help my unbelief' (Mark 9:24; Bible, 1984). The question of faith and doubt at prayer – at the same time – is an important consideration in understanding the nature and practice of prayer. Third, the fact that Luke places the non-deliverance of James (turning it into martyrdom) side by side is instructive. The sovereignty of God and the prayers of God's people are juxtaposed (Fernando, 1998:364-365). While we must acknowledge that ultimately God's will be done, we have the example of Jesus in the

Garden of Gethsemane to remind us to pray earnestly, like the church here, when faced with an impending challenge.

Prayer for Guidance in the Missionary Enterprise

In Acts 13, we see prayer as an integral tool used by God in the expansion of the missionary enterprise (Acts 13:1-3). Fernando summarizes five words that characterize the missionary program of this church: prayer, fasting, guidance, release and commissioning (1998:376). The following relationships will be noted briefly: (1) the relationship between worship, prayer and fasting, (2) the relationship between prophecy and guidance and (3) the relationship between a seeming contradiction between God and the church as the sending agency.

The relationship between worship, prayer and fasting is an involved one. We see the combination of prophets and teachers here for the first and only time in the New Testament. Normally, fasting is done when there is a sense of urgency in the church regarding some matter – presumably, in this case, guidance for Paul and Barnabas (Fernando, 1998:374). The spiritual exercise of worship, along with fasting and prayer, rendered the community to be more spiritually sensitive (Bruce, 1988:244). There is a suggestion of balance between the objective and subjective with the prophets and the teachers: the objective, revealed truth and salvation history along with the more Spirit-led utterances through the prophetic gift as described further in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14.

The relationship between prophecy and guidance is an interesting one in the New Testament. Evidently, the mind of God regarding Paul and Barnabas was communicated - likely through the prophetic utterance (Schnabel, 2012:555). Schnabel believes that Christian prophets would have conveyed, in a similar fashion as the Old Testament prophets, God's revelation expressed in exhortation form, critique, encouragement and at times disclosure about future events (2012:553). Pervo, citing Aune, suggests this is a prescriptive oracle (2009:322).

The relationship between the calling of God and the church as the sending agency is seemingly contradictory. We hear that the church sets apart Paul and Barnabas with commissioning prayer. A few verses later (Acts 13:4), we read that it is the Holy Spirit who has sent them. How does one reconcile this? While in human terms the church in Antioch is the 'sending agency' of Paul and Barnabas, in theological terms it is the Holy Spirit who sets apart, calls, commissions and empowers the missionaries. The church should be seen as simply confirming this and assisting in inaugurating a new phase of missionary work (Schnabel, 2012:555). The commissioning prayer included asking for God's presence, blessing and empowerment, which Pervo feels is similar to an 'ordination' with the imposition of hands (2009:322). As noted earlier, Moses similarly laid his hands on Joshua for the passing of the leadership task on to Joshua, even though it was God who called Joshua to that task (Deuteronomy 34:9).

The Apostles at Prayer

The apostles had a privileged position to see Jesus pray and to learn directly from His teachings about prayer. In this section, we will examine the teaching of the Apostles James, Peter, Paul and John various aspects of prayer. These four apostles are chosen because of their influential positions in the church.

The Apostle James

The Apostle James was a half-brother of Jesus, and his summary statement at the pivotal Jerusalem Council found in Acts 15 reveals that he appears to be a leader of the church. Few New Testament books have been as controversial as the one that bears his name. Luther called it an 'epistle of straw' and modern theologians treat it as a holdover from Judaism (Moo, 2000:1). To clarify, Luther accepted it among the canon but noted it was not among the most important letters, most likely because of its apparent clash with the doctrine of justification by faith. John Calvin was the most accepting of the book's full apostolic authority and argued that Paul and James' perspective could be harmonized so as to maintain the unity of the Spirit (Moo, 2000:5)

The book is very practical and concise in nature with James used metaphors to make his point. The genre is historical letter – but it is not written to ‘one church’ but to the ‘twelve tribes’ (suggesting a focus on Jewish believers).

The date of writing and the authorship continue to be debated (see Davids, 1982:2-16), but internal evidence suggests it was written between 40-60 AD. Theological themes include the character of God, eschatology, the Law, wisdom, poverty and wealth, the Christian life, faith, works and justification, and prayer.

In his epistle, James writes to a Jewish church that appeared to be fractious with quarrels and fights (James 1:1; 4:1). Johnson notes that James is writing to members of the Christian community who gather in the name of Jesus and profess the faith of Christ, but whose attitudes and actions are not yet fully in friendship with God (1998:212). His emphasis is on ‘faith in action’ (Johnson, 1998:212). James reminds us that the ultimate purpose of Christian instruction and doctrine is godly character and righteous behaviour (McCartney, 2009:3). Against this significant background and his leadership of the church was his passion for prayer. The ancient historian Eusebius states that James’ knees ‘grew hard like a camel’s because of his constant worship of God, kneeling and asking forgiveness of the people’ (Hughes, 1991:254). James writes three significant discourses on prayer: prayer for wisdom (James 1:5-8), hindrances to prayer (James 4:1-3) and keys to effective prayer (James 5:13-16). The common thread for these three passages is the importance to pray without doubting and with confidence.

Regarding prayer for wisdom, in the context of having one’s faith tested through trials, James encourages his readers to ask for it (James 1:5). The caveat is that one must ask believing that God will give, for a doubting or divided heart will not receive any answer from God (Bible, 1977). McCartney points out that the word translated ‘doubt’ is specialized and is a form of passing judgement on God’s Word – the opposite of faith (2009:91). Martin calls this person a ‘spiritual vacillator’, and due to a divided inner life, he cannot expect God’s gift of wisdom (1998:215). We come across the ‘double minded man’ again in James 4:8 where James commands this person to ‘sanctify his heart’

(Bible, 1984). This person is unstable in all his paths - an illusion to a drunkard (McCartney, 2009:92) and illustrated by the boat at sea tossed by the winds and waves (1:6). The confidence in God's answer expressed in this verse reminds one of Jesus' teachings concerning prayer and faith in Mark 11:24 and Matthew 21:22. Martin (1998:19) illustrates this kind of faith by quoting J.A. Findlay's definition of faith as 'a painstaking or concentrated effort to obtain blessing for oneself or for others, material or spiritual inspired by a confident belief that God in Jesus can supply all human need'.

McCartney adds that this does not mean that a believer may never have a measure of uncertainty whether or not something is God's will, but rather, he is condemning of an indecision or hesitancy that questions the integrity of God to deliver the wisdom requested (2009:91). When the requester asks in confidence because of the nature of God (his faithfulness and love for the person), they can expect to have an answer for the wisdom needed.

Regarding hindrances to prayer (James 4:1-3), James assertively points out the reasons for their quarrels and fights and directly points out two hindrances to their prayers: (1) they do not ask God for what they want and (2) they ask with wrong motives. To frame his teaching on prayer, James claims that the reason for their divisions is twofold: internal and external. Internally, their focus on their evil desires is at war within them. The word for pleasures is *hedeone* from which we get the word 'hedonistic' (Hughes, 1991:167). The negative use of the word changes the meaning to 'desires' which represents the double-minded man referenced earlier. That double-minded person cannot expect God to respond to prayers that are aimed at fulfilling such disordered desires (Perkins, 1995:123). Externally, their focus is on passions and covetousness that leads to war between people – even murder. Desire-filled, envious believers do not make requests of God, as they do not trust Him for their provision (Richardson, 1997:176). Adamson adds that their prayer is corrupted by the desire only for what they mean to spend on their lusts (1972:169). Hughes poignantly states that such a narcissistic embrace of one's own pleasure, whether it be sensual, materialistic,

professional or positional, is the bane of the church and ruinous to the prayer life – this person doesn't pray much at all (1991:168). This is the wisdom of the world, as it seeks to use God simply as a means of fulfilling envy's incessant cravings. To be friends with the world, one chooses to live by the logic of envy, rivalry and competition (Johnson, 1998:211). As a result, they pray with wrong motives and there is no answer forthcoming! Their prayer is not just 'amiss' but 'corrupt' (Adamson, 1972:168).

The antidote to the fruit of 'friendship with the world' is to draw close to God with deep repentance for this divided loyalty – with tears – by humbling and purifying oneself and resisting the devil (James 4:7-10). One could then assume then that the prayers offered with a life consistent with being a 'friend of God' have divine approbation.

Regarding effective prayer (James 5:13-16), James abruptly shifts to effective prayer for those who are suffering and sick in a context of speaking of the danger of earthly riches and then patience and corresponding endurance. We will focus on the process of restoration - from preparation of the sufferer, the prayer of the elders for the sick and the result of the prayer.

James gives prescription for those in the church under different circumstances: the sufferer, the happy person and the sick individual. The word 'suffering' could mean physical, but it is also broader and often means hardships in war and life. In the context of James, it could be the implication of oppression (1:9-11); the need for perseverance (1:12-14) or the marginalization experienced (1:26-27; 2:1-4; 14-17 and 5:1-6), perhaps at the hands of rich farmers (McKnight, 2011:432-433). Davids points out that, rather than complaining, striking out or bearing the oppression with quiet resignation as the stoics advised, one ought rather to pray (1982:192). The word used for prayer is the broadest of the Greek verbs that denotes speaking to God, followed with the exhortation for the happy person to sing praises – close to the English word 'psalm' (Blomberg & Karnell, 2008:241). James wants God remembered in all times – good and bad (Davids, 1982:192).

Special attention is given to the sick person. First, the initiative is on the sick person to call the elders. Secondly, confession of sin is important. The Bible emphasizes that sin does not always cause sickness. In John 9:2-3, the disciples question 'who sinned – this man or his parents?' to which Jesus replies 'neither, but so that the glory of God will be revealed' (Bible, 1984). However, James indicates a possible link between sin and sickness by exhorting confession of sin to occur – 'so that they may be healed'. Dibelius and Conzelman again suggest that, in this context, the confession of sin is preparatory in the same way that purification rites would be (1972:255-256). Blomberg and Karnell suggest that the communal confession of sin remains important for the life and health of the community (2008:245). In the larger context of James, the act of confession would be in alignment with 4:4-10, where friendship with the world is condemned and the exhortation of re-establishing friendship with God would help to assure that any subsequent prayers for healing are not corrupt - and can therefore be heard.

The prayer of the elders. Although the gift of healing was clearly operative in the early church (c.f. 1 Corinthians 12:9, 28, 30), Dibelius and Conzelman suggest that the elders are in possession of the healing gift by virtue of their office (1972:253). Davids notes that this exercise of eschatological power as a duty of office is something that was not present in the synagogue elders but was regularly exercised in the church during the first centuries of its existence (1982:194). This section on prayer is significant, as one of the most common elements of Church Planting Movements is aggressive praying for non-believing sick people.

The elders are to respond to the requester by anointing the sick person with oil and then praying in faith for healing. It is presumed that the elders are 'righteous' by virtue of their office (c.f. 1 Timothy 3). The oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit, and the application of it is a rich symbolic act that sets the sick apart to be ministered to in a special way (Hughes, 1991:256).

The prayer of faith harkens back to the prayer without doubting of 1:5-8. Blomberg and Karnell suggest we should pray boldly believing that He is a God of power and that He

listens to the prayers of His people (2008:2244). The authors allude to Elijah, and although his popularity was great in Judaism, the emphasis is that he was a 'man like us' and yet saw great results through prayer. Carson points out that the 'moral lesson is clear: our prayers can be wonderfully effective too' (2007:1011).

Blomberg and Karnell insightfully point out that James insists that, as soon as Elijah asked, God acted, both with the initial famine and then with the final coming of the rains. Still, there was a period required for Elijah to continue to exercise his faith as events unfolded. Significantly, Elijah knew he was acting within God's will in both the initial pronouncement and the final prayer (2008:247). It would appear from the example of Elijah's prayer that, in order for the prayer of faith to be as effective as Elijah's, it needs to be based on the knowledge of God's will for the person or situation.

James indicates that 'The sick person will be well, and the Lord will raise him up'. There is no 'in between'. It is as though James wants to emphasize by 'whose power' the healing occurred through – and that not being the elders.

An added benefit is if the sick person who has requested prayer has sinned, he will be forgiven. There is no strict equation of illness and sinfulness here (John 9:1-3; 11:4). Again, James leaves open the possibility that some sickness is associated with sin, and that the use of the perfect participle suggests the power of past sins could affect the present situation of the sufferer (Martin, 1998:209). A spiritual healing of forgiveness will take place, which may potentially affect the physical realm.

The Apostle Peter

Peter was part of the inner circle that was privy to the prayer life of Jesus at the transfiguration and in the Garden of Gethsemane. He was going to his rooftop to pray when a pivotal event in Christendom occurred – the vision interpreted as the inclusion of the Gentiles into the Gospel. Simultaneous to this, God had been preparing the confirmation of this new direction by speaking through the prayers of Cornelius (Acts 10, 11).

Regarding authorship, one view is that the epistle is the work of an anonymous author who wrote in Peter's name – perhaps Silvanus listed in 1 Peter 5:12. No doubt the stylish prose of the book seems to be inconsistent with Peter's fisherman background. However, there was consensus among the Church Fathers that Peter was the author (Charles, 2006:277-279). Forbes agrees and notes Peter's authorship was never disputed in the early church tradition (2014:1). The author of 1 Peter claimed he was a 'witness for the sufferings of Christ' (1 Peter 5:1; Bible, 1984). The first citation of Peter is found in Polycarp in AD 155, with the first document we have with his name is 'Against Heresies' by Irenaeus, dated from AD 182-188 (Grudem, 1989:22). The dates for the book range from the mid-sixties (before or around Peter's death date) to the late first century.

Writing during his later years before his martyrdom, we see in Peter's epistles a more tempered apostle from his earlier days with Jesus' earthly ministry. Written to 'God's elect strangers' scattered throughout the north of Asia Minor, they indicate a primarily Gentile population (Charles, 2006:282).

The letter is full of Old Testament references, weaving metaphors, concepts and images of new covenant themes such as 'you are a royal priesthood'. Theological themes include: Christ's second coming and subsequent judgment, ethics, divine election, exhortation to holiness, the Triune God, human relationships, prophesying and prayer.

In his first epistle, he shares three admonitions concerning hindrances to prayer related to marriage, self-control, clear thinking and the difference in God's acceptance of prayer between the evil and the righteous. Peter's writing is a substantial addition for transformed understanding the Christian worldview and culture – in the midst of suffering and persecution. Jobes cites various scholars who call the letters 'the most condensed resume of the Christian faith and of the conduct it inspires' – 'on par with Romans and the Gospel of John' (2008:1,4). The date is often debated in the range 75-95 AD.

In 1 Peter 3:7, we read that husbands are to be considerate of their wives and treat them with respect so that nothing 'hinders' their prayers. The word 'hinder' has the sense of being 'cut off' and ironically is the same word used in 1 Thessalonians 2:11 when Paul states that 'Satan hindered us from coming' (Bible, 1984). The context is important here: Peter's exhortation about relationships in God's new economy. Peter gives instructions to women regarding how they are to conduct themselves as Christ followers. Then, in a radical departure from the culture of the day where the dominance of women by men was the norm, Peter gives a prescription regarding a man's consideration for his wife.

Peter points out that the wellbeing of the Christian household depends on the man recognizing the woman as a coheir in Christ and living with her respectfully, even though he is the physically stronger and socially empowered male. In this way, Peter delicately prohibits domestic violence in the Christian household (Jobes, 2008:209). Men and women have joint status before Christ. Therefore, men are to treat their wives 'with knowledge': understanding they are weaker physically and that they should not use their male strength to take advantage of them. Davids adds that injunction is in the wider context of how relational disturbances affect prayer, but particularly here, if one desires a close relationship with God, the relationship with one's spouse must be carefully cherished (1990:123).

Harink makes the point strongly that the authoritarian husband or domineering male fundamentally fails to understand God and the gospel – for how can he himself call upon the grace of God when he refuses to acknowledge that he is a sharer in that grace with women? (2009:89). Achtemeier states it bluntly: 'The point is clear: men who transfer cultural notions about the superiority of men over women into the Christian community lose their ability to communicate with God' (1996:218). Schreiner adds that God does not bless with His favour those who are in positions of authority and abuse those who are under them by mistreating them (2003:161).

A further hindrance is found in 1 Peter 3:7: 'The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray' (Bible, 1984). The general context is that the theme of 1 Peter is the need to praise God in the midst of affliction for the hope He has given us (Carson, 2002:113). The specific context here is Peter's response to the question of how one lives in light of the soon second coming of the Lord. Jobes suggests that the semantic range of the word '*telos*' (age) suggests more than mere termination and refers to the last stage of a process that has been inaugurated by the resurrection of Christ (2008:275). The language used is reminiscent of the language Jesus used in the Garden of Gethsemane. Davids suggests that the history of Christianity is linear, and that with this sense of impending eschaton breaking in, it is impossible to understand the ethical stance in the biblical literature (1990:156). How can these two seemingly disparate concepts be combined? Jobes adds that, because Peter's readers are living in the last stage of divinely initiated process, whose outcome has already been assured by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, their behaviour should reflect that reality (2008:276). Therefore, whether the 'end' is right around the corner or is the 'last stage', it should affect our behaviour. Peter's listeners were seemingly more linear in their expectation of the soon return of Christ.

'Be clear minded and self-controlled' are basically synonymous (Michaels, 1998:245). It can mean to keep a 'cool head' and stay alert in light of Christ's second coming: to have all of one's mental faculties and see things for what they are (Achte-meier, 1996:294). Donelson adds that it has the sense of maintaining balance and sound judgment as opposed to the drinking parties inferred to in 4:3 (2010:126). Dwelling now in the nearness of the need, the messianic community is to be 'sober minded' and 'vigilant'. Harink adds insightfully that Peter calls us to this heightened state of awareness because there is always the temptation to fall back again into the life of the Gentiles: a steady state of intoxication with the normal that renders us incapable of assessing the danger (c.f. Galatians. 4:8-9) (2009:112).

This uncluttered communication with God is a necessity so that Peter's listeners can pray. The knowledge that Peter's readers are living in the final stage of God's redemptive plan should motivate prayers and not a complacent fatalism: the resource for living out Christ's victory in the Christian community (Jobes, 2008:277). Any hindrances to prayer have significant impact to the fulfilment of God's purposes in gospel proclamation, the birthing and strengthening of the church, as well as in civil society.

The Apostle Paul

The Apostle Paul is a towering and unparalleled figure in terms of his grasp of many aspects of prayer. The following categories will be examined: doxologies and thanksgivings, intercessions and petitions, the Trinity's role in prayer, exhortations to pray and Paul's modelling of prayer.

In Paul's letters, the exordium or opening will often announce God's activity as an incentive to praise God and supply reasons for the invocation of His blessing (Reid, 2004:1125). Typically modelled after Jewish prayers in synagogue worship, God is honoured for His work in creation, for His love for Israel and because His promises are trustworthy, along with His benefits and mercies to Israel (Reid, 2004:1125).

Paul usually ends his writings on a positive note of blessing, adapting to the local church situation with either a longer a shorter or longer benediction. It ranges from a phrase ('grace be with you' in Colossians 4:18; 1 Timothy 6:21; Titus 3:15; Bible, 1984) to a sentence (1 Corinthians 16:23; Galatians 6:18, Philippians 4:23; 1 Thessalonians 5:28; 2 Thessalonians 3:18) to a paragraph (Romans 16:25-27). Partial or full Pauline benedictions have been incorporated historically into the liturgy of the church, and they are still incorporated presently.

In-between the opening and the benediction, we see Paul's teaching on petitions and intercessions and the Trinity's role in prayer. We also see Paul giving general

exhortations to pray and his personal modelling of prayer. This is particularly true in the book of the Ephesians.

Paul's letter called 'Ephesians' was affirmed as a genuinely Pauline epistle in the second century by the church fathers Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian. We do not know to whom the letter is addressed or its explicit purpose, as scholars feel the addition of 'Ephesus' is a later one.

It follows the typical Pauline structure of salutation, thanksgiving, prayer, body, ethical exhortations and greetings (Patzia, 1990:121). The rise of critical scholarship in the eighteenth century questioned this, however, and pointed to the ninety non-Pauline words found in the epistle. Other factors include the lack of Christological and eschatological teaching, and the high explanation of the apostolic office, which is seemingly at odds with Paul's humility.

Nonetheless, the epistle is full of doctrinal jewels with J.N. Sanders calling it 'the final summing up of the apostle's life, work and thoughts' (as cited in Patzia, 1990:128) and Snodgrass calling it 'pound for pound, Ephesians may well be the most influential document ever written and provides some of the most insightful theological thinking on the church in the New Testament' (1996:17,19). Major themes include: man's sin has alienated us from God, but Christ redeems us; Jew and Gentile are alienated as well, but through Christ are reconciled; God had commissioned Paul to preach this; there are ethical behaviours that flow out of our redemption and to stand fast in the faith, as it forces those opposed to Christ to ultimately be subject to him (Fowl, 2012:3-4).

We read in Acts 19 and 20 that Paul spent about three years in Ephesus and then bade a tearful farewell to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20). In Ephesians 1:17-23, Paul offers intercessory prayer on behalf of the Ephesians where he asks God to open the eyes of his readers to see the surpassing greatness of God's power. Then he speaks of their deliverance from the power of sin, the devil and the flesh – overcoming their alienation and rendering them God's spiritual building blocks. Next, he launches into a second

intercessory prayer in Chapter 3 so that his readers may be filled with the fullness of God (where he, Paul, seems to break effortlessly into petitions and intercessions with almost rapturous language). Klein suggests tongue-in-cheek that Paul is struggling with his lexicon here – trying to express what he finds almost beyond expression. Klein then quotes Snodgrass: ‘this is language from someone who has been surprised and overwhelmed with Christ’s love’ (2006:99). Patzia claims there is no tangible way to describe it, and so he resorts to rhetorical expressions using botanical and architectural metaphors (1990:223-224).

Paul states in Ephesians 3:14-19:

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. (Bible, 1984)

In examining this prayer, we see four sections: (1) the content of his prayer (that they would be filled with the fullness of God); (2) the source or basis from which the answer will come (the riches of God’s glory); (3) the agent of the prayer (through God’s Spirit) and (4) the location or sphere of the answer to prayer: the inner person (Klein, 2006:97). There are three specific requests of Paul’s prayer: (1) for his readers to receive inner strength from the Holy Spirit, (2) that they may experience the abiding presence of Christ, and (3) that they will be rooted and grounded in Christ’s love (Patzia, 1990:220). Paul’s ultimate goal is that the Ephesians will be filled with the fullness of God (Klein, 2006:100).

Arnold suggests that this prayer goes beyond his first one in Chapter 1 by appealing to God to impart His power to his readers and that supernatural empowerment is important

because of the supernatural opposition that believers face (2010:204). Paul concludes with the glorious benediction of Ephesians 3:20 and links God's activity in the believers' heart through the Spirit with the church: a reminder of God's choice for the expression and cultivation of this life in Christ.

Trinitarian theology comes out strongly in Paul's prayers, such as in 2 Corinthians 13:14: 'May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you' (Bible, 1984). In the aforementioned prayer of Paul in Ephesians 3:14-20, Paul directs his prayer to the Father and asks for the Spirit's help in pouring out the divine power and love to the people. At the same time, Paul earnestly desires that the resurrected Christ will be close to them, imparting His power and love to them and reigning in every area of their lives (Arnold, 2010:205). Additionally, one of the principal blessings of the new covenant is the pouring out of the Spirit in much fuller measure than the old covenant people of God experienced. Therefore, in Paul's writings, the Spirit is made the explicit agent in the dispensing of divine power (Arnold, 2010:210). All of this is to experience Christ in His 'fullness'.

Exhortations to pray are common throughout Paul's writings. Four will be examined. First, the very brief imperative to 'pray without ceasing' as found in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 is part of 'be joyful' and 'give thanks in every circumstance' (Bible, 1984). In pointing to the five times Paul speaks of prayer in 1 Thessalonians, Bridges states that, in his mind, prayer was integral to the life of a believer (2008:162). Martin cautions that these imperatives were given in the context of imperatives to the faith community at Thessalonica. Once taken out of the realm of private expressions of faith and recognized as community activities, these commands may be seen as expressions of a common faith, and they should make the communal gathering a joyful, prayerful and thankful experience (2001:181). The faith community in Thessalonica was facing both hostile Jews and the threat of the Judaizers adulterating the pure gospel. The assaults were focused on the household of Jason (Acts 17:5-9; 20:4) who were not only new in the faith, but they were poor as well. However, Timothy brought the good news of the

church doing well (1 Thessalonians 3:8). Sometime after his second missionary journey, Paul responds (c. AD 50 – Bruce, 1982a:xxxiv). Hendricksen lists the purposes of Paul's letter to them: to confront head on the questions of his motives; to express his joy and gratitude for their faith; to answer questions about the 'falling asleep' of believers as well as about Christ's return. In his second epistle to them, he continues on the theme of the second coming of Christ, to warn against wandering away from the faith, and to express his gratitude for their spiritual growth (1981:12), although some have argued that second epistle was actually to a group of other Macedonian churches – explaining the similar content in both letters – Bruce, 1982a:xliv) In this environment, Paul exhorts them to 'pray without ceasing' (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

The 'pray continually' injunction does not mean nonstop praying. Rather, it implies constantly recurring prayer, growing out of a settled attitude of dependence upon God (Barker: 1994b:869). F. F. Bruce adds to this stream of thought by saying that Jesus taught on persevering prayer in Luke 16:1 ('Jesus taught this so you would pray and not give up') and in Romans 12:12 (to 'persevere in prayer' captures the sense of this verse'; 1982a:24).

Second, in the Pastoral Epistles, the verses in 1 Timothy 2:1–3:13 contain the first part of a church order – how one ought to conduct oneself in the household of God. Towner suggests that the Ephesians are not praying for the Gentiles to be saved, which is the very mandate of Paul. They must understand the missiological grid that they need to pray for the salvation of all and that they need to participate in God's mission that makes a distinctive reflection of God in society (2006:164, 171). Even though Paul uses the phrase 'first of all' in the first verse of Chapter 2, Mounce pronounces that prayer is not really the topic but rather the stage upon which Paul builds his teaching on salvation (2000:76). Hughes opines that Paul's great fear is that, metaphorically, the vibrant lifesaving station in Ephesus, the principal lighthouse in Asia Minor, would put out its light or forget its mission. Shipwrecks from their own number, such as Hymenaeus and Alexander, had abandoned faith and a good conscience – earlier defections to the

gospel message (Hughes & Chapell, 2000:58). To that end, Paul gives explicit instructions to the Ephesian churches on how to pray and live so that the gospel will continue to penetrate.

Although many would affirm Paul as the writer, some especially earlier critics these epistles to Timothy to be the work of a clever falsifier (Hendricksen, 1981:17) Paul starts out his epistle in 1 Timothy Chapter 2:1 by saying 'first of all' prayer should be made for everyone (Bible, 1984). Quoting Sica, Mounce (2000:78) states that 'Prayer is the "fundamental activity in the life of the church."'

The epistles to Timothy were affirmed by the fathers Polycarp and Clement. It appears clear that one author wrote them both with the theology and ethics pointing to a unified whole (Towner, 2006:27) and it is a combination of a personal letter and theological treatises against heresies (apparently the Gnostics) aesthetic elements of Jewish Christians so as to remind salvation is in Christ alone, relationships and the organization of the church, the Christian Life and the Holy Spirit.

How does one pray? Verse 10 tells us we should pray by employing four different kinds of prayers: request, petitions, intercessions and thanksgivings (Bible, 1984). The big idea is one of completeness – every dimension and action of prayer is to be utilized (Towner, 2006:166).

'Petitions' refers to a statement of need, and it is used twelve times by Paul (Mounce, 2000:79). Towner adds that this is a direct request to God to intercede in one way or another (2006:166). 'Prayers' is the most general term for prayer in the New Testament, found 133 times and used 33 times by Paul (Mounce, 2000:79). 'Intercessions' or 'petitions' is the word that Paul uses to describe the Holy Spirit's intercession in Romans 8:26 and here meaning 'a pleading in the interest of others' (Hendricksen, 1981:92). An example would be Christ's prayer for believers found in Hebrews 7:25: 'he always lives to intercede for them' (Bible, 1984). 'Thanksgivings' occurs 12 times in Paul. Lea and Griffin (1992) point to the fact that the first three kinds of prayers express various ways

of making requests to God, and the final one describes the expression of gratitude to God. Towner adds that it is also an expression of confidence in anticipation of God's future response (1992:87). 'The first term marks the idea of the insufficiency by the requester, the second highlights devotion of the seeker and the third underscores the childlike confidence of the petitioner' (J. E. Huther, as cited in Lea & Griffin, 1992:87).

Prayer was to be made for kings and those in authority. It is significant that this was written at a time when Nero was emperor, because he was no friend of Christians. The persecuted Christians could easily have omitted prayers for their persecuting rulers under the circumstances (Lea & Griffin, 1992:87). Dibelius and Conzelman point out that Christians had every reason to be hostile to the state (1972:37).

What is the goal of these prayers? The answer appears to be so that people could live quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. Additionally, Towner suggests Paul has other aims here – to express the theology of a dynamic Christian ethic and to participate in God's mission by making visible the new life in society (2006: 169,171). In contrast to their opponents who are bringing disrepute on the church, Paul exhorts Christians to live out their lives in tranquillity and calmness with complete reverence and godly dignity (Mounce, 2000:82). Saarinen adds that the context here suggests the resulting behaviour, as the context advises Christians to hold to an external behaviour that creates public trust through a display of moral qualities (2008:51).

The third exhortation to pray occurs a few verses later. In 1 Timothy 2:8, Paul states: 'I ask men everywhere to lift up holy hands without doubt or wrath' (Bible, 1984). The imagery of 'holy hands' comes from the Old Testament (Exodus 30:19-21; Psalms 24:4; Isaiah 1:15; 59:3), which requires that hands be ritually clean before approaching God. The cleansing in the New Testament became moral (James 4:8; 1 Peter 3:7) (Mounce, 2000:106). This carries the idea of calm and peaceful piety (Saarinen, 2008:61). Hughes and Chapell point out that Paul's concern in 1 Timothy 2:8 is not body posture but that they would not have quarrels and be free from anger. He wants to see unified petitions go up from everyone (2000:63). Gloer adds that holy hands represent a life

committed to doing the will of God: hands that are about God's purposes (2010:140-141).

Fourth, in Ephesians 6:10-20 we have a classic exhortation to pray. Paul exhorts the Ephesians in verse 11 to 'be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power' (Bible, 1984) and to be able to take their stand against the devil's schemes. This will be accomplished by two actions: by putting on the armour of God and by praying. Praying for strength is a major way of appropriating God's answer to be strong in the Lord and to be able to 'stand' (Lincoln, 1990:452). These exhortations to pray include the following: pray in the Spirit on all occasions (with all kinds of prayers and requests); be alert and always keep on praying for the saints, and a personal prayer for boldness for Paul as he faces the Roman leaders.

Praying in the Spirit is to pray in such a way that is led, guided by and empowered by the Spirit (Arnold, 2010:474). It no doubt refers also to the intercession of the Spirit as Paul describes in Romans 8:26-27 with 'groans that words cannot express and in accordance with God's will (Bible, 1984). Paul's earlier exhortation from Ephesians 5:18 to be 'filled with the Spirit' (Bible, 1984) would also enable the believer to be 'strong in the Lord' to have communion with the Spirit through prayer. Slater adds that the admonition to pray in the Spirit reminds the reader that we are faced with a spiritual battle (2012:176). We are reminded in Ephesians 5:26 that Satan tries to get influence over the lives of Christians through uncontrolled anger, and also in Ephesians 2:2,3 that they 'used to follow the ways of the world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air – the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient' (Bible, 1984).

Being alert hearkens back to Jesus' exhortation in Mark 14:38 to the sleepy disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane to 'watch and pray so that they might not fall into temptation' (Bible, 1984). Believers are to pray continually for one another because their struggle with the powers of darkness is never ending to be able to overcome fatigue, discouragement and complacency (O'Brien, 1999:484, 485). The verb translated as 'preserve' is used repeatedly by Luke to characterize the prayer practice of the early

church, and it is used in classical Greek to express the relentless pursuit of something (Arnold, 2010:465).

Paul prepared to face Nero by requesting prayer for boldness (literally confidence) to be a good ambassador for the gospel (Arnold, 2010:467). As he has prayed for the Ephesian church, now he reciprocally requests their prayer in his time of need.

Regarding Paul's modelling of prayer (Ephesians 6:10-20), it is clear that he was not a theoretician but a practitioner. Leenhardt, in referring to Paul's ongoing idea of going to Rome that seemingly had not ceased to ferment in his mind, poignantly states that prayer is the crucible in which his missionary projects come forth (2002:43). Similarly, Paul prayed to the Father on behalf of the Ephesians and modelled for them how to approach God in intercession for others (Arnold, 2010:208).

Similarly, we read in Romans 9:1-3 how Paul was willing to be cursed so that his people, the Jews, might come to Christ. This desire gave rise to a prayer for Israel's salvation (10:1). In Galatians 4:9-20, Paul prayed using the metaphor as if he were experiencing the pains of childbirth related to the salvation of the Jews.

In Acts 20, we see Paul saying 'goodbye' to the Ephesian elders in prayer where they kneel down together and pray. Clearly, his writings came out of a very deep and personal communion with the risen Christ.

Ephesians 3:20

In Ephesians 3:20, we read 'Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever. Amen!' (Bible, 1984). Paul's second letter of intercession starts in Ephesians 3:14 where he prays that God will grant the Ephesians His power and they might sense His love. Paul clearly directs his prayer to the Father and seeks the Spirit's help as the agent of delivery (Arnold, 2010:204). The power of God is the theme for Paul's doxology and is one of the high points of Paul's letters. Boice suggests it is the greatest prayer recorded

in the Bible (1997:113). Here, Paul desires his readers to understand the greatness of God's power and the availability of that power to them (Thielman, 2010:242).

Slater opines there are three parts to a doxology: (1) God was named, referred to or identified, (2) a statement of praise followed and (3) then an eternity formula concluded it (2012:96). Meanwhile, Thielman suggests that Paul follows the four-part pattern of the typical Hellenistic, Jewish and Christian doxologies: (1) a reference to the one who receives the glory, (2) a reference to the glory itself, (3) a reference to the eternal duration of that glory and (4) then the term 'amen' (2010:241).

Most commentators stress that the 'exceeding abundantly' superlatives Paul uses are rhetorical and are Paul's attempt to grasp the immensity of God's power humanly speaking. The rare adverb 'exceedingly' is only found twice elsewhere in Scripture (1 Thessalonians 3:10 and 5:13) and it means 'quite beyond all measure' (Arnold, 2010:219). Coupled with 'abundantly', Paul attempts to grasp the immensity of God's power in human terms. The preposition 'upper' with the accusative gives the sense of excelling or surpassing over, above and beyond more than the sense of literally being 'beyond everything' – very far (Hoehner, 2002:492, 3). It is best to take it as the middle voice to indicate 'working' to underscore the personal Spirit continually working in us (493).

In this usage, the preposition indicates a degree which is beyond that of the scale of extent with which it is compared and expresses the highest form of comparison available (Graham, 2008:262).

Arnold argues that Paul has in mind that Christ is greater than the 'powers' that are in Ephesus and Asia Minor because of the proliferation of astrology, magic and the mysteries of underworld deities (1989:102). The beleaguered believers in Ephesus share the same access to the power as Paul himself. This divine enablement is the prerequisite for the continuing mission of the church (Arnold, 1989:162) and allows us to go from three to four dimensions (1989:94).

An alternate view relates to the phrase 'according to His power that is at work within us'. Muddiman argues that this phrase puts a limit on God's power (as cited in Slater, 2012:96). This would coincide with the Gospel of Matthew 9:29 where Jesus says 'according to your faith be it done to you' (Bible, 1984). The power that we know to be working in us is a witness to the nature of the power that governs the universe, that brings everything to its appointed end and that raised Christ from the dead.

The Apostle John

1 John 3:21-22 and 1 John 5:14-15

The epistles of John are pastoral concerns to protect the traumatized early church community from further erosion from the so-called 'anti-Christ' and from moral defection (1 John 2:15-17), which was a real problem for second and third generation Christians. John communicates confidence to these believers with ten 'we knows' in 1 John 5:13-21 (Rhea Jones, 2009:223).

Christians were citing 1 John in the mid-second century with Polycarp and Origen quoting directly or parallel type language. It was recognized by Eusebius among recognized books, and all three epistles were recognized as canonical by the fourth century (Jobes, 2014:31).

I. Howard Marshall states that the letter of 1 John does not contain the typical literary and stylistic features, but notes it is addressing a specific issue and is more of a tract or a written sermon (1978b:14). Kruse echoes this and states it does not fit into the category of the Greco-Roman letter with no opening greetings or closing salutations, but it is rather addressed to people who are facing particular problems. He disagrees with Marshall that it is a tract or homily, but suggests it fits best as a circular letter with no clear structure (2000:28-31).

Regarding the date of the epistle, the general consensus of evangelical scholars is around the AD 90-95 range (Jobes, 2014:29), making it the last canonical letter written.

Underlying the book are numerous references to ‘tests’ and the underlying pastoral desire for the letter’s recipients to abide deeply in Jesus. Barclay suggests several issues John was facing: Gnosticism, false teachers, denial of Jesus’ Messiahship and denial of His incarnation (1976:5-12). Allen opines on four main purposes for the book: (1) to combat false teachers, (2) to deal with ethical issues, (3) for the strengthening of the people and (4) so that their ‘job would be complete’ (Allen, 2013:19,20). Burge feels the Apostle’s main concerns were Christology and ethics, with secondary concerns such as the Holy Spirit, discernment and tradition concluding with fellowship and love (1996:28-35). Kruse adds that the author rejects secessionist teaching, assures the believers about the nature of God and the atonement, teaches that those born of God do not sin (2000:35) and informs the believers about the role of the Holy Spirit. Jobes notes John’s letters deal generally with heresy and a crisis of leadership with the encroachment of the false teachers (2014:30). Rhea-Jones opines that John wrote at a time of a crisis in the churches that was threatening to divide them as some denied a bodily Christ (2009:1). The future of the church was on the brink with the last living apostle, so the truth about who Jesus Christ was/is was critical. Who best to provide it than the last living apostle?

A strong similarity exists between the way that the author states the purpose in writing this letter – ‘that you may know that you have eternal life’ (1 John 5:13) – and the purpose statement in John 20 – ‘But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name’ (John 20:31; Bible, 1977).

John has a special interest in answered prayer and outlines two conditions in His gospel: (1) praying in the name of Christ (John 14:13) and (2) ‘remaining in Jesus and allowing his words to remain in us’ (John 15:7; Bible, 1984). This section outlines the conditions of 1 John 3:21-22 and 1 John 5:14-15, which are two similar passages with some unique distinctives:

1 John 3:21, 22: 'Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from Him anything we ask, because we obey His commands and do what pleases Him' (Bible, 1984).

1 John 5:14-15: 'This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will he hears us. And if we know that He hears us – whatever we ask – we know that we have what we asked of Him' (Bible, 1984).

This section will examine six words and concept clusters:

1. Condemnation and confidence in approaching God.
2. 'If our hearts do not condemn us' (1 John 3:21; Bible, 1984).
3. 'Because we obey His commands and do what pleases Him' (1 John 3:22; Bible, 1984).
4. 'If we know that He hears us' (1 John 5:15; Bible, 1984).
5. 'If we ask according to His will' (1 John 5:14; Bible, 1984).
6. 'We have whatever we ask of Him' (1 John 5:15; Bible, 1984).

Condemnation and Confidence in Approaching God

Allen points out that verses 13 and 14 are tied together in that our assurance and confidence in our salvation leads to confidence that God answers prayer (2013:235). Similarly, Akin adds that the gift of eternal life allows the believer to come directly before God with boldness or confidence (2001:205). Yarbrough affirms that the use of '*kai*' in bridging verses 13 and 14 also links the idea of eternal life and confidence, assurance and even boldness in God's presence (2008:298). Johnson goes further in saying that confidence here includes eternal life, Jesus' second coming, judgment and now answered prayer (1993:134).

Regarding 1 John 3, Yarbrough adds that 'confidence before God is no small thing – Hebrews reminds us to hold onto it (3:6; 10:45) because it allows us access because of the blood of Christ' (2008:212). Confidence literally means 'a speech' and hence

boldness (Allen, 2013:236). This is the same confidence expressed in Hebrews 4:16 as found in the English Standard Version translation, 'Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and grace to help in time of need' (Bible, 2010). The subject of the passage is Christian confidence particularly with the repeated use of 'we know' (Smalley, 2007:280). Yeager adds that this kind of victorious prayer comes only from the Christian who has great confidence in Christ because of his close walk with God as referenced in John 15:7 (1985:414).

Boldness (*'paresia'*) is the freedom of speech granted the citizen, but it also implies being in the presence of an individual or group of greater power and authority – resulting in being able to exercise authority (Lieu, 2008:223). Throughout the letter of 1 John, boldness before God is a recurring symbol of the relationship with God shared by those who believe (1 John 2:29; 3:21; 4:17).

'If Our Hearts Do Not Condemn Us' - 1 John 3:21

An important component of our confidence is that 'our hearts do not condemn us' (1 John 3:21; Bible, 1984). The word 'condemn' here is a perfect passive participle meaning 'to find fault with, to blame, to accuse', as in 'a charge laid against him' (Bushell *et al.*, 2008).

This implies that we will not even approach God with boldness if there is an undermining of that confidence. God ignores presumptuous prayers if they are offered with unclean hands (Yarbrough, 2008:300) with sin separating us from God. The condemnation appears to block communion with God and has to be addressed – and removed - in order to get to the point of confidence where one can ask to have the prayer answered. Romans 8:1 states there is therefore 'no condemnation' to those who are in Christ Jesus (Bible, 1984). There is a sense

**‘Because We Obey His Commands and Do What Pleases Him’ - 1 John 3:22
(Bible, 1984)**

The qualifications of answered prayer in 1 John 3:18-21 is a life of obedience (Smalley, 2007:280). Yarbrough states that another way of looking at these words is to understand prayer more as communion with God (2008:301). John adds understanding to this passage by writing, ‘God hears someone who is devout and obeys His will’ (John 9:31; Bible, 1984). Obedience means submission to His will, which is a major theme in the passage to come.

‘If We Know That He Hears Us’ - 1 John 5:15

In the story of the raising of Lazarus from the dead in John 11, one is struck by the absolute certainty of Jesus that it would happen. Schnackenburg, commenting on that Jesus; confidence states, ‘we cannot fail to notice how certain the Johannine Christ is of being heard by His Father in John 11:41ff. This provides the supreme example of the power of prayer. Christians share in this power to the same degree or distance that their own fellowship with God approximates to the intimacy of the Father and the Son – or fails to do so’ (2002:248).

Being heard is a profound aspect about Johannine prayer (Rhea Jones, 2009:229). To know becomes the unifying leitmotif of the passage and holds together all the different elements (Lieu, 2008:224). How does one know when He hears us?

Commenting on the meaning of 1 John 5:15, Allen states, ‘We have prayed in faith in the will of God. The check is in the mail. God’s answer is coming; the first ‘here’ in v. 15 is the present tense in the Greek. You may not have it immediately, but God has already answered it, and in His timing, He will send it’ (Allen, 2013:239). Rhea Jones adds that the gift of being ‘heard’ is God’s extraordinary gift to His disciples (2009:229). Yeager adds insightfully that our confidence in our dealing with God lies in the fact that we know that, if we ask in keeping with His will, we are certain to get a hearing (1985:414).

John is definite when he writes 'we know' using the present tense 'we have' as opposed to the future tense 'we will have' (Kistemaker, 1986:360). Stedman calls this the 'witness of the Spirit' – meaning 'bringing it home to the individual with power' (1980:353). Findlay adds that the 'we know' in the Greek refers to an abiding conviction resting on known facts (1909:396).

Smalley (2007) adds that, because we know that God listens to us, John is saying that we can be sure that our requests are granted, although the condition that we are to pray in accordance with God's will still applies. It would appear as though there is an 'objective sense' of Him hearing us in prayer (just as John establishes our confidence in our salvation, the judgment to come and Christ's second return) along with a subjective sense of knowing. Stedman adds, 'Jesus could say, "I thank You Father that You always hear Me" because everything He did lay within the boundary of the will of God' (1980:363), which leads to the next section.

'If We Ask According to His Will' - 1 John 5:14 (Bible, 1984)

Smalley (2007) states forcefully that the fundamental characteristic of all truly Christian intercession is that the will of the person who offers prayer should coincide with God's will. Stated another way, 'Prayer is not a battle, but a response, its power consists of lifting our wills to God, not in trying to bring His will down to us' (Smalley, 2007:282). Akin supports this by saying that 'according to His will' is setting forth the fundamental condition of effectual prayer – recognizing the infinite wisdom of God's will and subordinating our desires to it (2001:214). He quotes John Stott in saying, 'Every true prayer is a variation of the theme "Your will be done"' (Akin, 2001:188).

Jobes links the previous section with God's will by asking the question 'How does confidence that God hears us amount to our having what we ask?' She answers by stating 'to properly ask of God, one must always submit to His perfect and omniscient will' (2014:232). To pray in the will of God, we have to discern the will of God. Learning the importance of praying in the will of God may be the single most important principle of prayer (Allen, 2013:237). Yeager adds that most of us ask for more than the will of

God, and as a result, we ask amiss as per James 4:3 (1985:415). Marshall agrees by summing up the passage in saying that the believer must seek to submit his or her will to God's (1978b:244).

To properly ask of God, one must always submit to His will as Jesus did when He prayed 'not My will but Yours be done', and although we may not know if we are praying in the will of God, we must receive that in the confidence that we were heard (Jobes, 2014:232-42).

'We Have Whatever We Ask of Him' - 1 John 5:15

Stott points out that this statement can be taken to mean, 'Our petitions are granted at once: the results of the granting are perceived in the future' (as cited by Plummer, 1986:188). This parallels Mark 11:24: 'Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you will receive it and it will be yours' (Bible, 1984). James 1:6 points to this principle in an exhortation to ask for wisdom 'not doubting in your heart that God will grant it' (Bible, 1984).

Lieu adds that the present tense (we possess or have) leaves no room for doubt or for hope alone: confidence anticipates reality (2008:224). We hearken back to one of the conditions of John's epistle as found in John 15:7 where we have what we ask as we remain in Him (Bible, 1984).

Reformed theologian Donald Crump provides a thought-provoking statement:

Johannian theology now constructs the chief cornerstone for the traditional Reformed solution ...that the principal outcome of Christian prayer is not receiving answers to particular requests but experiencing increased conformity to the will of God...

John's theology does not preclude the possibility that we are free to pray for a good many things that have not been divinely predetermined...Perhaps God has determined many things but not all things. On the one hand, prayer remains the

principle avenue by which the Father's will subsumes our own, teaching us simultaneously to yield thoroughly and to ask boldly while receiving thankfully whatever God has decided to grant. On the other hand, prayer remains an open-ended exploration of new horizons waiting to be outlined by the cooperative initiatives shared between a Father who waits to hear and the children who venture to ASK! (2006:168-169)

This section on the relationship between the believer and God is both objective according to the text yet challenging to articulate, as it also lies in the realm of phenomenology. The Apostle John, as the oldest living apostle, not only demonstrated his deep faith in his writings, but also prepared the church with a foundation so that it could meet new challenges in the next period of the Apostolic Fathers.

2.2.7 Prayer in the Period of the Apostolic Fathers

The Apostolic Fathers consist of persons and documents that interpreted and applied the apostle message in the first apostle-less generation (Olson, 1999:41). They had close connections with the Apostles and provide a link between those who knew Jesus and the new generation. The best known 'Fathers' include Ignatius, Origin, Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus and Tertullian. The Didache, a compilation of teachings, was assembled during this time.

Osborne notes that prayer was more central in the life of the church in the first century than it is today (2010:253). Thus, we will briefly examine the life of prayer in the early church, which is typically dated up to the Council of Nicaea (AD 325). We will consider three key tendencies during this period: (1) distinguishing between other religions and the pressure of syncretism, (2) the emphasis on the Lord's Prayer and (3) the emphasis on piety and asceticism.

Distinguishing Between Other Religions and Syncretism

Christian prayer was heavily influenced by Judaism, but the Apostolic Fathers sought to demarcate some of the prayer practices. Whereas the 'Pharisees' fasted on Monday and Thursday, the Christians proclaimed a fast for a half a day on Wednesday and

Friday (Friday in honour of Good Friday). Clearly Christian prayer and Eucharistic practices developed from Jewish traditional roots.

However, as Christianity spread, more Gentiles were becoming Christians than Jews were, and these Gentiles brought their cultural and philosophical influences with them. A big task of the Apostolic Fathers was to distinguish Christian prayer from the pluralistic Roman environment and reinterpret those using Jewish and non-Jewish models (Brown, 2004:1). For example, terms such as 'Father' and 'kingdom' needed to be redefined because of the Greco-Roman worldview (Brown, 2004:16). The influence of Gnosticism played a large role in the milieu of the early Fathers, particularly those from Alexandria. Brown points out that Clement of Alexandria was influenced by the Gnostics even though he defended against some of their heresies (2004:132).

The Emphasis on the Lord's Prayer

The phrase 'Our Father' in the Lord's Prayer is one of the very few elements across Christendom where we have unity and agreement to pray together (O'Loughlin, 2010:79). Simpson goes so far as to state that the two main traditions of the Apostolic Fathers – the more mystical tradition represented by Origin and Gregory of Nyssa and the catechetical tradition represented by Tertullian, Cypress and Theodore – come together in their writings on the Lord's Prayer as they focus on piety and devotion (Simpson, 1965:189). Origin's treatise on the Lord's Prayer is preserved entirely in Greek. Excavations from the ancient city of Pompeii show that the Lord's Prayer was commonly used in AD 79 (Kistemaker, 1978:326). Tertullian shared that the Lord's Prayer embraces the characteristics that embody the main functions of prayer: the honour of God and the petitions of man (Kistemaker, 1978:328). The Didache, an early Christian manual of instruction, gives extensive treatment to the Lord's Prayer, providing a version closer to Matthew's version and enjoining believers to pray the prayer three times a day (Young *et al.*, 2004:1121). The Apostolic Fathers thus remind us that the Lord's Prayer and the Lord's Supper were treasures given to us by the Lord (Kistemaker, 1978:327).

The Emphasis on Piety and Fasting

The development of the 'saint' started with prayer and a godly life, leading to wielding divine power and intercession and then miracles (Young *et al.*, 2004:359). As the community gathered to worship, the focus was on singing to Christ, prayer, teaching and fellowship around the Eucharist. The Didache points to the community communally fasting three times a week. They developed a whole system of fasts – from fasts from various types of food (e.g., fish, oil, eggs) to sex (O'Loughlin, 2010:84).

2.2.8 Prayer in the Ante-Nicene Period

During the Ante Nicene period, from approximately 100–325 A.D, we will examine the role of the development of prayer and piety during persecution, imbalances and corresponding rise of heresies.

- **Persecution and Prayer**

Starting in AD 64, when Nero attempted to scapegoat Christians for the fire of Rome, Christians suffered forms of persecution that lasted until AD 311 (Davies, 1976). In 112, Pliny the Younger and the Emperor Trajan labelled Christians a subversive group condemned to death. In AD 249–251, the brief but significant rule of Decius made things much worse for Christians with his edict requiring everyone to sacrifice to the gods of the State. Ephesus was a highway for the slain (Davies, 1976:179) pointing to the Christians who were martyred for their faith. Then, in 303, Diocletian sought to annihilate the church. This persecution lasted until an edict in AD 311 by Emperor Galerius gave legal status to the Christians and ended decades of persecution.

The result of this persecution was a refined church that derived its strength from the Lord through prayer, fellowship and worship gathering on the Lord's Day and throughout the week. For example, on the anniversary of the day of the death of a particular martyr, the congregation remembered the martyr's 'heavenly birthday' and celebrated it by prayer, by reading a history of his or her life, sufferings and victory and by the celebration of the holy supper (Schaff, 2002:283).

Prayer was a focus of the gatherings of the saints. One shocking evidence of the depth of the piety of these early believers was a prayer written by Tertullian for their Roman persecutors:

We pray for the safety of our rulers to the eternal God, to the true and living God whose favour beyond that of all others they should prefer. Unceasingly do we pray for all our rulers. We pray that they may have a long life, that the empire be secure, that the imperial household be safe, that armies be brave, that the senate be faithful, that the people be righteous, that the world be at peace, and for whatever the people and Caesar desire. (Johnson, 2009:117)

Webber notes that a tripartite structure appears with vigour and clarity in the classic Eucharistic prayer starting with giving thanks to God who made all things, recounting the story of Jesus and then asking for the sending of the Holy Spirit (1994:16, 17).

- **Imbalance in Prayer**

Unfortunately, the difficult conditions endured by Christians led some to extreme asceticism in lifestyle, particularly regarding fasting. Against the frequent over validation of fasting, Clement of Alexandria used to quote the words of Paul: 'The kingdom of God is not meat or drink, therefore not abstinence from wine or flesh, but righteousness and peace in the Holy Spirit' (Schaff, 2002:279)

- **Heresies Concerning the Person of Christ**

Both the Apostolic and Ante Nicene Fathers had a major role in fighting a long list of various heresies. An example of one would be the 'Cainite heresy'. Jude verse 11 speaks of those who follow the 'way of Cain' (Bible, 1984). For the Cainites, their heroes were Cain, the sons of Korah and especially Judas for his betrayal of Christ whom they mocked as 'wicked' (Trompf, 2010:573). Tertullian called the Cainite heresy, in which they rejected the need for Christ's atonement, a 'viper' (Johnson, 2009:119).

A most significant issue in the history of the church contributed to the Emperor Constantine calling the Nicene Council in 325 to address this. A popular priest named Arius stated that God could have not 'begotten' a son. Several aspects were addressed: Was Jesus more divine than human, created or begotten? Is He co-equal and co-eternal with the Father? Is the Father the one true God, or are the Father, Son, and Spirit the one true God? The end result was the council affirmation of the deity of Christ, being 'begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father' (George, 2005:23). This resulted in the excommunication of Arius. The affirmation of Christ's deity is significant as it concerns prayer. Both Jesus and the Holy Spirit, being equal and fully God, intercede for us to the Father. This clarification set the stage for the continued centrality of prayer in the church.

2.2.9 Theological Challenges and Concepts

- **Prayer and the Sovereignty of God: Does God Limit Himself?**

Understanding prayer is often a conundrum, and ultimately one must learn to trust in God's sovereignty, whatever the answer may or may not be. Much ink has been spilled seeking to understand the apparent contradiction these concepts represent.

Old Testament examples of stretching theological boundaries on the understanding of this include previous passages examined: Abraham's negotiation of the saving of Lot in Sodom (Genesis 18); Moses' pleading for the survival of Israel rather than their destruction after the golden calf debacle (Exodus 18). Others include the permission granted of God to test Job, the allowance of God for Satan to block the apostle Paul's desire for expansion so that ultimately the gospel came sooner to the West rather than Asia, the killing of John the Baptist in prison compared to the deliverance of Paul and Silas from their shackles, for example.

As previously mentioned, Calvin saw no conflict between God's sovereignty and His children asking for things in prayer, citing Elijah in 1 Kings 18. Elijah knew of what God had told him, yet he told God his longings in prayer in case his faith became 'sluggish'

(Calvin, 1986:205). He points out the importance of the Spirit in instigating prayers in and through us.

J.I. Packer turns the question of 'how can "evangelism and the Sovereignty of God" be conjoined' by turning it around and saying 'how can it not be' – and that these two seemingly opposite doctrines must be held together and not played off against each other (1961:23). He describes divine sovereignty as embracing everything that comes into the biblical picture of God as Lord and king in His world, who 'works all things after the counsel of his own will' (Ephesians 1:11; Bible, 1984) and who directs every process and orders every event for the fulfilling of his eternal plan (Packer, 1961:9). Yet, God allows us to be a fully responsible moral agent tasked with preaching the gospel. Packer cites Spurgeon, who was asked how to reconcile these two great truths and said 'I never reconcile friends' (1961:35) and suggests that there are two equal but opposite dangers: one focusing on an exclusive concern with human responsibility, and the other focusing on an exclusive concern with divine sovereignty (1961:25-31).

We have seen that God 'limits Himself' in the sense of allowing us to participate in decisions regarding certain outcomes in the realm of His sovereignty. We have no choice in other outcomes. We see this interplay in Moses' intercession where God allows a certain largesse in some areas but not in others. God willingly limits Himself as a parent might limit himself or herself with a child while at the same time retaining ultimate control and decision-making authority. Our participation in the prayer process in the realm of God's ultimate sovereignty as it relates to the fulfillment of His mission is represented in the proposed theoretical strategic intercessory prayer model in Figure 1 of this thesis).

The Role of Pneumatology in Mission

A survey of the Scriptures demonstrates the central place the Holy Spirit occupies – as the third member of the Trinity. This was affirmed by the Council of Constantinople in 381. He is called the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of God, the Spirit, the Spirit of fire, the Spirit of judgement, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of truth, the Spirit

of holiness, the Spirit of Christ; the Spirit of Jesus, the Spirit of life, the Spirit of sonship, the Spirit of the living God – among others.

Related to mission, His role is many-fold including:

- ✓ Convicting people of sin and need of a Saviour (John 16:7-11) and enabling the 'new birth' (John 3)
- ✓ Providing the power for effective witness (Acts 1:8).
- ✓ Providing ministry guidance (the setting apart by the Holy Spirit for the work among the Gentiles - Acts 13). Bosch points out that the Spirit not only initiates the mission, He also guides missionaries about where they should go and how they should proceed. The missionaries are not to execute their own plan but they have to 'want the Spirit to direct them' (1991:115). Note that Paul and Barnabus had already been called, however, the church had to recognize it through the mechanism of the Spirit's leading. Another example of ministry guidance is when the 'Spirit of Jesus' also blocked a proposed mission effort by the Apostle Paul (Acts 16:6).

In his insightful treatise *Knowing the Holy Spirit Through the Old Testament*, Christopher Wright points to the Spirit as being in five key categories with linkage to the New Testament and to us: (1) the Creating Spirit, (2) the Empowering Spirit, (3) the Prophetic Spirit, (4) the Anointing Spirit and (5) the Coming Spirit. The Spirit plays two key roles in Moses' humility: dependence on God's Spirit and acceptance of God's Spirit in others (2006a:49-51).

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen states one of the most exciting developments of theology in recent years has been the 'unprecedented' interest in the Holy Spirit stimulated by diverse influences. One of those influences is in Eastern Orthodox churches, who have accused their Western counterparts of the 'forgetfulness of the Spirit' (2010:xi). This is a serious but appropriate indictment. Conservative evangelical missiology has been slowly recapturing the role of the Holy Spirit in mission. To that end, the Cape Town Lausanne declaration in 2010 stated:

We love the Holy Spirit within the unity of the Trinity along with God the Father and God the Son. He is the missionary Spirit sent by the missionary Father and the missionary Son, breathing life and power into God's missionary church...we love and pray for the presence of the HS because without the witness of the Spirit to Christ, our own witness is futile. Without the convicting work of the Spirit, our preaching is in vain. Without the gifts, guidance and power of the Spirit, our mission is mere human effort. And without the fruit of the Spirit, our unattractive lives cannot reflect the beauty of the gospel. (The Cape Town Commitment 1.5 March 27, 2011 - www.lausanne.org/ctcommittment)

Gary Tyra states that 'at the heart of the missional movement is a pneumatological question: For example, the need to ask the question as to what the Holy Spirit up to in this or that ministry location, and how might/should we cooperate with him (2011:23). In Acts 16:7, we read of how Paul was 'forbidden by the Spirit of Jesus' to enter into Bithynia. McQuilkin calls the Holy Spirit 'the Grand Strategizer' (McConnell, 1997:26). The critical nature of the Holy Spirit's role in guiding the missionary enterprise today can hardly be underestimated, and it should be part of any model related to mission planning. How that translates into practice is the focus of the proposed theoretical model.

Four Aspects of Intercession

Although answered prayer ultimately is a matter of God's sovereign will, nonetheless, in the Biblical record, repeated patterns and principles can guide the believer into a greater understanding of the mystery of prayer.

There are four main aspects to intercessory prayer: asking, growth, blockages and timing. These can be independent of each other or they can operate simultaneously and together on parallel streams. In short, they are a complex adaptive system defined as 'a study of the interplay among processes operating at diverse scales of space, time and organizational complexity' (Levin, 2002:3).

Asking

David records the Lord asking him in Psalms 2:7: 'ask and I will give you the nations as your inheritance' (Bible, 1984). Solomon was invited to ask for whatever he desired, and he chose wisdom (2 Chronicles 1:7; Bible, 1984). The Lord, through the prophet Zechariah, invites Israel to ask for the springtime rain (Zachariah 10:1; Bible, 1984). When we come to Jesus, He repeatedly teaches about 'asking' in prayer ('ask and it will be given to you...' Matthew 7:7; 'ask for good gifts'; Matthew 7:11; Bible, 1984) and He teaches about the importance of belief in the asking (Matthew 18:19; 21:22; Bible, 1984). In John 14:13,14, Jesus invites us to ask in His name, and He gives promises for having done so (John 15:16; 16:19 and 16:24; Bible, 1984). The apostle James speaks of the importance of asking (James 1:6) and not asking (James 4:2). The epistles of John also teach about 'asking' (1 John 3:22; 5:14-15; Bible, 1984).

Growth

The Scriptures indicate that some answers to prayer occur immediately (Daniel 9:22-23) while others are a process. Some examples include: Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14), the healing of the blind man in stages (Mark 8:24) and the parables of persevering in prayer (Luke 16; Bible, 1984) – indicating that just one 'ask' may not be sufficient in some cases.

Blockages

As we pray, we will often encounter blockages to our prayers. These could be personal or spiritual in nature. We see this with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane where he struggled with doing God's will and ultimately came to the conclusion of 'Not my will, but Yours be done'. They could be tests of obedience, integrity and faith where God is verifying our commitment to Him (Clinton, 1988).

They could also be spiritual warfare prayers that we are not privy to, but in which we sense the opposition ('For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places'; Ephesians 6:12; Bible, 1984).

They could be the 'Spirit of Jesus' or the 'Holy Spirit' blocking a certain path of mission (Acts 16:6).

The argument is sometimes made that, because it is all under God's sovereignty, we must passively accept the outcome. The thrust of Scripture prayer, however, is continuing to 'ask, seek, knock' until indicated otherwise.

For these blockages, we need spiritual discernment to understand if this is something to wrestle and persevere through or to learn to trust in God's sovereignty, such as Paul's thorn in the flesh (2 Corinthians 12:7). Although it was a messenger of Satan, the thorn was part of God's plan and to understand that 'His grace was sufficient' (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Timing

Often God's timing is not determinate of any human situation or condition, such as 'But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son . . .' (Galatians 4:4; Bible, 1977). These high-level things are determined before the foundations of the world by a Sovereign God, not available for human comprehension or participation. Other times, we have seen God take the initiative to have humankind understand and participate what the Sovereign God would purpose to do (Moses - Abraham Genesis 18; Amos 4:4). This would lead to the kind of confidence that the Apostle John speaks of in 1 John 3 and 5, resulting in 'we know'. That confidence was demonstrated with Jesus already understanding the Father's will to raise Lazarus (Lazarus is sleeping; John 11:11; Bible, 1984).

In this section we have briefly examined Theological Concepts and Challenges vital to the prayer as it relates to missions: Prayer and the Sovereignty of God, Pneumatology in Mission, and Four Aspects of Intercession. This leads us to the critical understanding of spiritual discernment as it relates to God's mission.

2.3 BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING AND THE THEOLOGY OF DISCERNMENT

The basic meaning of discernment (*diakrisis, discretio*) is 'separation, division, in the physical sense of the word' (Waaajman, 2002:484) and seeing, sensing difference (Bos, 2013).

2.3.1 Old Testament Examples

- Urim and Thummim were stones that were put into a pouch to give direction as needed. Little is known about these precious stones except that they were entrusted to high priests and were a tool for identifying God's will. Most likely, they became brighter through supernatural means indicating either 'yes' or 'no'. They were mostly used in pre-exilic times (Douglas, 1979:1306).
- In 1 Kings 19:11, God was not in the wind with the guidance Elijah needed, but He was in the still small voice.
- In Joshua 9, Joshua made a treaty with the Gibeonites, who had disguised themselves and lied regarding their past. The Israelites did not 'inquire of the Lord' and went ahead with a treaty based on external signs (Joshua 9:14; Bible, 1984).
- David inquired of the Lord numerous times (1 Samuel 23:2; 1 Samuel 23:4; 1 Samuel 30:8) looking for a 'yes/no' answer. However, he went further in two Scriptural instances by asking a 'where' question (2 Samuel 5:19) and a 'how' question (2 Samuel 5:23).
- Solomon asked for and was granted a 'wise and discerning heart' (1 Kings 3:9) to be able to effectively lead his people.

2.3.2 New Testament Examples

- In Acts 10, Peter had a vision where he saw unclean animals, but he was challenged in his Jewish understanding of clean and unclean. In parallel timing, God worked by communicating to Cornelius - a God-fearing Gentile - that he

should connect with Peter. He sent servants to fetch Peter. As Peter was thinking about the vision, the Spirit spoke to him about the three men from Cornelius' house. The Greek construction is such where the Spirit prefaces an important command with 'Now' and the use of the imperative for Peter to meet the men (Zerwick & Grosvenor, 1974:384). Peter understood God was putting this all together. Here we see the principle of double confirmation, defined as 'when God makes clear His will by reinforcing it through more than one source, each independently of the others' (Clinton, 1988:239).

- Paul and Barnabas: In Acts 13:1-3, we see that, as the Antiochian church met and fasted and prayed, Paul and Barnabas were set aside by the Holy Spirit for the work of evangelizing the Gentiles, 'captured by' and affirmed by the church. How did the church know that it was the Holy Spirit speaking to them?
- In 1 Thessalonians 5:21: 'test everything (test, examine), hold on (hold fast) to what is good, avoid every kind of evil' (Zerwick & Grosvenor, 1979:621).
- In 1 John 4:1-3, on the heels of having 'confidence' in prayer before God because our hearts do not condemn us (1 John 3:21-22), John says we are not to believe any spirit but 'test the spirits'. This is done through the litmus test of the Spirit confessing that Jesus Christ who is come in the flesh is from God (1 John 4:2). This testing means to 'discern, prove, try, examine' (Strong, 1977:24) or 'approve, tried and true' (Arndt & Gingrich, 1964:202).

2.3.3 Church and Mission History

Church History

- Origen had a very well developed understanding and theology of discernment. For Origen, both evil and good spirits can influence a person; thereby believers need spiritual grace or the gift of discernment. One can tell the difference between the two types of spirits because the godly spirit is calming while the bad spirit disturbs the spirit (Lienhard, 1980:514).
- Diadochos speaks of two kinds of consolation – one from the Holy Spirit and the other from Satan. The first moves the soul to love, whereas the second has the

illusion of sweetness but is accompanied with doubting and inappropriateness (Lienhard, 1980:524).

- In his commentaries, John Calvin comments on the mutual interplay between the Word and the Spirit:

Therefore, each time the seductive spirits put forward the name of God we are to enquire from the Scriptures if such is the truth. If we go about this with a holy zeal and a pure desire (affection) combined with humility and modesty, the Spirit of discernment will intervene who will be as a faithful interpreter, so as to declare Himself speaking in the Scriptures. (Calvin, 1979a:270).

Calvin picks up the idea of discernment in his 'Commentaries' when he says 'In order to practice discernment correctly, not only must one evaluate all doctrines in the light of the Word of God, but one must have a 'spirit of wisdom' (*un esprit de prudence*) which enables to interpret the Scriptures. In other words, in order 'to be competent judges, it is necessary that the Spirit of discernment be given to us and that we be governed by it' (Calvin, 2000:263).

When summarizing Calvin's commentary on 1 John 4:1-6, Berthoud states:

In the first three verses he sees the Apostle making three points: The danger which threatens the believers and from which they must preserve themselves: the false prophets who under the influence of Satan seek from within the Church 'to corrupt and infect the purity of the Gospel by a diversity of errors'; The means by which believers are to guard themselves from the danger: the testing of the spirits; The injunction not to listen to those who deny 'that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh' (vs. 2b).

- The Catholic tradition has developed the spirituality, discernment teaching and implications of St. Ignatius of Loyola. In fact, the Ignatian teaching of 'Consolations and Desolations' and 'Spiritual Exercises' has been a template for the understanding of discernment in multiple applications from business to

community living. Consolation refers to a sense of peace, tranquillity and quiet as one considers thoughts or a course of action that is born of God. The enemy can equally seek to guide, but if it 'disquiets or disturbs the soul, taking away the peace from before, it is a clear sign that it proceeds from the 'evil spirit' (<http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/seil/seil79.htm>).

- **Thomas Dubay** adds to the thoughtful literature of discernment with his book *Authenticity*. He states that 'Signs of the Holy Spirit' are in three categories: (1) moral behaviour, (2) doctrinal criteria and (3) communal criteria. These signs are 'God Directedness, New Love, Cross Asceticism, Frugality, Uncluttered Freedom, Sound Doctrine, At Odds with the Prevailing Spirit of the World, Unity, Obedience Freely Given' (Dubay, 1997:143-181). He makes the point of communal discernment as a vital key to discerning God's voice.
- **Jonathan Edwards:** As a significant participant and leader during the Great Awakening, the American theologian and pastor Jonathan Edwards had a well developed understanding of spiritual discernment. His focus on understanding true spirituality is in the realm of what he described as 'affections' – inclinations of the soul. These included thought, feelings (but not necessarily emotions) and action. The first step was to understand false signs' (McDermott: 40). Table 7 lists contrasts between affections and emotions, beliefs and unholy affections.

Table 7. Contrasts between affection and emotions, beliefs and unholy affections (adapted from McDermott, 1995:40-41).

| | |
|---|---|
| Affections | Emotions |
| Long lasting Deep Consistent with beliefs Always result in actions Involve mind, will, feelings | Fleeting Superficial Sometimes overpowering Often fail to produce action Feelings often disconnected from the mind and will |
| Affections | Beliefs |
| Always influence behaviour Influence feelings Strong | Do not always influence behaviour Often disconnected from feelings Often weak |
| Holy Affections | Unholy Affections |
| Always inspire thinking feeling doing | All feeling with no thinking All thinking with no feelings A mere doing with no thinking or feeling |
| Holy Affection Examples | Unholy Affections Examples |

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Love for God and others | Hatred for God and others |
| Hatred of sin | Love of sin |
| Hunger for God and divine things | Disgust and indifference for 'divine' |
| Joy | Cynicism |
| Gratitude to God | Bitterness towards God |

- Hudson Taylor:** When faced with the overwhelming need in China for new missionaries, Taylor first called a prayer meeting to determine what to have people pray about. Then there was the ardent use of their best understanding and using his and his team's best wisdom in going through the mission stations, one by one, to determine the needs. Next, with further prayer and faith, they sent out a call to pray for workers into the harvest field and God answered (Taylor, 1888:110-111).

Emerging Data

- Church Planting Movements:** Garrison (2004) points out that prayer is fundamental to every church planting movement studied. At some point in the process, one must discern if it is best to continue with evangelism amongst an unreached people group or move on to another one. The answers to the questions 'where is God working' and 'where is God calling us now' are pivotal ones to discern. Another critical part of the process is specific prayer for leading to the 'man or woman of peace' that God can use to start a church planting movement (Garrison, 2004).

- **Medical Ethics:** In the context of discernment regarding medical ethics, Verhey argues that the Scriptures are the primary tool of discernment and that reading them communally is a key (2005:302).
- **Discernment Survey over the Last Six Decades:** Kees Waaijman has done an overview of publications on discernment starting in 1957. Two global comments observed were that discernment is more 'balanced' and also there has been a greater emphasis on communal discernment in recent times (2013:7). George Hunsberger observes a grid in missional-minded churches that pay attention to the wider context that goes beyond spiritual seeking (cited in Barrett *et al.*, 2004:39):
 - Where they are in a geographic, social, cultural context
 - When they are in the flow of history and change
 - Who they are in continuity with a tradition and reforming it in the present
 - Why they are welcoming God's call and entering God's coming reign

- **Biblical Discernment: Modern Day Models**

The following models have as their base an understanding of the Scriptures based on a conservative evangelical framework.

- The Bull's Eye Model

This approach says that God has a sovereign will, a moral will and a personal, individual will for each person (Friesen & Maxson, 1980:33). All three must line up in order for us to discover God's perfect will for our lives.

It agrees with the bull's eye approach in that God is sovereign, and as Jesus sought to understand and do the will of Father, so should we (John 5:17, 19;

Bible, 1984). It differentiates from the 'bull's eye' approach in that there is often a broader scope of acceptability to God's will.

- The Wisdom Model

The wisdom approach is best explained in the landmark book *Decision Making and the Will of God* (Friesen & Maxson, 1980), which challenges the 'traditional' model. This model states that nowhere in Scripture does God have a perfect will for every detail of a person's life (Friesen & Maxson, 1980:82-83). It focuses on rational decision-making based on the gifts, abilities, and experiences that God gives the individual. It challenges the belief that there is 'one perfect' will of God – who we should marry, what job we should take and so on. In this model, proponents do not need to pray for specific guidance from God, except for the perfunctory prayer for wisdom (James 1:5) of which I have been part of innumerable times.

The 'emerging model' agrees with the wisdom approach in that God has given us many tools and understanding – He is a very pragmatic God. It agrees by saying that there may be other paths that are permissible for us (the perfect versus the permissive will of God). It agrees that God has given us most of what we need through His Word replete with commands, principles and instructions for functioning in the church, in our work, in our interpersonal relationships and in our families. It agrees by saying many people and missions proponents seek needlessly in prayer for things God has already granted or decreed.

The 'emerging model' differentiates from the wisdom model in the sense that following our own human wisdom is often not God's best plan for us (for example, Paul's desire to go to Spain was not in God's sovereignty or timing). The emerging model also disagrees with wisdom model by noting that Jesus spent much time in prayer discerning where the Father was working (John 5:17), and

only doing what the Father did (John 5:19). Might we learn something from the example of Jesus?

- Relationship/Formation Approach

Much of what the relationship/formation model says is that, by increasingly becoming close to God, we can better understand His will for us. As we grow in spiritual disciplines, we have a clearer channel to Him. God loves us and only wants the best for us. Often, a spiritual director can help us understand ourselves better and God's work in our lives and help us choose the best option that is before us out of many.

The emerging model agrees with the relationship/formation approach in that our own spiritual condition is a key to understanding God's will, as illustrated by the Delphi respondents' answers. It agrees that God is graciously leading us.

The emerging model differentiates from the relationship/formation approach by not believing that God has a predetermined will for us. It differentiates by saying that, although God is extremely gracious and works differently with different people, he generally is not 'Rogerian' in His approach to us (i.e. gently probing us to figure it out for ourselves in line with our own desires, experiences and gifts) as it relates to mission advance. Biblical, church and missions history is replete with God calling people out of their personal comfort zones and equipping them along the way for His seemingly divine purposes (see 2 Timothy 1:11 '.... God has called me to be an apostle, a herald and a teacher').

- 'Testing the Spirits' Approach (1 John 4)

Based on the principle of 'testing the spirits' from 1 John 4:1-3 to discern truth from error in false prophets, the testing the spirits approach uses a template of 'revelation/interpretation/application' to determine God's will:

- Revelation: What is the source?
- Interpretation: What does it mean?

- Application: What do I do about it?

Three examples will be offered to describe this process of discernment/guidance for mission advancement.

Examples of Discernment/Guidance for Mission Advancement

Example 1: Assurance of God's Mission: Jewish Line Preserved

In Exodus 41, we read that Pharaoh had two separate dreams. He was convinced of the significance of them, but he was unable to interpret the dreams. Nor were his wise men able to interpret them. Then the Pharaoh's cupbearer remembered that, when he was in prison, he had a dream and Joseph correctly interpreted it along with a dream had by the chief baker. Thus, Pharaoh summoned Joseph.

Revelation: What is the source?

1. After Pharaoh recounted his dream, Joseph immediately affirmed that the source was God (Gen 41:25; Bible, 1984).

Interpretation: What does it mean?

1. Joseph told Pharaoh that the two dreams were 'one and the same' (Gen 41:25; Bible, 1984).
2. Joseph explained that the two dreams were God's way of communicating to Pharaoh that it (a famine) had been firmly decided by God.
3. Joseph gave a clear interpretation that the seven healthy cows and seven full heads of grain represented seven years of abundance, and the seven lean cows and withered heads of grain represented seven years of famine (Gen 41:25-26; Bible, 1984).

Application: What do you do with this information?

1. Joseph immediately launched into telling Pharaoh what must be done to save the people.
2. This included appointing a wise person to administrate the plan.

Pharaoh recognized in Joseph someone in whom the 'spirit of the gods' lies and appointed him to be the administrator.

Example 2: Funds for Mission Advancement

Ananias and Sapphira sold a piece of property and lied about putting the whole price at the disciples' disposal – perhaps to emulate Barnabas who did the same thing.

Revelation: What is the source?

Peter discerned that this was not of God – indeed the enemy had filled their hearts (Acts 5; Bible, 1984). We are not told how this knowledge came to him or by what process he deduced this.

Interpretation: What does it mean?

Peter's discernment led him to the conclusion that Ananias and Sapphira had lied and that they desired to be lauded for their gesture.

Application? What do you do with this information?

Peter first gave each of them the opportunity to tell the truth separately. Instead of telling the truth, they both lied twice (once in presenting the money and again in giving the price received for the land). Peter confronted the husband first and then the wife. In his exhortation to them, he gave a clear principle of New Testament stewardship: that the money was theirs to do as they pleased and there was no compulsion. Their sin was in lying: specifically lying to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3; Bible, 1984). Peter then announced the judgment: death. We are not told how he came to know this judgment.

Consequently, both Ananias and Sapphira died and their bodies were carried out. Great fear of the Lord spread throughout the church (Acts 5:11; Bible, 1984). The purity of the church was protected.

Example 3: Mission Advancement to Europe

Paul had a vision to go to Spain. He was blocked both by Satan and by the 'Spirit of Jesus'. Then he had a vision to go to Macedonia, and this time he immediately

concluded the source was God. We are not told how he determined that it was God sending him there.

Revelation: Testing the Spirits: What is the source of this information?

Paul may have asked questions like 'Is it Satan blocking me?' 'Is God allowing Satan to block me?' or 'Is it God's ultimate will even using the enemy (a.k.a. Job)?'

Interpretation: Prayer: What does this information mean?

It appeared as though God was closing one door, even one fervently desired by Paul, and opening another.

Application: Prayer: What do I do with this information?

Example: Should I wait to go to Macedonia? Should I go now and expect hardships? Paul concluded it was the Lord's will for him to go to Macedonia and not Spain. We know in hindsight that, from Macedonia, the gospel came to Europe and then to North America.

In this section we have examined Scripture, church history and various approaches to spiritual discernment. This subject matter is critical to the proposed theoretical model related to intercessory prayer and the furtherance of mission.

2.4 IMPLICATIONS AND SUMMARY

In this chapter, we have examined the Scriptural foundation for intercessory prayer and the application of teachings and principles demonstrated by the Ante-Nicene church. Three notable theological concepts and challenges were presented as it relates to mission fulfilment: (1) evangelism and the sovereignty of God, (2) the role of pneumatology in mission and (3) four aspects of intercession. Finally, biblical examples of discernment were presented as well as various faith traditions approaches (concluding with some conservative evangelical approaches).

The next chapter focuses on historical models and practitioners as well as emerging data. Finally, a summary of prayer ministry as it relates to the proclamation of the gospel, the birth and strengthening of the church and its impact upon civil society is presented.

CHAPTER 3

MODELS AND PRACTITIONERS

3.1 THE MORAVIANS

3.1.1 Historical Roots

To understand the Moravians, one has to go back to John Wycliffe of England. He translated the Scriptures into the English language, much to the scandal of the established church. Meanwhile, John Huss (1369-1415), a brilliant churchman, took Wycliffe's ideas and taught them using his position as theological teacher (Hutton, 1895:12). Condemning the abuses he saw in the church that did not line up with Scripture, including the sale of indulgences that Martin Luther later also rejected, Huss was burned at the stake (Allen, 1965:9). His supporters and other likeminded believers realized that the church was not going to implement the reforms for which Hus had given his life. They founded the Unitas Fratrum, the 'Unity of Brethren', and were severely persecuted: fleeing to the woods and mountains for many years (Allen, 1965:11). Eventually migrating to Saxony in Germany for freedom's sake, the refugees met Count Nicholas Zinzendorf, who started the Moravians (Blocher & Blandenier, 2013:263).

Count Nicholas van Zinzendorf

Upon losing his father as a boy, Nicholas van Zinzendorf inherited the title of count, which was equal to royalty. As such, Zinzendorf was trained to become a leader in the empire. Showing signs of spiritual sensitivity at an early age, he was sent to study law at the University of Halle to eradicate his ideas of studying for ministry. Two pivotal events made this strategy backfire. First, the debauchery of the students disgusted him. Secondly, an encounter with a painting of the sufferings of Christ seemed to speak to the young count and resulted in a consecration to the Saviour. Also, as befitting royalty, he went on a tour of Europe. At Versailles, he met an archbishop who nurtured his faith. A biographer states that he had the eyes of a visionary, and with eyes of faith, saw the

Christian gospel carried to the far corners of the earth (Lewis, 1962:11). His burning passion was the 'love of Christ that glowed in his heart as a child, the same love that thrilled his middle-age, the same love that inspired his every endeavour' (Lewis, 1962:15).

While enjoying his honeymoon, van Zinzendorf met with the refugees of Unitas Fratrum who had come to Saxony to escape severe persecution. He ceded them land on his estate and the village of Herrnhut was formed. Eventually, many other refugees came so that the community numbered some six hundred refugees.

Herrnhut

Modelled on the simplicity and industry of living coupled with spiritual consecration, the village of Herrnhut experienced various internal doctrinal struggles. It took a man of Zinzendorf's considerable diplomatic acumen and spiritual maturity to negotiate these. However, after many conflict resolution attempts, the situation reached a crisis point and a prayer meeting was called. At that moment, a falling of the Holy Spirit similar to Acts Chapter 2 was experienced, resulting in re-consecration to God's purposes among the pray-ers and the diminishing of the importance of the other matters. It was an experience of the 'nearness of Christ', resulting in men, women and children all desiring to pray. The twenty-four hours of each day was broken up into hourly increments, chosen by lot, and prayer around the clock began fanned by 'breezes of the Spirit' (Greenfield, 1927:24).

3.1.2 Values

Seven values characterized the Moravian movement. First, their motto: 'In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, liberty. In all things, charity' (Greenfield, 1927:25). This motto of the Moravians describes a deeply held value that undoubtedly contributed to the longevity of their movement. Many other organizations have since taken this on as their by-word.

The second value was motivation: the Moravians galvanized the entire community for a missionary mindset. This included involving the community in prayer and in businesses to support the missionary enterprise. Upon setting up a community in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in 1833, the Moravian community counted fifty different business enterprises that were supporting not only Moravian work in that city, but also in the USA and Germany.

The third value was education: education was always a high priority for the movement.

Fourth, hymnology characterized the Moravian movement. The hymnology of the Moravians involved choirs that also doubled as a means of Christian education.

The fifth value was ecumenism: Zinzendorf was a staunch defender of Lutheranism and did not want to detract from it, but rather be 'a church within a church'. A. B. Simpson, founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, followed this example many years later. The Moravians were charter members of the World Council of Churches, for example. The unity of the Moravian church was a testimony of the *koinonia* that motivated their earlier Unitas Fratrum roots.

Prayer was the sixth value: the one hundred year unbroken prayer meeting for missions commenced in 1727 by the Moravian Community of Herrnhut is unparalleled in church and mission history. It was at a Moravian group prayer time, at 3:00 a.m. that John Wesley and George Whitfield were coached concerning the deeper life and prayer, having a mighty experience of the Holy Spirit (Greenfield, 1927:33-34).

The seventh value was record keeping: the meticulous recording of statistics by the Moravians means that we have excellent records of the numbers of missionaries sent and the baptized believers.

3.1.3 Sending of Missionaries

In 1731, Zinzendorf was invited to the coronation of his cousin, King of Denmark. After a remarkable discernment process that included a collective discernment of leaders and

the casting of the lot, he went to the coronation believing that God had a special purpose for that visit. At the king's court, he met a slave from the island of St. Thomas who told him of their extremely difficult living conditions. This was the impetus for sending the first Moravian missionary. This outward focus became the watchword of the Moravian movement; and by 1852 (their one hundred fiftieth birthday), they had sent out over 2,000 missionaries and baptized 44,757 people. This represented one missionary sent for every 92 members, compared to one every 5000 for other Protestant denominations (Blocher & Blandenier, 2013:276).

3.1.4 In Hindsight

Although the enthusiasm and mobilization of the Moravians towards missions is laudable, Blocher and Blandenier (2013:277-278) list four key mistakes that the Moravians made in their missionary enterprise. First, they did not have a missionary strategy. For example, the first Moravian missionary was a potter, but when he got to St. Thomas, he realized the clay there was unsuitable for pottery and had to find a different profession to support himself. There was no consideration of demographics. Second, the lack of organizational infrastructure, especially to help, sustain and counsel missionaries while they were on the foreign field, was detrimental. Third, Moravian missionaries were sent out with nothing but a passion and no education or understanding of culture, demographics, etc. Fourth, the continuation of using the lot as a means of decision-making was another mistake the Moravians made. While it has a New Testament precedent, it was used before Pentecost (Blocher & Blandenier, 2013:278). These weaknesses led to much loss of life, needless hardships and theological division.

3.1.5 Significance of the Moravians

Despite these mistakes, the Moravians had a great influence on the church and missions. John Wesley was profoundly touched by the Moravians after meeting them on a trip to America. One could say that, consequently, church, missions and world history was changed. William Carey, the founder of modern missions, was also deeply touched

by the Moravian ministry, and the ministry served as a benchmark for the launching of the modern missions movement. Furthermore, eighteenth and nineteenth century missionary movements drew their inspiration from the Moravians.

3.2 HISTORICAL REVIVAL MOVEMENTS AND KEY PLAYERS

Throughout the history of the Christian church, intercessory prayer has not always focused on the advancement of the gospel and the revival of God's people. Divisions in the church, including between theological positions, have caused ebbs and flows in evangelistic and mission concern. Yet, as Robb stated, 'According to the writings of J. Edwin Orr and David Bryant, united prayer has preceded every great movement in the history of the church' (1998:200). This section contains a selected synopsis of movements and key players that used strategic intercessory prayer to advance the mission of God.

3.2.1 Jonathan Edwards and the Great Awakenings

Jonathan Edwards was a brilliant theologian and a former president of Princeton University. He preached one of the most famous sermons in history entitled 'Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God', which led to a sense of fear of God's judgment. Less known is Edwards' understanding of prayer that led to revival and mission advance. Edwards was convinced that praying Christians could exert a powerful influence on the fortune of the church and the world (Kreider, 2003:436). He also coined a phrase popularized by J. Edwin Orr as a theme in his analysis of revivals, 'When God has something very great to accomplish for the church, 'tis His will that there should precede it the extraordinary prayer of His people' (Kreider, 2003:436). Edwards was concerned when the revival of God's people ebbed and thus issued a famous call to prayer called 'An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God's People in Extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth, pursuant to Scripture-Promises and Prophecies Concerning the End Times' (Kreider, 2003:436).

David Prothero (2004) notes that the Great Awakening of 1758 was the greatest revival that ever happened on the North American continent and demonstrated the role of intercessory prayer and the movement of the Spirit. This revival, as well as the 'noon hour prayer' movement of God, focused on 2 Chronicles 7:14: the passionate but not emotional seeking of God's face. George Whitfield, the famous British evangelist, came to the US and travelled with Edwards throughout the colonies: spurring on the revival. Edwards himself felt the need of prayer and solicited prayer support from Whitfield with the stated purpose of 'being an instrument for His glory and the advancement of the kingdom of Christ' (Kreider, 2003:453).

New Englanders agreed that prayer was their central devotional practice. The vital breath of Christianity came not from the clerical sermon but from the prayer of the believer (Cotton Maher, Boston 1703, as quoted in Kidd, 2004:20). A unique feature of the Great Awakening was that the movement was a lay one with prayer societies forming for the promotion of prayer. The prayer movement was also enhanced by the burgeoning print industry. Both sides of the Atlantic spurred the other side on with prayer guides and journals (Kidd, 2004:20). Isaac Watts (1674-1748), the famous hymn writer of 'When I Survey the Wondrous Cross' and 'O God our Help in Ages Past', wrote an extensive prayer guide (Kidd, 2004:20). William Law's *A Call to a Devout and Holy Life* was an extensive regulation of the life of prayer focusing on five different stages of prayer (Kidd, 2004:21). Prayer societies sprang up and were very popular in the early eighteenth century England and the US.

3.2.2 Charles Finney

Charles Finney was a noteworthy evangelist and analyst of revival. His 'Lectures on Religion' was an analysis of revival and the role of prayer. It is estimated that 500,000 people became Christians through Finney's ministry (Scotland, 2013:137). His ministry was instrumental in D.L. Moody coming to Christ, who continued to fan the flame of revival and the importance of prayer.

3.2.3 D.L. Moody

Moody was an uneducated but brilliant man who had a unique experience with the Holy Spirit, crying out to God in prayer for a new filling of the Spirit when he received a baptism of the love of God (1987:18). After this baptism, he preached the same sermons as he had before, but noted a drastic difference in the response (1987:18). His view was that the Holy Spirit gave power to serve, stating that ‘though Christian men and women have the Holy Spirit living in them, He is not dwelling with them in power’ (Moody, 1987:51).

3.2.4 Jonathan Goforth

A Canadian Presbyterian ministerial student, Jonathan Goforth, was touched deeply by the visit of D.L. Moody to Knox College, Toronto. Eventually appointed to missionary service by the Presbyterians, he went to China (Goforth, 1937:64). There Goforth was beaten and almost died during the Boxer Rebellion. He was profoundly impacted by revivals in Manchuria and Korea, eventually writing the famous book *By My Spirit* highlighting the importance of intercessory prayer in the revival of the church and the spread of the gospel (Goforth, 2004). He noted the powerful impact that Finney’s writings had on him, and he became determined to understand and implement these laws of revival (2004:loc.234).

When Goforth shared with Hudson Taylor about going to an unreached part of China where the China Inland Mission had strived for ten years to penetrate with the gospel, as recounted in Rosalind Goforth’s book *Goforth of China*, Taylor responded: ‘You must go forward on your knees’ (Goforth, 1937:80). In a sermon, Goforth noted the principles of prayer that Spurgeon called his congregation together with in 1858 and said, ‘The Spirit of God is now saving multitudes in the U.S. Since God is no respecter of persons, we will pray until He sends similar showers of blessing upon our land’ (Goforth, 2002). The Mighty Revival of 1858 was the result.

In a personal interview, Orr (1912-1987) recounted the relationship between prayer and the movement of God’s Spirit. He repeatedly stressed that in every revival he had

studied: ‘when God wants to do something, He gets His people ‘a praying’” (pers. comm., 1982, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada).

3.2.5 Mission Societies

J. Edwin Orr (1976) noted the impact that prayer and revival had in the starting up of many mission societies – scores from the US and Europe. Of particular note was the blockage of missions in Latin American and Muslim countries, and thus focus was given to the Pacific Islands (Orr, 1976:35-46).

Throughout the history of the Christian Church, intercessory prayer has been focused on the advancement of the revival of God’s people, the advancement of the gospel and the effect of the gospel on society. A chart developed by Stuart Piggin (2001:112) shows the range of revival impact on an ascending scale from 1 to 6:

R1 - Individual revival

R2 - Local church or vicinity revival

R3 - Regional revival (such as in the 1740s)

R4 - Whole culture is impacted (the Second Great Awakening in the 1940s)

R5 - Societal revival (Wesley’s in the 1800s; the 1904 Welsh Revival)

R6 - Universal revival (Millennial Age)

3.3 EARLY MISSION LEADERS TO CHINA AND PRAYER EMPHASIS

After following the calling of God by serving in China with another mission, Hudson Taylor founded the China Inland Mission in 1865. Looking through the inaugural issue of the *China’s Millions* magazine, first published in 1876 (Taylor, 1875-76), it is clear that passion for evangelism was a top conviction of Taylor’s. The title of the magazine was chosen to indicate there was one missionary for every one million Chinese persons (Taylor, 1876:iii).

Another key passion of Taylor was prayer for the calling, sustaining, protection and blessing of missionaries. The maxim of prayer that was foundational to the mission was 'Move God before Moving Men'. The theme verse of "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit," says the Lord of Hosts' (Zechariah 4:6; Bible, 1984) was prominent. A note in the first edition of *China's Millions* reported that Taylor went to Spurgeon's Metropolitan Tabernacle prayer meeting where 'about 1500 persons were present, where an address on the needs of China, an account of the work there and the brethren about to depart were earnestly committed to God in prayer' (1875-1876:36). Another noteworthy account by Taylor – perhaps instructive – described what happened when he called a prayer meeting to pinpoint accurately what they were asking God for:

It was recognized . . . that we needed clear light and Divine guidance before we could pray definitely; so we first spent time in united prayer for that guidance, and then went over the map of China, province by province and station by station. Representatives of many of these districts were present, and knew well the need . . . When added together, we found that the total was no less than seventy. It was at once seen that we could not receive so large a number of new missionaries in one year; our house accommodation was then insufficient, and had the necessary funds been in hand, the renting of fresh mission premises inland is usually tedious and difficult. We thought, however, that within three years we could readily receive this number, and spent the remainder of the afternoon in asking for them, and accepting them by faith from God . . . We prepared an appeal for prayer, and circulated it among the members of the mission for the signatures of those who would undertake to pray daily for "the seventy" . . . Many responded to this appeal, which the Lord abundantly answered. (1888:110-111)

Hudson Taylor's leadership values included careful discernment, passion for the multiple unreached people groups in China, meticulous records, contextualization of the

gospel and rapid indigenization of the work paralleled with the importance of translating the Word of God into the language of the people.

As the work progressed, the killing of missionaries increased and the stress of the Boxer Rebellion mounted. Eventually, Taylor had a stroke and he was forced to rest in Switzerland. After much prayer, he made a controversial choice regarding a successor: D. E. Hoste.

Hoste had distinguished himself as a man of prayer, a missionary with the language and one who understood contextualization. Upon Taylor's sickness, Hoste took up more administrative tasks. He at first refused the appointment of Taylor to succeed him (Fung, 2012). Eventually, though, he acquiesced. As the leader of CIM, he spent his mornings in prayer for the many requests of the growing missionary band, praying for the over 1,000 members and their children by name. He wrote 'I have found that waiting upon God and intercession on behalf of others is really the most vital and effective part of my service. The persistent opposition of the powers of darkness can only be overcome by persistence and importunity in prayer' (Fung, 2012:24-25).

Colleagues of Hoste agreed on a motto that described his life: 'He lived to be forgotten so that Christ would be remembered'. Sure enough, personal research in the OMF headquarter archives bore this out with the paucity of material concerning him. This lack of documents was also due in part to the mission's hurried rush to leave Shanghai, the CIM capital, as the threat of the Communists loomed. Many documents that link Hoste to Chinese Christians were destroyed in the mission's hasty exit. The spiritual legacy of D. E. Hoste, however, was clear. With his motto of 'praying first', his patience in restoring relationships, and his reluctance to pronouncing judgement, the mission counted 1,360 missionaries by the time he retired in 1935 (Fung, 2012:32).

J. O. Fraser, a missionary with CIM, went to work with the Lisu people in Northern China in the early 1900s. On January 15, 1915, he prayed for several hundred Lisu families to come to Christ (Taylor, 1988:loc.1477). The principles used in his prayers

included praying the Word of God, asking specifically, learning to pray through an issue until God gives the victory, continuing to labour for the result and praying for all manner of logistical concerns. Fraser also acknowledged that faith has 'fixed limits' (he had faith for five to six hundred families but not one thousand, which would have been overwhelming; Taylor, 1988:loc.1477). Ten years later, in 1925, between five and six hundred families turned to Christ in a very brief time span. The principle of 'praying through to victory' was again key to Fraser's understanding of prayer. ⁷He wrote:

Do we spend time waiting upon God to know His will before attempting to embark on His promises? That this is a principle upon which God works He has informed us very plainly in 1 John 5:14, 15. ('And this is the confidence that we have in Him that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us: and if we know that He hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him'.) I cannot help feel that this is a cause of many unanswered prayers. James 4:3 has a broad application, and we need to search our hearts in its light. (Taylor, 1988:loc.1484)

The explosive growth of the Chinese church would appear to be boiled down simplistically to strong discipleship, radical faith and a very strong prayer life. A study of the Word of Life house church network, with approximately 20 million members, shows corporate prayer as a central part of their worship gatherings (25%) and private prayer as a central part in their discipleship and daily practice (Xin, 2008:157-184). Additionally, the Jesus Family, which was modelled after the New Testament early

⁷ In a personal interview with an international leader in Asia, the same principles came to the fore — particularly when talking about opening up an Asian region that had been long closed and resistant to the gospel. Careful consideration of the opportunity included extensive personal and corporate prayer, vision trips, seeing how God was lining up circumstances from working with people on the ground in that country and a growing burden for the penetration for the gospel (pers. comm., Richard Schlitt, May 22, 2015).

church, emphasized prayer. Their leader, Mr. Zhing, credited Hudson Taylor with showing him how to live a life of self-sacrifice (Kim, 2011).⁸

It would appear as though the Chinese church reflects the prayerful DNA of the original mission leaders.

3.4 KOREA

Korea is a land with much history and conflict. Conflicts with China and particularly Japan dominate the country's historical landscape. Two hundred years of difficult mission history started to bear fruit in the early 1900s, and as of 2010, Jenkins (2010) reported that 30% of Koreans were considered Christians with many of world's largest churches there.

The first reported stirrings of revival happened in 1903 through the ministry of prayer, and they intensified to include 10,000 people coming to Christ in 1904. At one point, it was suggested to cut back the amount of prayer, but instead they intensified it, and revival broke out again (Goforth, 2015:7). At that point, Jonathan Goforth decided to investigate himself. He visited eight mission stations in Korea, and then reported on the situation to his Chinese brothers and sisters (2015:3). In his report, he told them a Mr. Swallow told him it was good that they spent months in prayer preparation, because God did more in a few days than they could have done in a month (Goforth, 2015:12). This appears to be a common denominator in Korea and elsewhere: after much prayer, God does deep spiritual work in a hurry: both in the church and in the community. At Tan Ku, in a southern provincial capital, they decided to hold prayer for ten days for revival. During the seventh day, the Holy Spirit came with a church formed by reading the Scriptures without any Christian presence. Puzzling about how to be baptized, each new believer went home to his/her own bathtub to be immersed (Goforth, 2015:15). The

⁸ A personal conversation with the 'Heavenly Man' Brother Yun (who was a Chinese church house leader who survived unimaginable persecution) demonstrated a life centred on prayer, which was affirmed by his editor and biographer (Hattaway, 2008:1).

revival was characterized by prayer and confession of sin, and it spilled over into the communities: resulting in a great harvest of new believers.

In Philip Jenkin's analysis of the astronomical growth of the church in Korea, he lists several contributing factors: sociological factors such as the oppression of the Japanese and Christians offering relief help, Christians speaking up on behalf of the poor and disenfranchised (2010) and Christians offering hope during a dark time. In stark contrast to Jenkin's analysis, Paul Yonggi Cho, throughout his book *Prayer: Key to Revival* (1984), makes it clear where the power to change came from. Korean native-born dissertation writers also point directly to the subject of the central role of prayer (Hwang, 2010; Han, 2002). Meanwhile Paul Stewart Gunter, in his dissertation entitled 'A Case Study of the Prayer Ministry of Yoido Full Gospel Church' (1987) points to sociological factors, such as history, culture, society and politics providing a fertile environment for the gospel. But then he adds that mission strategy, evangelism, the role of women, hard work and the cell system contrasts with the simple explanation of most Koreans as to why the church grows: prayer (1987:55). Growth has slowed down in recent years.

3.5 AFRICA

African Prayer

African Christians have a rich heritage of prayerfulness, the subject of which several dissertations alone could be written. In this section, we will briefly seek to understand the traditional African spiritual worldview, the prayer paradigm arising from that, African Christian prayer practice and some notable African prayer leaders.

Traditional African Worldview

John Mbiti, in his extensive analysis of African mostly rural societies, notes that all have a notion of God. African knowledge of God from that timeframe was expressed in proverbs, prayers, stories and religious ceremonies. Many African societies consider God to be omniscient and omnipresent (Mbiti, 1990:30). Every African recognizes God as 'one' (Mbiti, 1990:35). God is typically seen most fundamentally as the provider, both

of crops and fertility, with creation being the most widely acknowledged work of God (Mbiti, 1990:39). God is the Lord master and ruler and judge of all (Mbiti, 1990:46). Significantly, the physical and the spiritual are but two dimensions of the one and same universe – they dovetail – there is no sacred and secular (Mbiti, 1990:56). Creation is seen as the greatest act of God, which He did ‘ex-nihilo’ (Mbiti, 1990:39-40).

For many African peoples, this is a religious universe. Physical and spiritual are but two dimensions the one and the same universe...they dovetail. The religious dimension is not an academic proposition; it is an empirical experience, which reaches its height in acts of worship (Mbiti, 1990:56).

Prayer is the most common form of worship (Mbiti, 1990:61). Many Africans are very fond of expressing their worship through singing. Prayers are directed especially to the God who provides materially and also for health and protection from danger. One key request is for fertility. Blessing prayer can be for individual needs, but also for communal ones, as it often is an important role in the social and religious life.

Prayer postures include kneeling, standing, falling down before God and sometimes raising eyes and hands towards heaven (Mbiti, 1990:65).

The Africa Bible Commentary, written by over 70 African scholars, puts a unique African perspective on Jesus’ teaching on prayer in Matthew 6 as it relates to calling God ‘Abba Father’. In Africa, the relationships between children and their parents have traditionally tended to be formal, whereas relationships between alternate generations are more intimate, such as a grandchild relating to his grandparents with complete freedom and informality. This is the kind of relationship Jesus encourages us to cultivate with God (Adeyemo, 2010:1122).

Tite Tienou adds that a major worldview among Africans is that life is orderly and good, but that accidents and ‘vicissitudes of life are attributed to evil beings’ (as cited in Carson, 2008:269). They then need to spend much time for protection, as religion blocks these plans. The structure of African prayer is best described as a ‘triangle’ with

three actors: God, man and the adversary. The most important part of the prayer is the 'petition' (Carson, 2008:270).

Additionally, throughout their history in South Africa, the Dutch Reformed Church has had prayer as central - including praying and singing the Psalms as well prayer interspersed throughout the typical church service.

Three Prayer Vignettes from the Far Past (1867, 1935) and Recent History (2017)

- In 1867, missionaries were being blamed for lack of rain by the rain makers in the Easter Cape of South Africa in the Transkei Region. Finally, a missionary encouraged the people to come to the chapel the following Sunday and they would pray for rain. The great chief and his mother (Nomsa) and many others gathered. The missionary asked the people to kneel down and pray to the Lord God of Elijah. As they knelt, big drops of rain came down on the zinc roof, which continued all afternoon and night...with the river becoming flooded. Brother Davis got the name of a great rain maker, but signs, wonders and even miracles will not change the hearts of sinners, and Nomsa died not believing and her royal son remains...increasing dark and wicked...to this day (Taylor, 1877:273-277).
- Blasio Kigozi taught in a Church Missionary Society school (Rwanda) in 1935. He invested a week in his room in solitude and prayer. The Holy Spirit touched him with deep repentance, so he left the prayer room and went first to his wife. Then he gathered his students and proclaimed Christ. Conviction gripped the students who wept in repentance. Within weeks, Blasio took ill and died. Newborn Christians (nicknamed 'abaka' – 'persons on fire') organized mission outreach teams across Uganda and then neighbouring countries. Across East Africa, believers gathered for prayer and the Holy Spirit moved through the region with hundreds of thousands converted and brought into the fellowship of the churches. The East Africa Revival Fellowship has confirmed as transformation a mission prayer movement ever since Blasio's week of prayer Retreat (Shenk, as cited in Bonk, 2010:353)

* South Africa—

‘It’s Time’ – The Largest Prayer Meeting in African History Held in South Africa

Saturday, April 22, 2017, saw the biggest prayer gathering in South African history, as close to two million people gathered from all parts of South Africa to pray. The event was held on a farm just north of Bloemfontein, which is centrally located in South Africa.

Some 1.7 million people registered on-line to attend this historic occasion and thousands more arrived on the day. The multi-racial crowd spread over more than a kilometre relied on multiple large screens and many kilometres of cabling for the sound system.

Popular South African farmer/evangelist and subject of the book and film ‘*Faith Like Potatoes*’ Angus Buchan called for a nation-wide prayer meeting in light of the current spiritual and socio-political decline evident in the nation. The event was called, ‘It’s Time’.

Buchan said, ‘We are tired of people taking the law into their own hands. We are going to call upon the Lord to bring justice, peace and hope to our beloved South Africa. He says ‘If My people who are called by My name’—that is you and I, so I want to ask you to pray for us’.

As people kept on streaming to Wilde Al’s farm near Bloemfontein for the ‘It’s Time’ prayer meeting, organizers were forced to delay the start of proceedings by more than an hour due to people still coming to the venue in large numbers.

The prayer time was duplicated in hundreds of town[s] and suburbs around the nation in churches, rented halls and homes around South Africa. No television broadcasts were allowed, but Christians around the country followed the event from the social media posts of their friends. Busses and airplanes were chartered for the event.

Despite the magnitude of the event, there was no television advertising and little news coverage beforehand. Farmers in the area opened their farms to hundreds of thousands of campers at no cost. Gridlock was reported for up to 40 kilometres (25 miles) away and the event was delayed for an hour and a half to allow more to arrive. (Bougas, 2017:para. 1-7)⁹

These three vignettes show a significant tradition of prayer that continues to this day. It is not possible to briefly summarize the rich and long tradition of African prayer. Nonetheless, Tienou (as cited in Carson, 2008:270) lists three lessons we can learn from African prayer.

- Rediscover the importance and centrality of prayer (we have been infected by rationalism).
- The importance of community prayer
- Keeping worship and theology together.

3.6 EMERGING DATA

3.6.1 Prayer and the Social Sciences

It is noted that, where there is a worldview that is more accepting of the supernatural, prayer for God to work powerfully seems to be much more widespread. This kind of believing faith produces seemingly audacious prayers that lead to evangelism in mission. It is modelled in the Gospels and Acts, and it is much less common in the western approach to Christianity and witness than it is in the eastern approach. Two categories relating to prayer and mission advance will be examined briefly here: (1) mental health and (2) societal impact.

⁹ One local person I personally interviewed told me he was proud that there was no violence and the farms were cleaned up afterwards.

3.6.2 Prayer and Mental Health

An increasing number of studies point to the various benefits of prayer. In America's foremost trade review, *Psychology Today*, Routledge observes there is a 'growing body of evidence indicating that prayer.....can be beneficial for individuals and society' (2014:para 10). The five benefits he mentions are:

1. Prayer improves self-control
2. Prayer makes you 'nicer'
3. Prayer makes you more forgiving
4. Prayer increases trust
5. Prayer offsets the negative health effects of stress. (Routledge, 2014:outline)

In research examining 23 studies and results, the over 100,000 participants analysed indicated 'prayer demonstrated a significant improvement for physical and psychological ailments' (Thompson, 2007:iv).

After a fourteen-year longitudinal study, it was found that those who attended worship services at least monthly had a 22% lower risk of depression (Balbuena *et al.*, 2013:225-32). As the church gathers to worship, pray and hear the Bible proclaimed, there appears to be a verifiable healing component. This could be extrapolated from John 10:10, Jesus states that while the 'devil comes to steal, kill and destroy, I have come to give life, life to the full', and Luke 4:18 where Jesus quotes Isaiah 'The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on Me . . . to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives'.¹⁰ Crushing guilt is a common symptom of depression — an observation that goes back to Freud (Pappas, 2012). The Apostle Paul references the release of anxiety and replacement peace that comes through prayer (c.f. Philippians 4:6, 7).

¹⁰ In a personal interview with an Evangelical Nepalese leader after 8,964 had been killed in the April 2015 earthquake, he referenced the very practical help shown his fellow citizens in Christian love after the earthquake as a factor in the mass conversions¹⁰. (pers. comm., Ram Prasad Shrestha, May 2015).

3.6.3 Prayer: Historical, Cultural and Societal Impact

A 1919 report from the General Secretary of Africa Inland Mission shows the statistics of the mission. Sandwiched in-between the reporting of the number of medical clinics and schools is the repeated emphasis on personal and corporate prayer (General Secretary Report, 1919).

William Wilberforce is well known in his role as a Parliamentarian who spearheaded the abolition of slavery and later the emancipation of slaves. What is less well known is his conversion to Christianity after a hedonistic lifestyle (Pollack, 1977:35). Perhaps most importantly, this refocusing caused Wilberforce to centre and root himself in the study of scripture and in prayer, with a different attitude about time and money (Mextaxas, 2007:63). Wilberforce understood that there would be no gospel advance in a society sceptical of faith and scripture without persistent prayer. Accordingly, he made the presence and pursuit of God his central priority. To this end, he wrote, 'Of all things, guard against neglecting God in the secret place of prayer' (www.brainyquote.com/quotes/william_wilberforce_188422).

The Methodist field secretary for Western Canada, Hugh Dobson (1879-1956), was a far cry from the image of the otherworldly cleric so evocative of Victorian Protestantism. The modern clergyman's purview lay beyond the walls of the institutional church, for he was expected to be a student of the social sciences and scientific agriculture, a coordinator and interpreter of community social surveys, a social activist and a knowledgeable expert in the design of state social legislation, as well as a powerfully emotive revivalist preacher (Christie & Gauvreau, 1996:xiii, xiv). From 1912-1951, Dobson wrote and spoke on a wide range of social issues that included 'marriage and family, immigration, prison reform, child welfare, temperance venereal disease, observance of the Sabbath, human rights, racial relations, the disabled, labour, health insurance and gambling (<https://www.archeion.ca/hugh-dobson-collection>). He and other social reformers with Christian roots promoted several critical values which continue in Canada: compassion as evidenced in the universal health care, welcome to immigrants and care for human rights.

A landmark study unequivocally notes the relationship between conversionary Protestantism and growth in liberal democracy (Woodberry, 2012:244). Conversionary Protestants are defined as those who actively persuade others to adhere to their beliefs, emphasize lay vernacular Bible reading, emphasize personal faith/choice/values and do not emphasize group membership or sacraments (Woodberry, 2012:244). These four characteristics were found to be not accidental but instrumental in not only fostering liberal democracy, but the rise of civil liberties such as religious liberty, mass education, voluntary organizations membership, conferring of legal protection for non-whites in the 19th and early 20th century, educated women, medical care and leading nationalistic movements that empowered ordinary citizens (Woodberry, 2012:244).

Since the publication of this study, over twelve others have affirmed the findings (Dilley, 2014:41), making it an authoritative voice. Robin Grier, Professor of Economics, International, and Area Studies at the University of Oklahoma, called it 'The best work out there on religion and economic development' (Dilley, 2014:40).

What was the *raison d'être* for these social reforms? It was based on both the commands and principles derived from the Bible, notably the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. Bosch states that 'Taking this into consideration, it could be said that the positive historical and societal results came from God through His servant missionaries. The way that they were often directed was in response to their prayers.

Michael Welker argues for the powerful effect of the 'Spirit' which generates a 'structured or organismic pluralism', a 'body forming' community with different gifts and responsibilities to work for a complex 'common good' and that the 'combination of spiritual and Christological orientation is very powerful in the discovery and shaping of the normative structures of civil society" (Welker *et al.*, 2017:10-11).

French historian Elie Halevy wrote that the decisive difference between British and French development stemmed from indirect and unanticipated consequences of the Methodist Revival (1995).

On December 31, 1738, when participating in a night of prayer in company with George Whitfield and others from Oxford, the power of God came mightily upon a group of believers. Wesley's ministry was birthed in prayer, when his heart was 'strangely warmed' (Miller, 1966:67). From then on, he had a new power and result. According to Wesley, one is to pray without ceasing, but he also instructed his followers on prayer – especially related to the small group meeting and discipleship. A monthly watch night service developed into a quarterly one based on the early church all night of prayer (Miller, 1966:684). Days of fasting and prayer, chiefly for the 'advance of God's work' (Miller, 1966:185) continued right up to his eighty-second year.

Wesley's ministry birthed in and sustained by prayer had an economic effect as well. He instructed his followers to work as hard as they could, give as much as they could and save as much as they could.

Missionary statesman A.L. Cook (2007) opines that Wesley himself both rejoiced and lamented at historical drift. While rejoicing in the people coming out of poverty, he mourned that, at the same time as they became productive, frugal, industrious citizens, they became affluent. This led to pride, selfishness and covetousness, particularly in the second and third generations (Cook, 2007).

In a far-ranging study, Barro and McCleary noted that increases in believing in heaven and hell 'tend to increase economic growth' (2003:36). J. Edwin Orr reported that six hundred schools were founded after the Great Awakenings (1976).¹¹

At the heart of the Christian faith is the practise of prayer.

¹¹ Peter Dugulescu (1945-2008) was a former Member of Parliament and one of the original 'Repenters' who worked to bring down Communism in Romania. In a personal interview, he reported it was as though God had unleashed a series of events that nothing was going to stop (Dugulescu, 2004). The commitment to prayer was clear throughout the climactic events of that revolution and his life. After two terms in Parliament, he founded an orphanage to address the huge need of children needing care.

3.6.4 Church Planting Movements

When the Apostle Paul responded to the call of God to be the apostle to the Gentiles, churches were planted amongst previously unreached people groups. The expansion of the kingdom in obedience to Jesus' Great Commission through the church has been the primary strategy of Christians over two millennia. What does prayer have to do with it?

In the last thirty years, there has been a resurgence in church planting and a renewed understanding of the factors that make it successful. The term 'Church Planting Movements' (CPMs) has been coined to identify the rapid multiplication of churches. Churches begin to qualify for this category when multiplying to their fourth plus generation (Smith & Kai, 2011:loc 2630). While prayer is not the only factor behind these movements, the data indicates that it is the primary factor. As Garrison observed, 'Prayer has been fundamental to every Church Planting Movement we have observed' (1999:29).

A study published by Slack and Shehane in 2003 indicated 80 churches in a country hostile to the gospel. After forty years there were two recorded Christians. Suddenly, a mother church of five hundred worshippers spawned twelve daughter churches, **which** were illegal in that context. A follow up study in 2013 revealed very little change (as cited by Garrison, 2014:98). Persecution, especially among family members, has contributed to this.

Regarding asking God to send out workers to plant churches around the world, Hesselgrave and McGavran poignantly state 'Prayer is the starting point . . . But prayer is more than the starting point. It is the continuing force behind the entire program of outreach' (2000:101). Robinson indicates that there is a close analogy between Joshua praying for the walls of Jericho to fall and strategic prayer, which collapses barriers to the gospel that are both spiritual and cultural (1996:87-91). Robb adds that it is prayer that can break down barriers and facilitate spiritual breakthrough in the unreached around the world (1998:197-202). Moerman (2005) adds that prayer is a central part of all church planting movements through the spiritual preparation of the planter shaped

through prayer, the launching strategy that is gained through prayer, the leadership chosen through prayer and the unity gained and maintained through prayer. Slagle goes so far as to say, 'Prayer is the primary role of church planters and their core team' (2006:12). Garrison places extraordinary prayer at the top of his list of ten common elements found in every church planting movement (2004:172).

Addison (2015) asks and answers the question 'What do Movement pioneers do?' He replies by saying they follow the example of Jesus and His disciples in doing the following: seeing the end by obeying Christ's call to mission; connecting with people by crossing boundaries to establish contact; sharing the gospel; training disciples by not only leading them to Christ but equipping them for witness and life; gathering communities by forming new churches and multiplying workers by launching new teams in unreached areas (2015:43-44). Prayer life and growth is a major part of their DNA.

One major shaper of CPMs is the T4T methodology pioneered by Ying Kai. From zero, the movement had grown to 1.7 million people in 2002. These numbers were verified by a team of professional researchers (Smith & Kai, 2011:2) who noted multiplication to the 18th generation, a remarkable finding. Prayer is central in the outreach as well as the discipleship training of the movement. The prayer factors in outreach include: praying for God to show Himself powerfully to do acts of kindness, praying for God to answer with miraculous power to demonstrate Himself and praying for God to specifically reveal the 'person of peace' that a CPM can be launched through. Two common questions practitioners employ are 'How can I pray for you?' and 'If God were to do a miracle in your life today, what would it be for you?' (Addison, 2015:129). When inquiring into the personal life of Ying Kai, it was noted that he rises early in the morning and prays generally for two hours per day, additionally praying before ever sharing his faith with others (Smith & Kai, 2011:loc 3923). Perhaps this is the fuel from his teaching on the faith-filled life where he states, 'Pray for what you need and take a risk' (Smith & Kai, 2011:loc.2198).

One researcher investigating church planting movements among unreached people groups noted that two out of the top five common success points of growing CPMs amongst unreached people groups included the practice of prayer: 'I pray for God's supernatural intervention as a sign that confirms the gospel, and I pray for the needs of my friends in their presence' (James Nelson, Lausanne Researchers Conference Malaysia, May 2015).

3.6.5 National Church Mission Sending Agencies

Waltz suggests that, in the next 10-20 years, there will be more missionaries from African, Latin American and Asian nations than from Western ones (Walz, 2008.para 39-43). The following are some examples from Asia.

China hopes to send out 100,000 missionaries within the current generation (Yung, 2009). In Korea, there was a combined commitment between churches and mission agencies to send one million tent-making missionaries by 2020 and 100,000 missionaries by 2030 (Ma, 2007:12). In India: the Friends Missionary Prayer Band started and was formed from a prayer meeting in Kovilapatty from different Vacation Bible Schools, with the motto of 'Go or send'. While they started out as a prayer/support ministry, with missionaries supported by prayer cells in congregations, they sent their first missionary in 1971. There were 65 missionaries in 1976 and 440 in 1988 and now there are over 11,000 indigenous missionaries (Pothen, 1990). Ma reports that more than 5000 missionaries had been sent by the Indian churches to reach Hindus and Muslims inside and outside India (2007:14). Meanwhile, it is purported by Yung (2009) that the Indian Missions Association had sent out more than 30,000 missionaries by 2009, and that the Philippine church hoped to send 200,000 tentmakers. The primary growth strategy of these groups is birthing church – i.e. church planting.

3.7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Prayer and the Proclamation of the Gospel

We have established that there is a relationship between intercessory prayer and the sending of missionaries, as evidenced by the Moravian church, new sending churches and church planting movements.

Prayer and the Birth and Strengthening of the Church

We have ascertained that the 'prayer-full' DNA of the early Christian missionaries is even today strongly evidenced by the Chinese church and its leaders.

Prayer and the Impact Upon Civil Society

We have observed that, through the initial thrust of prayer and revival seeing dramatic lifestyle changes and a thirst for knowledge, hundreds of schools were started in the US.

In the next section, we will look at the Delphi Research Project designed to glean data from practitioners of prayer who are missionaries, mission leaders, vocational Christian leaders and intercessors.

Chapter 4

RESEARCH PROJECT

4.1 INTRODUCTION AND SCHEMA

The research question of this dissertation states: ***How can a practical model of strategic intercessory prayer be developed that is scripturally, theologically and missiologically sound for missions practice today?***

This section seeks to explain the research project. It is important to note that this research is not seeking to prove conclusively or guarantee a model for understanding intercessory. Prayer is ultimately a mystery and lies in the realm of the sovereignty of God. There are no guarantees on what He wants to accomplish, when he wants to accomplish it and how he will do that. However, this theoretical model seeks to uncover and resultantly point to patterns that are indicative of how God often follows, as noted in the evangelical missional sphere. Figure 3 contains a schema of this chapter.

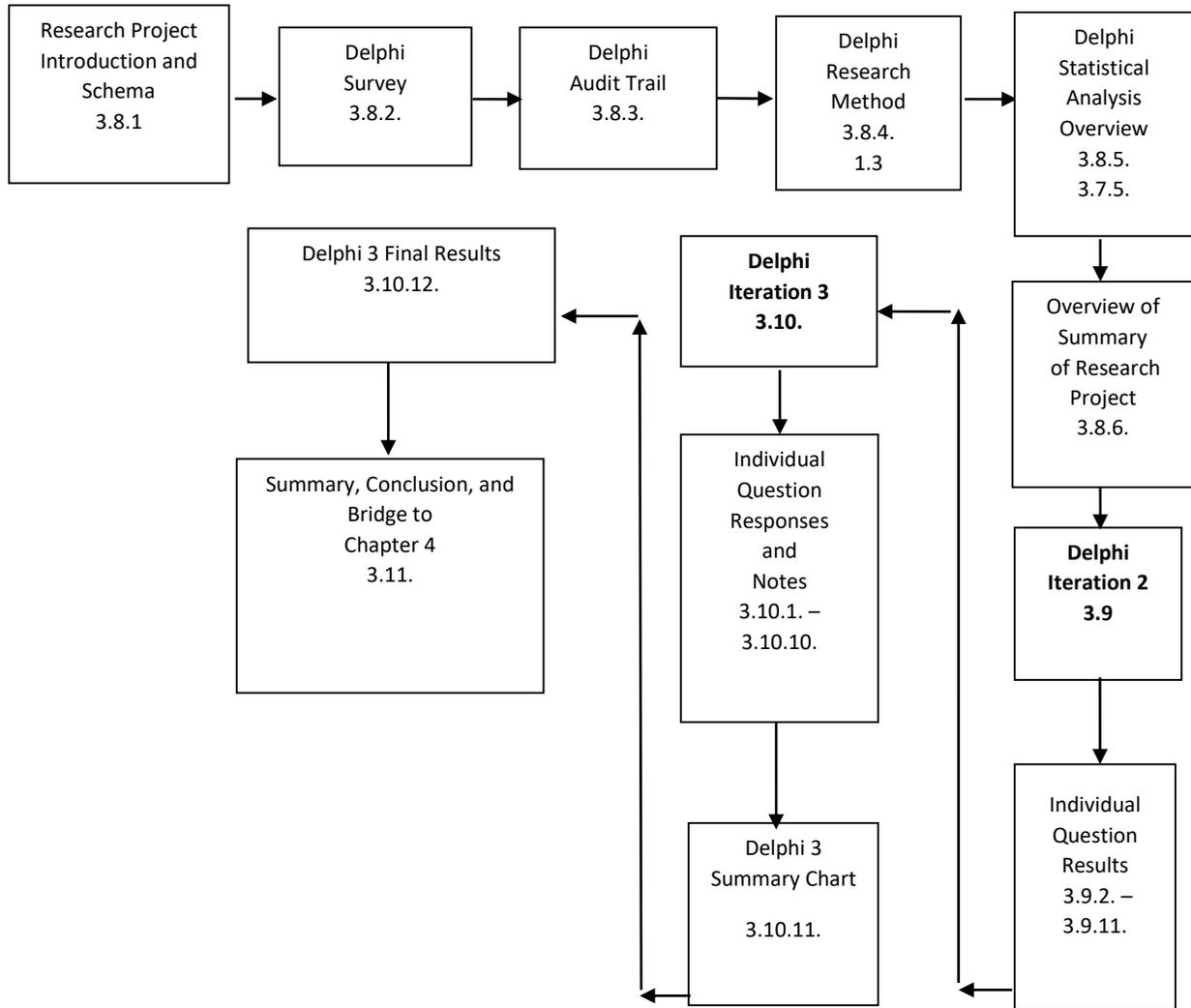


Figure 3. Research project schema200

4.2 DELPHI SURVEY

Transforming Mission (Bosch, 1991), *The Mission of God* (Wright, 2006) and countless others have shown that the overarching message of the Bible is about God's redemption and related purposes. Combined with that is the earlier tenant that all prayer at its' root or base is ultimately 'calling upon the name of the Lord' (Genesis 4)

Additionally, God's timing is part of His sovereignty. It would appear that we see patterns of answered prayer in Scripture and church and missions history related to God's mission as a combination of God's sovereignty and purposes that includes God's timing as well as our participation.

To test this theory, the Delphi method was employed with practitioners. According to Skulmoski *et al.*, the Delphi method is an iterative process used to collect and distil the judgment of experts (2007:1-3). By tabulating a series of iterative questionnaires, common answers are highlighted and then sent back for the refinement of thinking. This primarily qualitative research technique is appropriate for a phenomenological-based subject such as intercessory prayer. The strengths of this approach are (1) it maintains the anonymity of respondents, (2) it pursues refinement with iterations, (3) it favours controlled feedback without group dynamic or dominant individual pressure and (4) it offers the statistical aggregation of group responses. Experts are solicited who have the following qualities: knowledge and expertise with the issues under investigation, capacity and willingness to participate, sufficient time and effective communication skills (Skulmoski *et al.*, 2007).

Additionally, the following criteria were added to strengthen the survey: the participants must belong in the conservative evangelical theological camp, have their characters and track records affirmed by the evangelical wing of the body of Christ. All respondents were members in good standing in their local evangelical churches. The categories of respondents were missionaries, mission leaders, intercessors and vocational Christian leaders (theologians, pastors and parachurch workers). Forty-eight people were chosen.

Twenty-four semi-structured interviews were conducted along with the questionnaires (comprised of ten questions each). Each interview was one-hour long. Three rounds of iterations were held. The first one involved pilot and focus groups for editing, improving and clarifying the questions. The second questionnaire involved twenty-four semi-

structured interviews (each with a duration of one hour) along with the distribution of twenty-four questionnaires. After compilation and analysis, the third iteration was sent out seeking consensus and clarification. The Delphi audit trail is shown in Section 3.7.4.

4.3. DELPHI AUDIT TRAIL

Determination of Questions

From Basis Theoretical Material

- i. Old Testament
 - 1. Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Isaiah
- ii. New Testament
 - 1. Jesus
 - 2. Early Church
 - 3. Trinity Functionality and Prayer
- iii. Early Church
 - 1. Post Apostolic Fathers
 - 2. Ante-Nicene Fathers

From Meta Theoretical Material

- i. Models and Practitioners
 - 1. Moravians
 - 2. Revival
 - 3. Chinese
 - 4. Korean
 - 5. South American
 - 6. Historical
- ii. Emerging Data
 - 1. New Mission Agencies
 - 2. Church Planting Movements
 - 3. Missiology Dissertations
 - 4. Social Sciences

Determination of Purpose

- Consensus – not in the absolute sense but in the sense of finding out what the majority think
- Nuances – as prayer is multi-faceted

Determination of Participants

1. Skulmoski Criteria (Skulmoski *et al.*, 2007)
 - i. Knowledge and expertise
 - ii. Capacity and willingness to participate
 - iii. Sufficient time
 - iv. Good communication skills
2. Hsu and Sandford Criteria – (Hsu & Sandford, 2007:3).
 - i. Positional leaders
 - ii. First-hand relationship with a particular issue
 - iii. Stakeholders with various interests
3. Additional Criteria for this Study
 - i. Be a conservative evangelical holding to the authority of Scriptures. This homogenous theological orientation decision was made for the following reasons:
 1. If Scripture is not our standard, the rationale for missions is quite different and would definitely affect any prayer for it.
 2. The participants already come from diverse categories, so a different faith basis would make the number of variables virtually unmanageable and defeat the stated purpose of achieving reasonable consensus and nuances of understanding.
 - ii. Have an outstanding track record.
 - iii. Have an attested character.
 - iv. Have either a personal connection to me or be referred to me by trustworthy individuals.

- v. Categories Chosen:
 1. Mission leaders
 2. Missionaries
 3. Vocational Christian leaders
 4. Intercessors
4. Number of Participants

While the Delphi method historically can involve as few as 10-15 participants and more than 50, Hsu and Sandford (2007:4), quoting Witkin and Altschuld (1995), suggest that the approximate size of a Delphi panel is generally under 50 (Hsu and Sandford, 2007:4). I decided to respect this wisdom and involve the highest number of participants possible below fifty while maintaining equal representation from each category. Therefore, twelve people from each of the four categories were chosen.
5. Semi Structured Interviews: The interview is a 'managed verbal exchange' (Ritchie & Lever, 2003, and Gillham, 2000, as quoted in Newton, 2010:1).
6. Profiles of Participants

The general profiles of participants were used to help understand the correlation between their profiles and answers, specifically the following:

 - i. Relationship between participants' sex and answers.
 - ii. Relationship between age and answers.
 - iii. Relationship between cross cultural experience and answers.
 - iv. Relationship between education and answers.
 - v. Relationship between the amount of time spent in prayer and answers.

4.4 DELPHI RESEARCH METHOD PROCESS

Delphi Iteration 1

- i. Questions were drafted as per explanation above.
- ii. Questions were examined by supervisor.
 - Asked to change questions to be more open ended.
 - Asked to change questions to be less polemic in nature.
- iii. Questions were refined.
- iv. Consulted with three Canadian Government statisticians about the Delphi method.
- v. Delphi method and research proposal questionnaire were submitted to supervisor, co-supervisor, faculty and North West University Ethics Committee.
- vi. Research proposal and Delphi method were approved.
- vii. Questions were given to pilot group.
- viii. Questions were edited for grammar, flow and clarity.
- ix. Supervisor gave permission to proceed.

Delphi Iteration 2

- Questionnaires were given to 24 people.
- 24 semi-structured one hour interviews completed.
- Questionnaires were returned.
- Responses were compiled.
 - First answer
 - Second answer
 - Third answer
 - Fourth answer
 - Fifth answer
- Results were analysed.
 - Categories were chosen for respondents' answers.

- Some categories were merged as they are similar enough to be in the same stream.
- Categories were tabulated according to frequency.
- Common answers that had a broad based consensus were highlighted.
- All answers were coded for statistical analysis.
- Analysis occurred of profiles and results.
- Tables and charts were produced.
- Deeper analysis was conducted by verifying results with text answers.

Delphi Iteration 3

- Questionnaire (see Appendix B) was created to present the most common answers from Delphi Iteration 2 to each question. Then respondents were asked to agree/disagree with the top three ranked answers and comment why they agreed or why they did not.
- Subsequently, lower rated answers were presented and respondents asked to rank them on a descending scale.
- Comments were invited for the reasons for ranking.
- Questionnaires were sent out to all 48 respondents.
- Questionnaires were returned by 45 out of 48 respondents.

The Delphi iteration 3 analysis included:

- Compiling of the answers.
- New ranking of the answers.
- Coding of all answers for statistical analysis.
- Tables/charts for reference.
- Statistical analysis between profiles and results.
- Deeper analysis by verifying text answers.
- Delphi 3 summary.

4.5 DELPHI STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OVERVIEW 208

With the Delphi Iteration 2 and 3 questionnaires, qualitative data was coded and descriptive statistics calculated (frequencies and percentage). Thereafter, cross tabulations with Chi-squared tests and Cramer's V were used to examine associations with demographic variables (in three consultations with Dr. Suria Ellis, North West University, Potchefstroom Campus, South Africa).

Gender was discounted because of the unevenness of the gender of the participants in the survey (29 men/19 women).

The profiles of each participant and their bearing on the questions included the following categories:

- Cross cultural experience indicator.
- Amount of time praying per day.
- Category of respondent: missionary, mission leader, vocational Christian leader or intercessor.
- Educational level and age.

Each participant was asked to read and sign an informed consent form (see Appendix A) prior to their participation in the study.

With Delphi Iteration 2, ten questions were asked. A total of 1,140 answers were recorded. In the analysis, responses that were not statistically relevant through the Cramer's V and Approximate Significance grids were not included. The questions are marked using the Question number, followed by underscore, followed by the ranked response (i.e. Q1_1 – Question 1, highest ranked answer – 1).

With Delphi Iteration 3, ten additional questions were posed (see Appendix B), building on Delphi Iteration 2. The respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the rankings of the first questionnaire. Then the participants were asked to rank the remaining answers.

4.6 OVERVIEW OF SUMMARY OF RESEARCH PROJECT

The research project was designed to draw from historical models and practitioners concerning their relationship to intercessory prayer. Additionally, the contribution of emerging data to the subject has also been taken into account. From this 'pool', the research project emerged with the view of eventually developing a model of strategic intercessory prayer.

After testing and refinement with the first Delphi iteration, the second and third iterations were compiled, analysed and coupled with statistical analysis. The following section will recount these two last iterations. The four categories are numbered in the following way:

1. Evangelical missionaries
2. Evangelical mission leaders
3. Vocational evangelical leaders
4. Evangelical intercessors

4.7 DELPHI ITERATION 2

4.7.1 Introduction

Table 8 lists the profile questions that were designed to check for descriptive statistics – comparison and correlation – and the corresponding explanation behind each question.

Table 8. Profile Questions.

| Question | Explanation Behind Question |
|---|--|
| 1. What description best fits you? a. Missionary b. Missions leader c. Vocational Christian leader d. Intercessor | Designed to compare answers from different categories. |

| | |
|---|--|
| 2. Age Range: a. 13-29 b. 30-45 c. 46-59 d. 60 + | Designed to determine if age is a factor or correlates somehow with answers given. |
| 3. Have you served cross culturally? a. Yes b. No | Designed to establish how serving cross culturally may or may not affect answers related to prayer and missions advancement. |
| 4. Highest rate of education: a. High school diploma b. College level diploma c. Bachelor's degree d. Master's degree e. Doctorate | Designed to determine if education background have any correlation with specific answers given. |
| 5. Average time per day spent in prayer (in minutes). a. 1-29 b. 30-59 c. 60-89 d. 90 + | Designed to answer the question if time spent in prayer makes any correlation with answers given. |

The Delphi method is an iterative process to collect and distil the anonymous judgments of experts using a series of data collection techniques interspersed with feedback. Four phases of intercessory prayer are being investigated: (1) asking, (2) growth, (3) timing and (4) blockages. Table 9 lists the questions used on the questionnaire in Delphi Iteration 2 of this study and identifies which phase(s) each question addresses.

Table 9. Questionnaire.

| Question | Phase |
|--|---|
| 1. If it is possible, how do you determine if what you are praying about is in God's will? | Refers to and is checking for the 'asking' phase. |
| 2. If you have ever had a prayer burden for mission advancement, please describe the factors surrounding it. | Refers to and is checking for the 'asking' and 'growth' phase. |
| 3. If it is possible, how can you tell that your prayer is in the process of being answered? | Refers to and is checking for the 'growth' and 'timing' phases. |

| | |
|--|--|
| 4. In your experience, what connection is there, if any, between your relationship with God and answers to prayer? | Refers to and is checking for the 'asking' and 'growth' phases. |
| 5. If there are seeming blockages to your prayers, how do you handle them? | Designed to gather information about 'blockages' or 'hindrances' to prayer. |
| 6. In your experience, what are some keys to seeing prayers answered? | Designed to gather information and look for commonalities regarding keys. |
| 7. What tools or aids, if any, do you use in the process of your praying for missions advancement? | Open ended question designed to see if there are any means, methods, materials, or equipment that aid the participant in the growth and timing of their prayer. |
| 8. Do you ever adjust your prayer(s) as you go along praying for missions advance? If so, how? | Refers to the 'asking' and 'growth' of the prayer. |
| 9. What role or impact, if any, does the Trinity have in your praying? | As the Trinity was important in Jesus' prayers, this question seeks to measure the respondents' understanding and usage of the members of the Trinity in prayer. |
| 10. In your experience, if any, what are factors related to the timing of answered prayer? | Refers to and is checking 'timing' phase. |

The responses to each of the ten questions were tabulated and the results are discussed in Sections 3.9.2–3.9.11. In the discussion, Q1_1 means Question 1 Answer 1, Q3_4 means Question 3 Answer 4, etc.

4.7.2 Question 1 Results

The distribution of the responses to Question 1 ('If it is possible, how do you determine if what you are praying about is in God's will?') is shown in Figure 4 followed by some observations about the results.

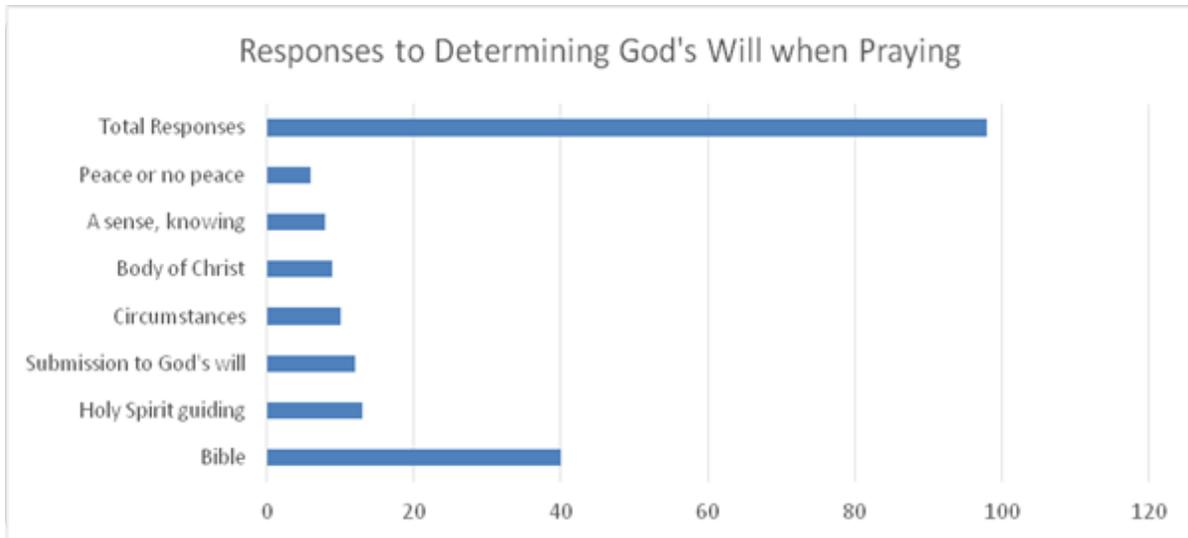


Figure 4. Graph of responses to Question 1.

Notes:

- Q1_1: 91 % of vocational Christian leaders indicated 'Bible' in their first answer, followed by 83% of mission leaders, 69.2% of missionaries and 63% of intercessors.
- Q1_2: Meanwhile, 63% of intercessors chose 'Holy Spirit' as their first answer, followed by 50% of vocational Christian leaders, 23% of missionaries and 16.7% of mission leaders.
- Q1_3: Missionaries used 'Submission to God's will' more than participants in the other categories (53%).
- Q1_1 Cross Cultural: 84.2% of those who have served cross culturally put 'Bible' as their first answer compared to 50% who had not served cross culturally.
- Q1_6 Education: Those with a doctorate ironically gave the highest number of 'A sense of knowing' answer responses (57.4%) compared to those with a college degree, a bachelor's degree (28.6%) or a master's degree (10%) (Cramer's V (CV) .348/Approximate Significance (AS) .213).

4.7.3 Question 2 Results

The second question on the questionnaire was 'If you have ever had a prayer burden for missions' advancement, please describe the factors surrounding it'. The answers are plotted in Figure 5.

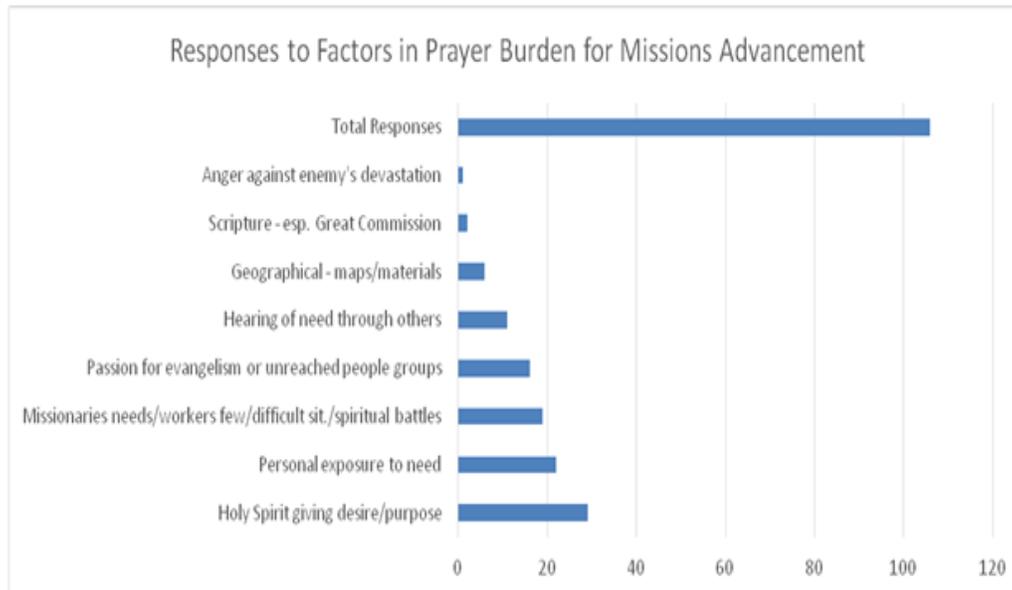


Figure 5. Graph of responses to Question 2.

Notes:

- Q2_1: Primary Category: Vocational Christian leaders gave substantially more credence to the 'Holy Spirit' giving a prayer burden for missions advancement (58.3%) compared to missionaries (38.5%), intercessors (27.3 %) and mission leaders (25%).
- Q2_3: Age: The older the respondent, the higher he/she responded to the missionary needs as a factor in a burden for prayer (60%) compared to 38.9% (middle) and 10% (youngest) (CV .380/AS .031).
- Q2_4 Age: The response 'Passion for unreached people groups' was significantly higher in younger respondents (50%) than in middle aged (16.7%) and youngest respondents (10%). ^
- Q2_6 Prayer Time: The only category of people who responded 'Geographical' were those who prayed 30-59 minutes/day (CV .349/AS .120).

4.7.4 Question 3 Results

The third question was 'If it is possible, how can you tell that your prayer is the process of being answered?' The responses to this question are summarized in Figure 6.

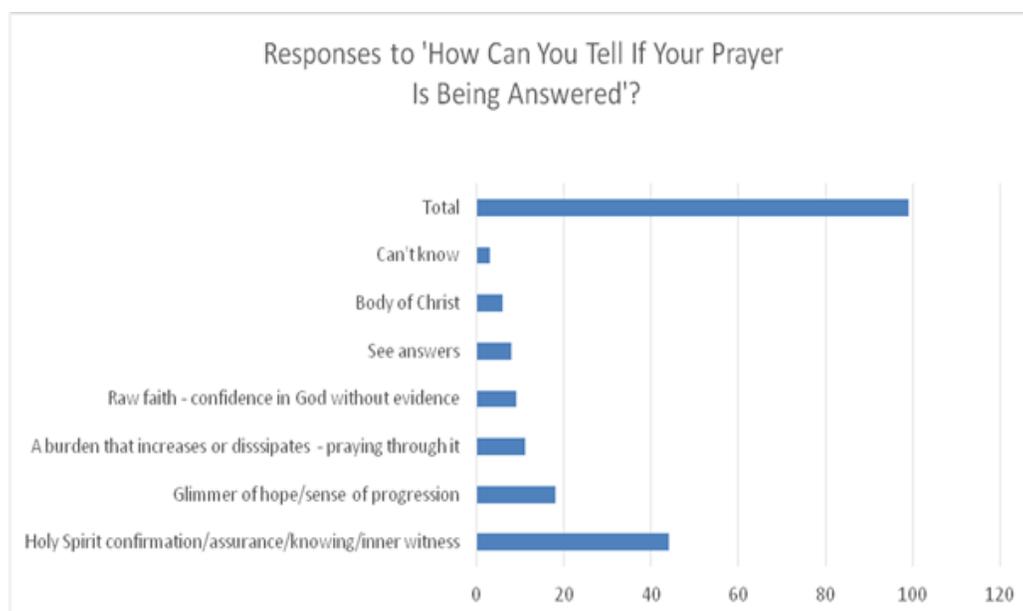


Figure 6. Graph of responses to Question 3.

Notes:

- Primary Category Q3_1: The Holy Spirit is far and above the most common answer.
- Primary Category: Q3_1: Additionally, the first answer 'Holy Spirit' is linked to the second ('progression') and the third ('a burden that increases or dissipates – praying through').
- Primary Category: Q3_3: Intercessors answered 'Holy Spirit' (54.5%) more than twice as often as vocational Christian leaders (25%), and substantially more often than missionaries (30.8%) and mission leaders (41.7%).
- Primary Category Q3_3: The intercessors' answer 'a burden that increases or dissipates – praying through' (54.5%) is more than double that of mission leaders and vocational Christian leaders (25%) and substantially more than that of missionaries (30.8%).
- Education Q3_1: Regarding those who answered 'Holy Spirit confirmation', participants with a doctorate had the highest percentage of responses (71.4%)

followed by those with a high school diploma (66.7%), a master's degree (30%), a college diploma and a bachelor's degree (28.6%) (CV .345/AS .221).

- Education Q3_9: Regarding those who responded to the question with 'Faith without evidence', the highest percentage of respondents were those with a high school diploma (66.7%), a college diploma (42.9%), a bachelor's degree (14.3%), a master's degree (30%) and a doctorate (28.6%) (CV .325/AS .282).
- Prayer Time Q3_1: was a statistically strong and definite relationship between answering 'Holy Spirit confirmation' to prayers being answered and the amount of time spent in prayer by those who pray. The highest was 62.5% by those who prayed 90+ minutes/day followed by 53.8% by those who prayed 60-90 minutes/day, 23.5% by those praying 30-59 minutes/day (23.5%) and 20% by those praying 1-29 minutes/day (CV .363/AS .096).
- Prayer Time Q3_4: Participants who spent the most time in prayer/day (90 minutes plus) reported the highest response of 'raw faith' in understanding that their prayers were answered (50%) (CV .280/AS 289).
- Only 15% of older respondents thought exposure was important to this question, compared to 50% of middle aged and younger respondents (CV .361/AS .044).

4.7.5 Question 4 Results

The fourth question on the questionnaire was 'In your experience, what connection is there, if any, between your relationship with God and answers to prayer?' Figure 7 depicts the responses to this question.

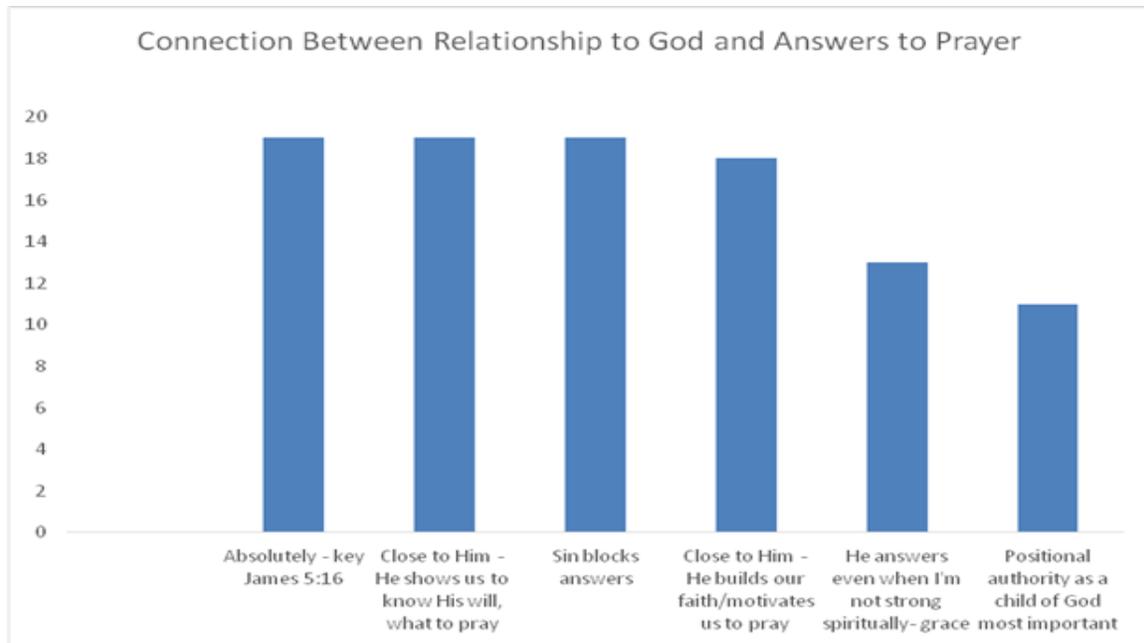


Figure 7. Graph of responses to Question 4.

Notes:

- The top three answers of 'Absolutely'. 'Close to Him – He shows us' and 'Sin blocks' had an equal number of responses followed closely by 'Close to Him – He builds our faith'.
- Primary Category Q4_1: The answers of intercessors for 'Absolutely' (54.5) were more than double that of mission leaders and vocational Christian leaders (25) and more than triple that of missionaries (15.4).
- Primary Category Q4_2: Mission leaders rated 'Close to Him – He shows us' as their first answer (58.3%), which was higher than missionaries (53.8%), vocational Christian leaders (50.0%) and intercessors (27.3%).
- Perhaps surprisingly was the response that 'God is graceful and even answers when I am not spiritually strong' being the fifth most common response.
- Cross Cultural Q4_5: Notably, participants who have served cross culturally answered 'He answers even when I am not strong spiritually' (36.8%) compared to 0% of those who have not served cross culturally.

- Education Q4_2: 66.7% of participants with high school as their highest educational level said 'Close to Him – He shows us to know His will, what to pray' compared to 14.3% of college level graduates (CV .340/AS 234).
- Education Q4_3: Only 9.5% of bachelor degree graduates indicated that 'Sin blocks answers' compared to 57.1% of college level graduates, 33.3% of high school graduates and 28.6% of those with a doctorate (CV .386/AS .129).
- Prayer Time Q4_1: Those who prayed less (1-29 minutes) responded the least (10%) to the question compared to those who prayed 60-90 minutes a day (61.5%) who said it impacted my prayers (CV .482/.011).
- Prayer Time Q4_3: Those who prayed 60+ minutes/day reported more than triple (38.5%/37.5%) compared to those who prayed less than 60 minutes (11.8/10.0%) that sin blocks the answer from coming (CV .319/AS .181).
- Age Q4_5: Those who were younger responded significantly higher in answering 'He answers prayer even when I'm not spiritually strong': 60% compared to 27.8 middle range and 15% the oldest (CV .370/.038).

4.7.6 Question 5 Results

Question 5 was 'If there are seeming blockages to prayer, how do you handle them?'

The examination of the responses to this question will be divided into two sections: (1) Part A related to the praying person and (2) Part B related to the situation being prayed for. The responses to Parts A and B are shown in Figures 8 and 9, respectively.

Part 'A':

Blockages Related to the Praying Person¹⁶⁰

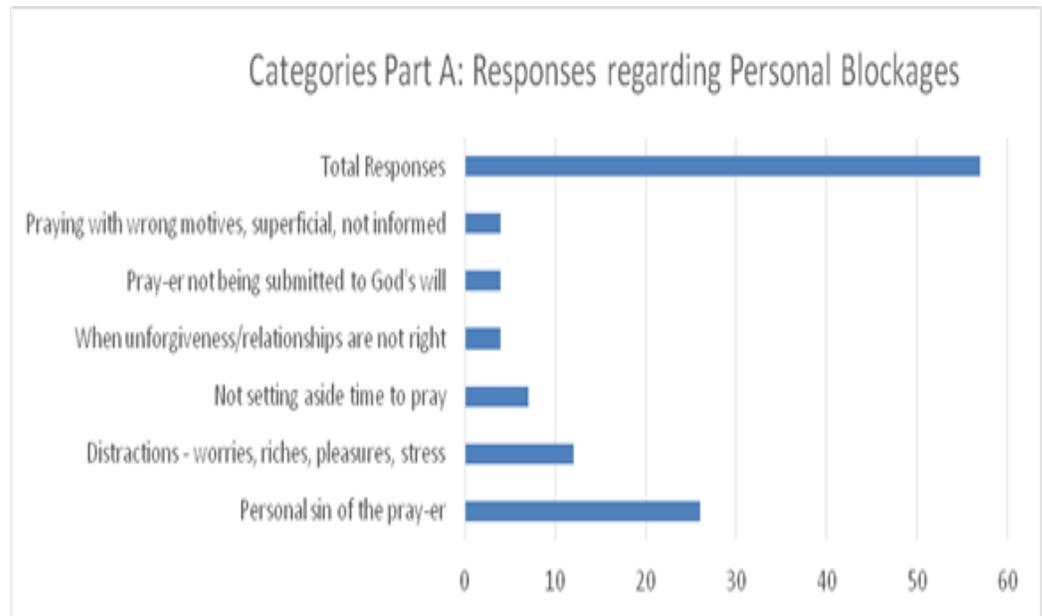


Figure 8. Graph of responses to Part A of Question 5.

Notes:

- Of the top three answers given related to blockages to prayer, personal sin and the need to confess was the highest volume of answers given followed by distractions such as worries, riches, pleasures, stress and not setting time aside. The most surprising was 'Not setting time aside - God would answer more prayers if I prayed more or was more disciplined'.
- Primary Category Q5_2 & 3. Curiously, mission leaders had a 0% response both to blockages as distractions and not setting aside time to pray.
- Cross Cultural Q5_2: Those who have served cross culturally answered that distractions were much less an issue (10.5%) for them as a distraction in prayer compared to 40% of those who had not.
- Prayer Time Q5_1: Those who prayed the longest had the highest response (62.5%) to 'The personal sin of the pray-er' blocks prayer.

- Age Q5_1: The older the respondent, the higher the ratio responded that sin blocks answers (55%/30%/27.8%).

Part B: Blockages Related to the Situation

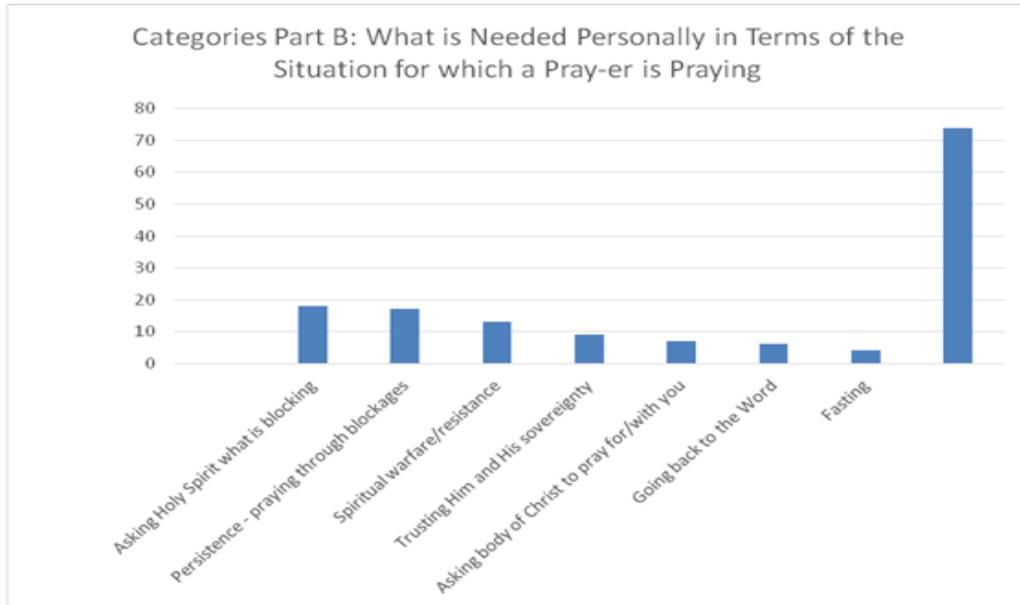


Figure 9. Graph of responses to Part B of Question 5.

Notes:

- Primary Category: Q5_7: Mission leaders (41.7%) and intercessors were more prone to ask the Holy Spirit regarding blockages than were vocational Christian leaders (16.7) and missionaries (15.4%).
- Primary Category Q5_8: Mission leaders were much more prone to use persistence (58.3%) than missionaries (38.5%), intercessors (18.2%) and vocational Christian leaders (16.7%).
- Primary Category Q5_9: Missionaries are less prone (15.4%) to cite spiritual warfare compared to mission leaders and vocational Christian leaders (33.3%) and intercessors (27.3%).
- A surprise was that the fewest number of responders chose fasting (4) as a means to break through blockages in light of Jesus teaching on it.

- Cross Cultural Q5_8: The number of participants who chose persevering prayer as their answer and who had served cross culturally was over three times the number of those who had not served cross culturally (39.5% - 10.0%; CV .254/AS .079).
- Education Q5_9: Related to 'spiritual warfare resistance', 50% of graduates with a master's degree compared to 14.3% of graduates with a bachelor's degree.
- Education Q5_10: Related to handling blockages by 'Trusting God in His sovereignty', participants with a bachelor degree were substantially more than those with a master's degree (20%); college diploma and doctorate (14.3%) and high school diploma (0%).
- Prayer Time Q5_8: Those who prayed the longest (62.5%) said that perseverance is an important key to praying through blockages.
- Age Q5_11: Younger respondents had a much less tendency to call the body of Christ to help pray through blockages (compared to 22.2% of #2 and 10% in the 60+ bracket).

4.7.7 Question 6 Results

The sixth question on the questionnaire was 'In your experience, what are some keys to seeing prayers answered?' The responses are shown in Figure 10.

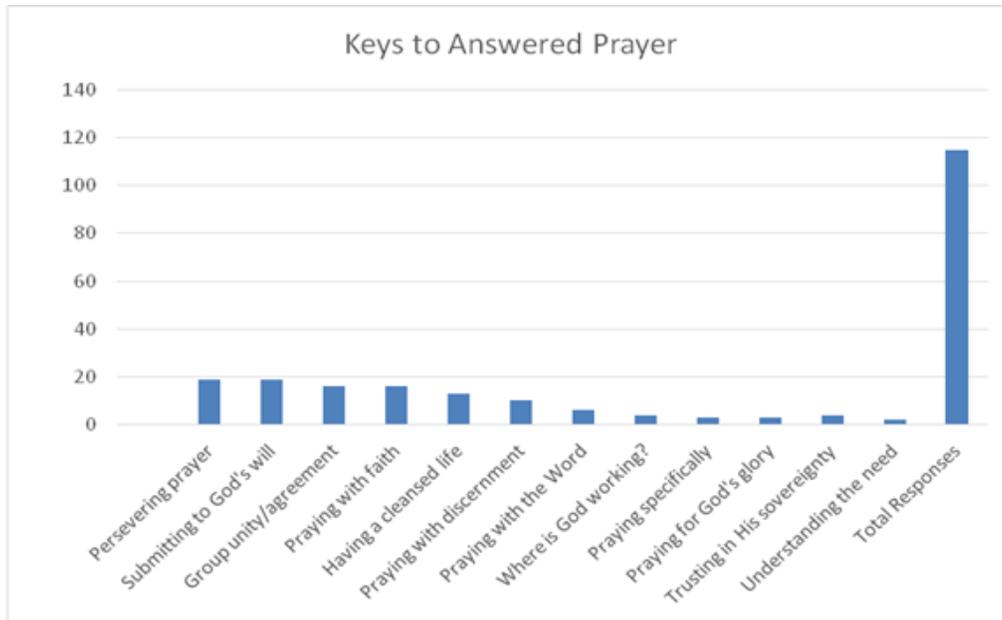


Figure 10. Graph of responses to Question 6.

Notes:

- Primary Category Q6_1: Intercessors scored the most number of answers stating 'Persevering prayer' as a key to answered prayer (72.7%) followed closely by missionaries (69.2%), mission leaders (50%) and vocational Christian leaders (41.7%).
- Primary Category Q6_2: Intercessors scored the highest number for the response 'Submitting to God's will' (72.7%) as their first answer compared to vocational Christian leaders (58.7%), mission leaders (50%) and missionaries (46.2%).
- Primary Category Q6_3 & 4: Group unity and praying with faith tied with the third highest responses for this question.
- Primary Category Q6_3: Strikingly, related to 'Group unity', intercessors had a significantly lower score (9.1%) compared to the next lowest category: vocational Christian leaders (25%), missionaries (30.8%) and mission leaders (33.3%).
- Primary Category Q6_4: Related to praying with faith, missionaries had the highest score of the first answer (53.8%) with mission leaders and vocational

Christian leaders tied at (41.7%). Ironically, intercessors had the lowest score (27.3%).

- Cross Cultural Q6_ 1: Those who have served cross culturally had more than double the response for ‘Persevering’ as a key for answered prayer (65.8% compared to 30%; CV .295/AS .041).
- Cross Cultural Q6_ 4: Those who served cross culturally had a substantially higher percentage (50%) compared to those who did not (10%) when it came to praying with faith as a key to answered prayer (CV.330/AS.022).
- Education Q6_6: Related to discernment as a key to answered prayer, the more educated participant responded with a higher value (high school diploma – 0%; college diploma – 0%; bachelor’s degree - 4.8%; master’s degree - 30%; doctorate - 42.9%) (CV.450/AS .045).
- Prayer Time Q6_4: In ascending order, those who prayed the least (20%) to those praying more (35.7%/46/2%/75%) indicated that praying in faith was a key element in answered prayer (Q6_4: CV .353/AS .113).

4.7.8 Question 7 Results

Question 7 was ‘What tools or aids, if any, do you use in the process of your praying for mission advancement?’ The responses are charted in Figure 11.

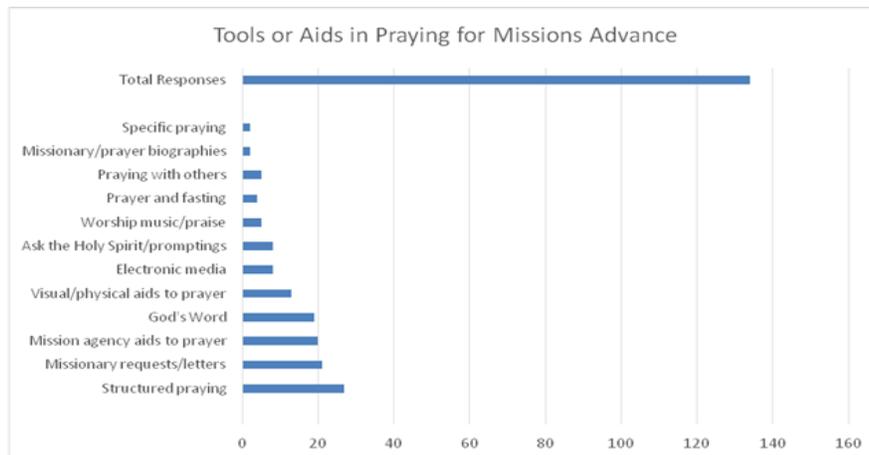


Figure 11. Graph of responses to Question 7.

Notes:

- Primary Category Q7_1: Intercessors were the least likely to put structured prayer as their best tool for praying for mission advancement (9.1%) compared to 50% for vocational Christian leaders and 33% for mission leaders and missionaries (30.8%).
- Primary Category Q7_7: Concerning the other answers, the statistically strongest result comes from the answer 'Ask the Holy Spirit/promptings' with mission leaders at 33.3% for their first answer, vocational Christian leaders at 25%, intercessors at 9.1% and missionaries at 7.7%.
- Cross Cultural Q7_5: Those who served cross culturally used visual aids substantially more (31.6% compared to 10%) than those who did not.
- Education Q7_7: Concerning the response 'The Holy Spirit prompting' (Q7_7) as a key tool or aid, the most educated participants responded less (0%) than the least educated participants (66.7%), followed by college graduates (28.6%), bachelor's degree graduates (14.3%) and master's degree graduates (20%).
- Prayer Time Q7_1: Praying with structure was rated higher (40%) by those who pray less (1-29 min/day; 30-59 – 52.8%) compared to those who pray more (60-90 min/day – 15.4%). Interestingly, it was rated at 0% for those who pray more than 90 minutes /day.
- Age Q7_3: Younger participants responded the least to 'mission agencies' 20.7% (middle highest 52.6%).
- Age Q7_5: Younger participants responded highest to visual aids help (40%).

4.7.9 Question 8 Results

Question 8 was 'Do you ever adjust your prayer(s) as you go along praying for missions advance? If so, how?' Figure 12 shows the responses.

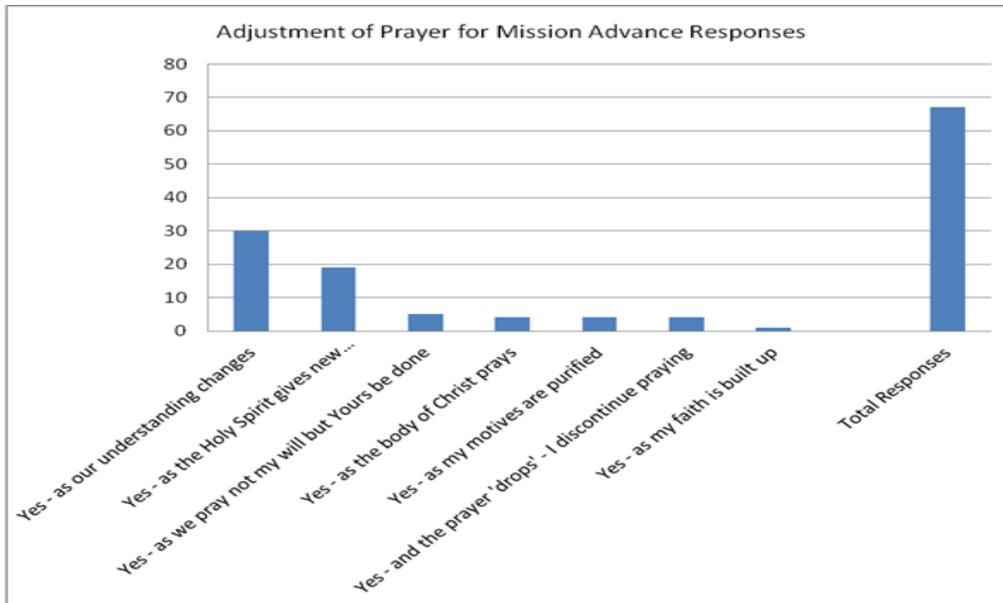


Figure 12. Graph of responses to Question 8.

Notes:

- Primary Category Q8_1: The answer 'Yes – as our understanding changes'. From the text answers, this include as world events change, as new understanding of the situation emerges and as consensus develops. The answers range from mission leaders as the highest category to respond on their first answer (66.7%). Then it was missionaries (46.2%), intercessors (45.5%) and vocational Christian leaders (41.7%).
- Primary Category Q8_2: The next highest answer was 'Yes – as the Holy Spirit gives new insights/refines/changes'. Intercessors were less likely to say this (18.2%) compared to mission leaders (41.7%).
- The third highest response to the question was 'Yes, as I pray not my will but Yours be done'. According to the text answers, as one prays, there is a shift in alignment towards God's purposes and less of the notions of the person praying.
- Cross Cultural Q8_1: Those who have served cross culturally responded substantially more by saying 'Yes as our understanding changes' (60.5% compared to 10%) than those who have not served cross culturally (CV .410/AS .004).

- Prayer Time Q8_2 and Q8_3: Ironically, those who prayed the most (90 min+/day) scored the lowest to the highest ranked responses to this question. First, they responded, 'Yes I adjust my prayers as the Holy Spirit changes me, refines me' (12.5%) and then 'Yes, as I pray 'not my will but Yours be done' (0%) (CV .354/AS .110 and CV .301/AS .226).
- Age Q8_2: The oldest participants had a significantly higher ratio (50%) of those answering the adjustment question with 'Yes as the Holy Spirit changes me'. This was followed in descending order by the middle range (27.8%) and most surprisingly 0% for the youngest range (CV .406/.019).

4.7.10 Question 9 Results

The ninth question was 'What role or impact, if any, does the Trinity have in your praying?' The responses to this question are shown in Figure 13.

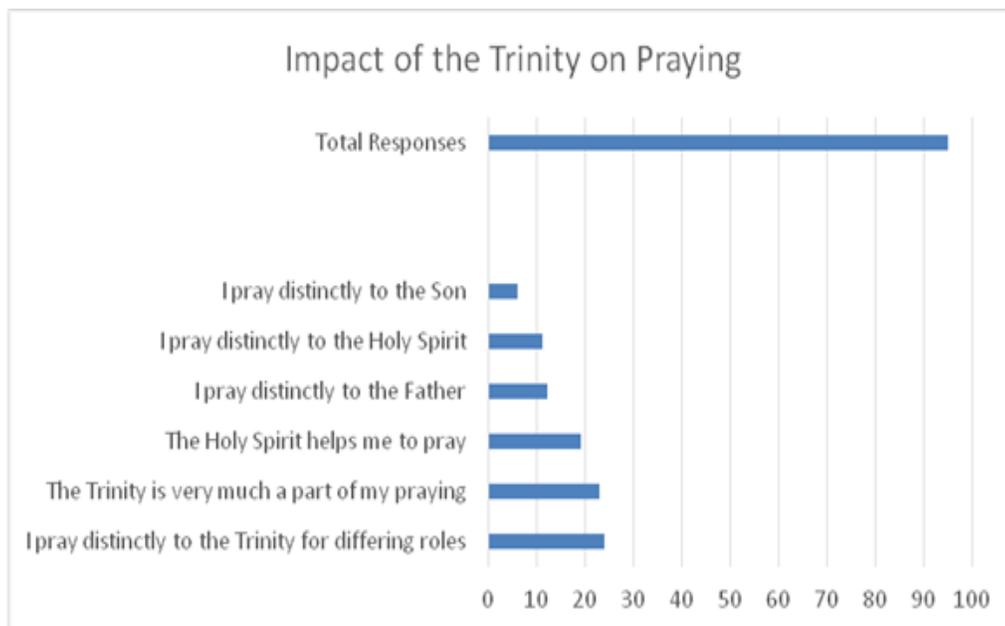


Figure 13. Graph of responses to Question 9.

Notes:

- Primary Category Q 9_3 'The Holy Spirit helps me to pray'. The vocational Christian leader group had the highest percentage of those responding this way

in their first answer (75%) followed by the intercessors (72.7%), missionaries (46.2%) and mission leaders (25%).

- Primary Category Q 9_4: 'I pray distinctively to the Father'. Vocational Christian leaders had the highest ratio (58.3%) compared to missionaries who had the lowest (15.4%).
- Cross Cultural Q9_2: When asked about the impact of the Trinity on their praying, participants who served cross culturally responded substantially higher by saying that the Trinity is very much part of their praying (47.4% compared to 10% - CV .310/AS .032).
- Education Q9_4: Those who had a doctorate stated 'They prayed distinctively to the Father' much higher (71.4%) compared to those with a high school diploma (0%); college diploma (14.3%); bachelor's degree (38.1%) and master's degree (40%). In this case, the more educated the participants were, the more they prayed to the Father.
- Education Q9_5: Those with a master's degree prayed to the Son (20%) compared to 0% in every other category.
- Prayer Time Q9_2: Of the participants who responded to the question regarding the impact of the Trinity by saying that it greatly impacted them (Q9_2), the highest percentage was those who prayed the most (62.5%) followed by those who prayed the least (40%).
- Age Q9_1: Those who answered the question by saying 'I pray distinctively to the Trinity' had the highest ratio among the youngest (60%) compared to the oldest (15%) and the middle range (11.1%).

4.7.11 Question 10 Results

Question 10 was 'In your experience, if any, what are factors related to the timing of answered prayer?' The responses to this question are charted in Figure 14.

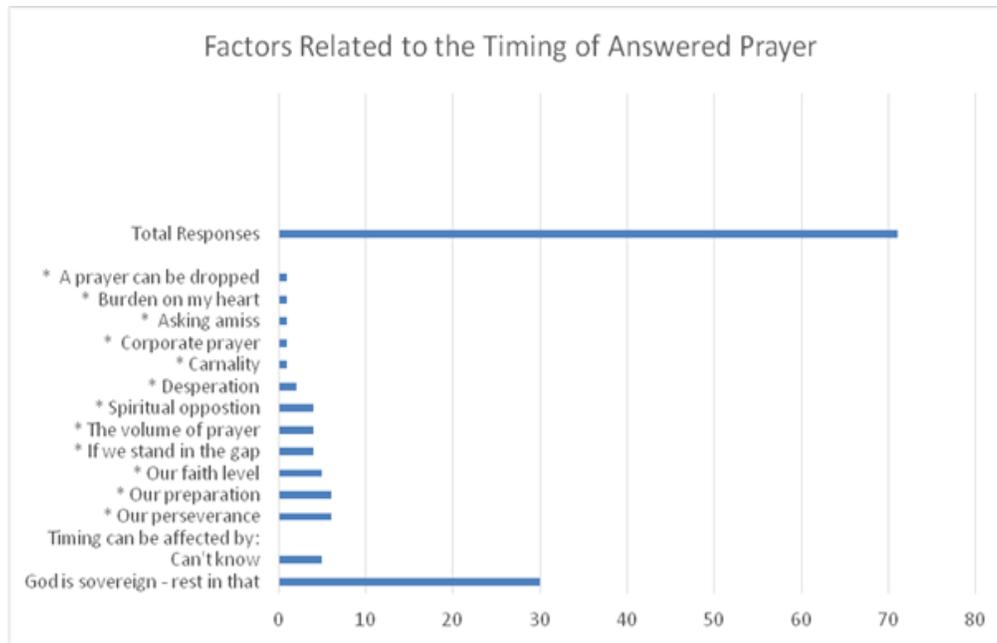


Figure 14. Graph of responses to Question 10.

Notes:

- Primary Category Q10_1: The 'by far' highest number of responses stated something related to 'God's Sovereignty – rest in that'.
- Education Q10_5: Related to the key of 'your faith level' as a factor in the timing of answered prayer, high school graduates were substantially higher (42.9%) than those with a doctorate (28.6%), those with a master's degree (10%) and those with a bachelor's degree (0%).
- Prayer Time Q10_5: Regarding those who responded by saying 'Our faith level', the highest percentage were those who prayed 30-59 minutes day (CV .367/AS .092).
- Age Q10_5: None of the participants in the youngest age range responded with 'Our faith level' to the question of the timing of answered prayer. The middle range group had the highest responses (27.8%) while the oldest group had the next highest (5%).

4.7.12 Delphi Iteration 2 Summary

Table 10. Summary of Delphi Iteration 2.

| Category | Notes |
|---------------------|--|
| Delphi 2 | |
| Missionaries (1) | <p>PC Q3_3. To the question ‘How can you tell if your prayer is answered?’ missionaries had the lowest ratio of the response ‘praying through’.</p> <p>PC Q4_1. Missionaries had the lowest ratio of responding to the connection between their relationship with God and answered prayer.</p> <p>PC Q5_7. Missionaries had the lowest ratio regarding asking the Holy Spirit about blockages.</p> <p>PC Q5_9. Missionaries were less prone to cite spiritual warfare.</p> <p>PC Q6_7. Missionaries had the highest ratio of response when asked to identify keys to answered prayer and the highest ratio of the response ‘praying with faith’.</p> |
| Mission Leaders (2) | <p>Mission leaders had a 0% response related to the blockages of distractions and not setting aside time to pray.</p> <p>Q2_1. They had the lowest ratio (25) giving credence to the Holy Spirit giving a prayer burden for mission advance.</p> <p>Q3_3. Mission leaders had the lowest ratio regarding the Holy Spirit gives a prayer burden.</p> <p>Q4_2. They had the highest ratio of responding ‘close to Him’ regarding connection between our relationship with God and answered prayer.</p> <p>Q6_3. They had the highest ratio of group unity regarding keys to answered prayer.</p> <p>Q7_7. Thirty-three percent of mission leaders ask the Holy Spirit about blockages.</p> <p>Q9_3. Mission leaders had the lowest ratio regarding ‘the Holy Spirit helps me to pray’.</p> <p>Do the mission leaders adjust prayer? Yes, ‘as the Holy Spirit gives insights and our understanding changes’ (highest ratios).</p> |

| Category | Notes |
|---|--|
| <p>Vocational Christian Leaders (3)</p> | <p>Q1_1. Vocational Christian leaders were the top respondents regarding answering 'Bible' in determining God's will.</p> <p>Q2_7. They had more responses to the Holy Spirit regarding a prayer burden for mission advance.</p> <p>Q5_8. Vocational Christian leaders were the last to cite persistence (16.7%) regarding getting through blockages and the last to cite persevering prayer as a key to answered prayer (Q6_1).</p> <p>Q8_1. They had the lowest ratio regarding saying they adjust their prayers as their understanding changes.</p> <p>Q9_3. Vocational Christian leaders had the highest ratio for the answers that 'the Holy Spirit teaches us how to pray', and 'I pray distinctly to the Holy Spirit' (Q9_4).</p> |
| <p>Intercessors</p> | <p>PC Q6_1. Intercessors had the highest ratio of persevering prayer.</p> <p>Intercessors had the highest ratio of submitting to God's will.</p> <p>Q1_2. Intercessors had the highest ratio regarding the Holy Spirit directs us in understanding His will.</p> <p>Q3_3. Regarding 'A burden from the Holy Spirit is a way He shows He is answering', the ratio of intercessors was more than double that of vocational Christian leaders.</p> <p>Q4_1. Intercessors had the highest ratio for responding 'Absolutely' regarding the connection between our relationship with God and answers to prayer.</p> <p>Q4_5. They had the lowest ratio of 'close to Him'.</p> <p>Q6_3. They had a significantly lower ratio related to 'group unity'.</p> <p>Q6_4. Intercessors had the lowest ratio regarding praying with faith.</p> <p>Q7_1. Intercessors were the least likely to put 'structured praying' as a tool for prayer for mission advancement.</p> <p>Q8_2. Intercessors were the least likely to say 'the Holy Spirit changes me' in response to adjusting prayers.</p> |
| <p>Cross Cultural Experience</p> | <p>Cross Cultural Q1_1. Of the participants who have served cross culturally, 84.2% put 'the Bible' as their first answer compared to 50% who have not served cross culturally.</p> |

| Category | Notes |
|-----------|---|
| | <p>Cross Cultural Q4_5. Notably, those who have served cross culturally and answered 'He answers my prayer, even when I am not spiritually strong' scored 36.8% compared to 0% who have not served cross culturally.</p> <p>Cross Cultural Q5_2. Those who have served cross culturally answered that distractions were much less an issue (10.5%) for them as a distraction in prayer compared to 40% of those who have not served cross culturally.</p> <p>Cross Cultural Q5_8. Those who served cross culturally answered regarding praying about situations that are blockages that persevering prayer was over three times compared to those who have not.</p> <p>Cross Cultural Q6_4: Those who served cross culturally had a substantially higher percentage (50%) compared to those who did not (10%) when it came to praying with faith as a key to answered prayer (CV.330 AS.022).</p> <p>Cross Cultural Q7_5: Those who served cross culturally used visual aids substantially more (31.6% compared to 10%) than those who did not.</p> <p>Cross Cultural Q8_1: When asked 'Do you adjust your prayers', those who served cross culturally responded substantially more by saying 'Yes as our understanding changes' (60.5%) than those who had not served cross culturally (10%).</p> <p>Cross Cultural Q9_2: When asked about the impact of the Trinity on their praying, those who served cross culturally responded substantially higher by saying that the Trinity is very much part of their praying.</p> |
| Education | <p>Q3_1 and Q1_6. Participants with a doctorate had the highest ratio responding to a sense of 'knowing' that their prayer is answered and the Holy Spirit's confirmation.</p> <p>Q4_2. High school graduates had the highest ratio of saying 'close to Him – He shows us what to pray'.</p> <p>Q6_6. The more educated a participant was, the more important discernment was as a key to answered prayer.</p> <p>Q9_4. The more educated a participant was, the more he or she tended to pray to the Father.</p> |

| Category | Notes |
|---------------------|---|
| Prayer Time | <p>The more time spent in prayer, the more it was shared that God's will is determined by the Holy Spirit's promptings.</p> <p>Q3_1, Q6_4. The more time in prayer, the more 'raw faith' was important.</p> <p>Q5_8. The more time spent in prayer, the more that perseverance was a key.</p> <p>Q7_1. The more one prayed, the less structured prayer was important.</p> <p>Q8_2, Q8_3. The more one prayed, the less willing he or she was to change prayers.</p> |
| Age | <p>Q2_3. The oldest participants had the highest ratio responding to a prayer burden for missionary needs.</p> <p>Q5_8. Perseverance is an important key for those who prayed the longest.</p> <p>The youngest participants had the highest ratio regarding a passion for unreached people groups.</p> <p>Q7_3, Q7_5. The youngest respondents responded the least to mission agencies (Q7_3) and the highest to visual aids (Q7_5).</p> <p>Q4_5. The youngest had the highest answers to 'even when I'm not strong'.</p> <p>Q5_11. The youngest had much less tendency to call the body of Christ to pray.</p> <p>Regarding the question about God's timing, none of the youngest participants responded 'with our faith level'.</p> |
| Intercession | |
| Asking | <p>The importance of understanding God's will in alignment with the Bible.</p> <p>The importance of exposure to needs and issues.</p> <p>Out of personal intimacy with God comes the prompting of the Holy Spirit.</p> |

| Category | Notes |
|-----------|---|
| Growth | The importance of perseverance. The importance of structure/prayer helps/spiritual tools. The importance of discernment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prayer burden: Where is God working? • Falling in step with Him |
| Blockages | The importance of discernment. Ensuring personal/corporate sin issues are dealt with. Spiritual warfare steps. |
| Timing | Critical to trust God's Sovereignty. Our faith level. Our participation in what God wants to do. |

4.8 DELPHI ITERATION 3

The purpose of the Delphi 3 questionnaire was to see if there was any consensus on the top ranked and lower ranked items. Both the highest ranked answers and the lowest ranked answers to the questions in Delphi 2 were included on the questionnaire, but they were separated into two groups ('Top Answers' and 'Other Answers') under each question. The participants were asked to either agree or disagree on the ranking of the answers in each group.

4.8.1 Delphi 3 Question 1 Responses and Notes

The top answers to the first question 'If it is possible, how do you determine if what you are praying about is in God's will?' were (1) 'Is it Biblical?', (2) 'The Holy Spirit guiding my prayers' and (3) 'Submission to God's will'. The participants were asked to indicate if they agreed with the ranking of these three answers.

The other answers the participants were asked to rank were:

- The body of Christ helps to inform/shape my prayers
- Circumstances (glimmer(s)) of hope, see ‘arrows line up’
- A sense, knowing
- Peace or not having peace about the request.

The results of the ranking are shown in Tables 11-14.

Table 11. Q1 Response 1: Is it Biblical?

| Category | Percentage (%) | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|-----------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Missionary | 100.0 | Phi | .249 |
| Mission Leader | 100.0 | Cramer’s V | .249 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 91.7 | Approximate Significance | .435 |
| Intercessor | 100.0 | | |
| Average | 97.7 | | |

Note: The top ranked answer to the question ‘Bible/is it biblical’ is preserved.

Table 12. Q1 Response 2: The Holy Spirit.

| Category | Percentage (%) | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|-----------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Missionary | 92.3 | Phi | .411 |
| Mission Leader | 70.0 | Cramer’s V | .290 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 91.7 | Approximate Significance | .283 |
| Intercessor | 88.9 | | |
| Average | 86.4 | | |

Notes:

- The response ranked second ('Holy Spirit') is preserved.
- 100% of the youngest age group responded 'Holy Spirit' to this question (.347 Phi; .248 CV, .258 AS).
- Those who prayed the longest said 'The Holy Spirit' (.437/.309/.210).

Table 13. Q1 Response 3: Submit to God's Will.

| Category | Percentage (%) | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|-----------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Missionary | 100 | Phi | .345 |
| Mission Leader | 90 | Cramer's V | .345 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 83.3 | Approximate Significance | .156 |
| Intercessor | 66.7 | | |
| Average | 86.4 | | |

Notes:

- The third ranked response 'Submit to God's will' is preserved.
- 66.7% of college graduates said 'Submit to God's Word' compared to 100% of high school and bachelor's graduates (.420/.420/.100).

Table 14. Q1 Further Ranking.

| Delphi 2 Ranking | Delphi 3 | P | CV | AS | New Ranking Order (if necessary) | Reason |
|--|----------|------|------|------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| #4 The body of Christ helps to inform/shape my prayers | 33% | .654 | .372 | .173 | Retains rank #4 | %, statistically relevant |
| #5 Circumstances (Glimmer of hope, see arrows line up) | 29.2% | .637 | .368 | .193 | Changes to #6 | Statistically stronger |

| | | | | | | |
|--|-------|------|------|------|---------------|------------------------------|
| #6 A 'sense' or 'knowing' | 29.2% | .598 | .345 | .310 | Changes to #7 | Statistically weaker than #6 |
| #7 'Peace' or 'no peace' about the request | 33% | .597 | .344 | .314 | Changes to #5 | Strong Cramer's V, p. %. |

Notes:

- Those who have cross cultural experience ranked the 'body of Christ' higher than the others (39.5% - .381 Phi/.381 CV/.223 AS)
- A sense/knowing/circumstances ranking changed – both tied at 29.2% - (.598/.345/.310) and (.637/.368.193).
 - Those who served cross culturally ranked this much higher (50%) compared to those who had not.
 - Those who prayed the most had the highest response (50%) compared to those who prayed less (.722 Phi/.417 CV/.049 AS).

4.8.2 Delphi 3 Question 2 Responses and Notes

The top answers to the second question 'If you have ever had a prayer burden for missions' advancement, please describe the factors surrounding it' were (1) 'Having exposure to the need from missionaries and others about difficult situations, spiritual battles and the need for more personnel ('The harvest is white but the labourers are few)', (2) 'The Holy Spirit giving the desire/purpose' and (3) 'Personal, first hand exposure to the need'. The participants were asked to indicate if they agreed with the ranking of these three answers. The lowest answers (labelled 'Other' on the questionnaire) were

- Passion for a particular unreached people group (or evangelism)
- Geographical (maps, materials)
- Scripture (especially the Great Commission)
- Anger against the enemy's devastation

The responses are shown in Tables 15-18.

Table 15. Q2 Response 1: 'Exposure'.

| Category | Percentage (%) | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|-----------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Missionary | 92.3 | Phi | .331 |
| Mission Leader | 80 | Cramer's V | .224 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 83.3 | Approximate Significance | .568 |
| Intercessor | 77.8 | | |
| Average | 84.1 | | |

Note: Although statistically not significant, the findings indicate that it is by far the strongest response and therefore it retains its rank as the #1 answer.

Table 16. Q2 Response 2: Holy Spirit Gives Desire.

| Category | Percentage (%) | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|-----------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Missionary | 92.3 | Phi | .327 |
| Mission Leader | 90 | Cramer's V | .231 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 91.7 | Approximate Significance | .581 |
| Intercessor | 88.9 | | |
| Average | 90.9 | | |

Note: Although not statistically significant, this response was preserved as the second highest response.

Table 17. Q2 Response 3: Personal Exposure.

| Category | Percentage (%) | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|------------|----------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| Missionary | 84.6 | Phi | .204 |

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|------|---------------------------------|------|
| Mission Leader | 100 | Cramer's V | .204 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 83.3 | Approximate Significance | .609 |
| Intercessor | 88.9 | | |
| Average | 88.6 | | |

Note: Although statistically not significant, the sheer volume of respondents who responded 'agree' keeps this response as the third highest in terms of ranking.

Table 18. Q2 Further Rankings.

| Delphi 2 Ranking | Delphi 3 % | P | CV | AS | Ranking Order | Notes |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------------------|---|
| #4 Passion for UPG's | 43.2 | .592 | .342 | .080 | Retains rank #4 | Strong Phi and CV |
| #5 Geographical | 25 | .733 | .423 | .005 | Retains rank #5 | Barely statistically significant but high Phi/CV |
| #6 Scripture – Great Commission | 25 | .455 | .263 | .427 | Retains rank #6 | Not statistically relevant but moderate CV. |
| #7 Anger Against Enemy | 6.8 | .312 | .180 | .892 | Retains rank #7 | Not statistically relevant Very high approximate significance (AS) value |

Notes:

- Those who served cross culturally ranked as their highest ranked answer 'a passion for unreached people groups' (47.1% 304 Phi/.304 CV/.253 AS).
- Anger against the enemy as a reason for a prayer burden was ranked highest (28.6%) as the first answer by college educated persons compared with 0% of high school, master's and doctoral education graduates (.630 Phi/.363 CV/.134 AS).

4.8.3 Delphi 3 Question 3 Responses and Notes

Regarding the third question, 'If it is possible, how can you tell that your prayer is in the process of being answered?', the participants were asked to indicate if they agreed with the ranking of the top three answers: (1) 'The Holy Spirit's confirmation/assurance/knowing/inner witness', (2) 'Glimmer of hope/sense of progression', and (3) 'A burden that increases or dissipates – praying through'. The questionnaire also asked the participants to rank the bottom four answers:

- Faith – confidence in God without seeing the evidence
- See the answers – confirm it was God's will
- The body of Christ confirms
- You just can't know

The responses of the participants to these questions are shown in Tables 19-22.

Table 19. Q3 Response 1: Holy Spirit's Confirmation/Assurance/Knowing/Inner Witness.

| Category | Agreement Percentage (%) | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Missionary | 92.3 | Phi | .402 |
| Mission Leader | 90 | Cramer's V | .284 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 91.7 | Approximate Significance | .282 |
| Intercessor | 81.8 | | |
| Average | 89.1 | | |

Note: First place ranking confirmed.

Table 20. Q3 Response 2: Glimmer of Hope/Sense of Progression.

| Category | Agreement Percentage (%) | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|----------|--------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|
|----------|--------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|

| | | | | |
|------------------------------------|------|--|---------------------------------|------|
| Missionary | 92.3 | | Phi | .550 |
| Mission Leader | 100 | | Cramer's V | .317 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 91.7 | | Approximate Significance | .126 |
| Intercessor | 63 | | | |
| Average | 87.8 | | | |

Note: Second place ranking confirmed.

Table 21. Q3 Response 3: A Burden that Increases or Dissipates: 'Praying Through'.

| Category | Agreement Percentage (%) | | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Missionary | 100 | | Phi | .458 |
| Mission Leader | 90 | | Cramer's V | .324 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 83.3 | | Approximate Significance | .134 |
| Intercessor | 63.6 | | | |
| Average | 84.8 | | | |

Notes:

- Third place ranking confirmed.
- Of the three age categories, the older the participant was, the higher they ranked 'praying through' (77.8% – 82.4% – 90% - .468 Phi, .331 CV, .039 AS).

Table 22. Q3 Further Ranking.

| Delphi 2 Ranking | Delphi 3 | P | CV | AS | New Ranking Order (if necessary) | Notes |
|-------------------------|-----------------|----------|-----------|-----------|---|--------------|
| | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|---------|------|------|------|-----------------|---|
| #4 Faith - confidence in God without seeing the evidence | 66.7 #4 | .430 | .248 | .502 | Retains rank #4 | High % of respondents Hi p, moderate to high CV statistically not significant |
| #5 See the answers - confirm it was God's will | 44.4 #5 | .453 | .282 | .681 | Moves to #6 | Moderate to high CV Strong Phi. Statistically not significant |
| #6 The body of Christ confirms | 44.4 #6 | .394 | .228 | .857 | Moves to #7 | Statistically not significant |
| #7 You just can't know | 73% #4 | .494 | .285 | .529 | Moves to #5 | Majority ranked this last (73%) |

4.8.4 Delphi 3 Question 4 Responses and Notes

The top answers to the fourth question 'In your experience, what connection is there, if any, between your relationship with God and answers to prayer?' were (1) 'Absolutely – it is a key James 5:16 “the prayer of a righteous man avails much...”’, (2) 'Absolutely - as you are close to Him, He helps us to know His will and what to pray', (3) 'Sin blocks answers to prayer, and (4) 'Absolutely – as you are closer to Him , He builds your faith and motivates me to pray'. The participants were asked to indicate if they agreed with the ranking of these four answers. The two other answers the participants were asked to rank were:

- Even when my own personal relationship is not strong, He often answers prayer (His grace).
- Positional authority as a child of God is the most important element.

Tables 23-27 show the results of the responses to these rankings.

Table 23. Q4 Response 1: Absolutely – James 5:16 'The Prayer of a Righteous Man'.

| Category | Agreement Percentage (%) | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|----------|-----------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|
|----------|-----------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|------|---------------------------------|------|
| Missionary | 84.6 | Phi | .295 |
| Mission Leader | 72.7 | Cramer's V | .205 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 90.0 | Approximate Significance | .688 |
| Intercessor | 90.9 | | |
| Average | 84.4 | | |

Note: First place ranking retained.

Table 24. Q4 Response 2: Absolutely – He Helps Us to Know His Will, How to Pray.

| Category | Agreement Percentage % | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Missionary | 92.3 | Phi | .339 |
| Mission Leader | 72.7 | Cramer's V | .240 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 90 | Approximate Significance | .523 |
| Intercessor | 90.9 | | |
| Average | 86.7 | | |

Note: Second place ranking retained.

Table 25. Q4 Response 3 Sin Blocks Answers to Prayer.

| Category | Agreement Percentage (%) | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Missionary | 84.6 | Phi | .367 |
| Mission Leader | 72.7 | Cramer's V | .260 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 100 | Approximate Significance | .416 |

| | | |
|--------------------|------|--|
| Intercessor | 81.8 | |
| Average | 84.4 | |

Notes:

- Third place ranking retained.
- 100% of those with a master’s degree agreed with this, while only 66.7% of high school and college graduates agreed (512 Phi; .362 CV; .160 AS).

Table 26. Q4 Response 4: Closer to Him, He Builds Your Faith and Motivates to Pray.

| Category | Agreement Percentage (%) | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Missionary | 92.3 | Phi | .403 |
| Mission Leader | 72.7 | Cramer’s V | .285 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 100 | Approximate Significance | .295 |
| Intercessor | 100 | | |
| Average | 91.1 | | |

Notes:

- Going by strict statistical verification, the order could be reversed:
 - First place: Closer to Him, He builds your faith
 - Second place: Sin blocks answers to prayer
 - Third place: Close to Him – He helps us to know His will and what to pray
 - Fourth place: Absolutely: the prayer of a righteous man avails much
- However, because of the growing Cramer’s V score from 1 to 4 and the ranked percentages being quite high, we will leave the #4 ranking as is.

Table 27. Q4 Further Ranking

| Delphi 2 Ranking | Delphi 3 % | P | CV | AS | New Ranking Order (if necessary) | Notes |
|-------------------------|-------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|---|--------------|
| | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|------|------|------|------|-------------|--|
| #5 Even when not strong, He answers | 66 | .442 | .255 | .420 | Moves to #6 | Respondents ranked this higher Strong p, moderate CV, weak AS |
| #6 Positional authority is the most important element | 57.4 | .489 | .282 | .259 | Moves to #5 | Respondents ranked this lower. Very strong p, strong CV, reasonable AS. |

4.8.5 Delphi 3 Question 5 Responses and Notes

Concerning the Person who is Praying

Regarding the person who is praying, the top answers to the fifth question ‘If there are seeming blockages to your prayers, how do you handle them?’ were (1) ‘My own personal sin – confess’ and (2) ‘Distractions – address worries, riches, pleasures, stress’. The participants were asked to indicate if they agreed with the ranking of these two answers. In addition, the participants were asked to rank four other answers:

- Not setting aside time to pray
- When my relationships not right/unforgiveness
- Not submitted to God’s will
- Praying with wrong motives, praying superficially, uninformed praying

Tables 28-30 summarize the responses to these questions.

Table 28. Q5A Response 1: Personal Sin.

| Category | Agreement Percentage (%) | | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|----------------|-----------------------------|--|------------|-------------------------|
| Missionary | 92.3 | | Phi | .360 |
| Mission Leader | 72.7 | | Cramer’s V | .255 |

| | | | | |
|------------------------------------|------|--|---------------------------------|------|
| Vocational Christian Leader | 91.7 | | Approximate Significance | .413 |
| Intercessor | 91.7 | | | |
| Average | 89.4 | | | |

Note: First place ranking preserved.

Table 29. Q5A Response 2: Distractions (Worry, Pleasures, Stress).

| Category | Agreement Percentage (%) | | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Missionary | 92.3 | | Phi | .374 |
| Mission Leader | 72.7 | | Cramer's V | .264 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 91.7 | | Approximate Significance | .362 |
| Intercessor | 81.8 | | | |
| Average | 85.1 | | | |

Note: Ranking preserved (#2).

Table 30. Q5A Further Ranking.

| Delphi 2 Ranking | Delphi 3 | P | CV | AS | New Ranking Order (if necessary) | Notes |
|---|-------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|---|--|
| #3 Not setting aside time to pray | 36.2% Highest ranked | .609 | .352 | .134 | Retains rank #3 | Highest percentage, statistically relevant |
| #4 When my relationships are not right/un-forgiveness | 21.3 Ranked #2 | .366 | .212 | .900 | Moves to #6 | High AS Statistically not strong |

| | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------|------|------|------|-------------|---|
| #5 Not submitted to God's will | 19.1 Ranked #3 | .482 | .278 | .537 | Moves to #5 | Low statistical relevance but moderate CV |
| #6 Praying with wrong motives, superficially or uninformed | 25.5 Ranked last | .536 | .309 | .334 | Moves to #4 | Statistically stronger than others |

For the Situations Being Prayed About

For the situations being prayed about, the top answers to the fifth question ‘If there are seeming blockages to your prayers, how do you handle them?’ were (1) ‘Ask the Holy Spirit what is blocking’, (2) ‘Persistence – pray through the blockages’ and (3) ‘Spiritual warfare/resistance’. The participants were asked to indicate if they agreed with the ranking of these three answers. Subsequently, the participants were asked to rank four other answers:

- Trusting God and His sovereignty
- Asking the body of Christ to pray for/with you
- Go back to the Word to know how to pray
- Fasting

The responses to these rankings are shown in Tables 31-34.

Table 31. Q5B Response 1: Ask the Holy Spirit what is blocking.

| Category | Agreement Percentage (%) | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Missionary | 76.9 | Phi | .486 |
| Mission Leader | 58.3 | Cramer's V | .344 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 100 | Approximate Significance | .019 |
| Intercessor | 100 | | |

| | | |
|----------------|------|--|
| Average | 83.3 | |
|----------------|------|--|

Notes:

- Retains the first place ranking.
- Mission leaders were slightly more than half as convinced as vocational Christian leaders and intercessors about asking the Holy Spirit for blockages.
- The more educated the respondent was, the less prone he or she was to ask the Holy Spirit concerning blockages (70% masters, 71.4% doctorate, 85.7% bachelors, 100% college and high school graduates - .501 Phi; .354 CV; .149 AS).

Table 32. Q5B Response 2: Persistence.

| Category | Agreement Percentage (%) | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Missionary | 92.3 | Phi | .482 |
| Mission Leader | 58.3 | Cramer's V | .341 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 100 | Approximate Significance | .084 |
| Intercessor | 90.9 | | |
| Average | 85.4 | | |

Note: Second place ranking retained.

Table 33. Q5B Response 3: Spiritual Warfare.

| Category | Agreement Percentage (%) | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| Missionary | 83.3 | Phi | .650 |
| Mission Leader | 50 | Cramer's V | .375 |

| | | | | |
|------------------------------------|------|--|---------------------------------|------|
| Vocational Christian Leader | 100 | | Approximate Significance | .019 |
| Intercessor | 100 | | | |
| Average | 83.3 | | | |

Note: Third place ranking retained.

Table 34. Q5B Further Ranking - Lower Scores.

| Delphi 2 Ranking | Delphi 3 | P | CV | AS | New Ranking Order (if necessary) | Notes |
|--|-----------------|----------|-----------|-----------|---|------------------|
| #4 Trusting God and His Sovereignty | 36.2 | .507 | .293 | .417 | Retains rank #4 | Strong P and CV |
| #5 Asking body of Christ to pray with you | 10.6 | .582 | .336 | .180 | Falls to # 7 | Strong P and CV |
| #6 Go back to the Word to know how to pray | 23.4 | .636 | .367 | .078 | Goes to # 5 | Strong P and CV |
| #7 Fasting | 23.4 | .616 | .355 | .110 | Goes to # 6 | Strong P and CV. |

4.8.6 Delphi 3 Question 6 Responses and Notes

Regarding the sixth question ‘In your experience, what are some keys to seeing prayers answered?’, the participants were asked to indicate if they agreed with the ranking of the top six answers: (1) ‘Persevering prayer, (2) ‘Praying with faith’, (3) ‘Submitting to God’s will’, (4) ‘Group unity/agreement’, (5) ‘Having a cleansed life’, and (6) ‘Praying with discernment’. Then, the participants were asked to rank five other answers:

- Asking: ‘Where is God working?’
- Praying specifically
- Praying for God’s glory

- Trusting in God’s sovereignty
- Understanding the need correctly/more fully to better pray

Tables 35–41 contain the responses to these questions.

Table 35. Q6 Response 1: Persevering Prayer.

| Category | Agreement Percentage (%) | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Missionary | 84.6 | Phi | .401 |
| Mission Leader | 58.3 | Cramer’s V | .284 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 100 | Approximate Significance | .258 |
| Intercessor | 81.8 | | |
| Average | 79.2 | | |

Notes:

- Retains ranking.
- Vocational Christian leaders rank persevering prayer at 100% while mission leaders rank it only at 58.3%.

Table 36. Q6 Response 2: Praying with Faith.

| Category | Agreement Percentage (%) | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Missionary | 84.6 | Phi | .449 |
| Mission Leader | 58.3 | Cramer’s V | .317 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 100 | Approximate Significance | .139 |
| Intercessor | 81.8 | | |
| Average | 81.3 | | |

Notes:

- Retains rank #2.
- Ironical that, again, vocational Christian leaders are at 100% while mission leaders are at 58.3%.

Table 37. Q6 Response 3: Submitting to God's Will.

| Category | Agreement Percentage (%) | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Missionary | 84.6 | Phi | .441 |
| Mission Leader | 58.3 | Cramer's V | .312 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 100 | Approximate Significance | .157 |
| Intercessor | 90.9 | | |
| Average | 83.3 | | |

Notes:

- Retains rank #3.
- Mission leaders half are half that of vocational Christian leaders.

Table 38. Q6 Response 4: Group Unity/Agreement.

| Category | Agreement Percentage (%) | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Missionary | 76.9 | Phi | .376 |
| Mission Leader | 58.3 | Cramer's V | .266 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 75 | Approximate Significance | .341 |
| Intercessor | 81.8 | | |
| Average | 72.9 | | |

Notes:

- Retains rank.
- Mission leaders again have the lowest ranking score.

Table 39. Q6 Response 5: Having a Cleansed Life.

| Category | Agreement Percentage (%) | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Missionary | 75 | Phi | .386 |
| Mission Leader | 58.3 | Cramer's V | .273 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 83.3 | Approximate Significance | .320 |
| Intercessor | 90.9 | | |
| Average | 76.6 | | |

Notes:

- Retains rank #5.
- Those who have not served cross culturally were more prone to agree less with having a cleansed life as critical (70.3%) compared with those who had not served cross culturally (100%).287 Phi /.287 CV /.144 AS).

Table 40. Q6 Response 6: Praying with Discernment.

| Category | Agreement Percentage (%) | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Missionary | 84.6 | Phi | .449 |
| Mission Leader | 58.3 | Cramer's V | .317 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 100 | Approximate Significance | .139 |

| | | |
|--------------------|------|--|
| Intercessor | 81.8 | |
| Average | 81.3 | |

Note: Retains rank #6.

Table 41. Q6 Further Ranking.

| Delphi 2 Response and Ranking | Delphi 3 Ranking of Delphi #2 | P | CV | AS | New Rank (if necessary) | Notes |
|---|--------------------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|--------------------------------|--|
| #7 Asking 'Where is God working' | 27.1 | .637 | .368 | .362 | Moves to #9 | High P, CV |
| #8 Praying specifically | 35.4 | .714 | .412 | .057 | Moves to #7 | High P, strong CV. |
| #9 Praying for God's glory | 37.5 | .621 | .359 | .236 | Moves to #8 | High P, CV |
| #10 Trusting in God's sovereignty | 36 | .512 | .295 | .817 | Moves to #11 | High AS makes statistic unreliable |
| #11 Understanding the need correctly – more fully | 29.2 | .641 | .350 | .350 | Moves to #10 | Strong P, CV, more reliable AS than 'Trusting' |

4.8.7 Delphi 3 Question 7 Responses and Notes

The top answers to the seventh question 'What tools, if any, do you use in the process of your praying for missions advancement?' were (1) 'Structured praying', (2) 'Missionary requests/letters', (3) 'Mission agency aids to prayer', (4) 'God's Word', and (5) 'Visual/Physical aids to prayer'. The participants were asked to indicate if they agreed with the ranking of these five answers.

The lowest ranked answers that the participants were asked to rank were:

- Electronic media
- Ask the Holy Spirit/promptings
- Worship music/praise

- Prayer and fasting
- Praying with others
- Missionary/prayer giant biographies
- Specific praying

The responses are shown in Tables 42-47.

Table 42. Q7 Response 1: Structured Praying.

| Category | Agreement Percentage (%) | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Missionary | 61.5 | Phi | .398 |
| Mission Leader | 58.7 | Cramer's V | .282 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 66.7 | Approximate Significance | .267 |
| Intercessor | 54.5 | | |
| Average | 61.4 | | |

Note: Retains #1 rank

Table 43. Q7 Response 2: Missionary Requests/Letters.

| Category | Agreement Percentage (%) | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Missionary | 76.9 | Phi | .464 |
| Mission Leader | 66.7 | Cramer's V | .328 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 100 | Approximate Significance | .110 |
| Intercessor | 100 | | |

| | | |
|----------------|------|--|
| Average | 85.4 | |
|----------------|------|--|

Notes:

- Second place ranking retained.
- One would think mission leaders would be the highest ranked category for missionary letters. However, they ranked the lowest respondents (66.7%) compared to 100% of vocational Christian leaders and intercessors (Phi .464/CV .328/AS .110).

Table 44. Q7 Response 3: Mission Agency Aids to Prayer.

| Category | Agreement Percentage (%) | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Missionary | 53.8 | Phi | .471 |
| Mission Leader | 66.7 | Cramer's V | .272 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 75 | Approximate Significance | .302 |
| Intercessor | 54.5 | | |
| Average | 62.5 | | |

Notes:

- Rank #3 retained.
- Ironically, much mission agency materials are targeting intercessors, yet here intercessors rank mission agency aids the lowest (54.5%) of all categories (.477 Phi; .272 CV/.302 AS).

Table 45. Q7 Response 4: God's Word.

| Category | Agreement Percentage (%) | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| | | | |

| | | | | |
|------------------------------------|------|--|---------------------------------|------|
| Missionary | 69.2 | | Phi | .491 |
| Mission Leader | 68.7 | | Cramer's V | .284 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 100 | | Approximate Significance | .237 |
| Intercessor | 90.9 | | | |
| Average | 81.3 | | | |

Note: Rank #4 retained.

Table 46. Q7 Response 5: Visual/ Physical Aids to Prayer.

| Category | Agreement Percentage (%) | | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Missionary | 53.8 | | Phi | .499 |
| Mission Leader | 58.3 | | Cramer's V | .288 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 83.3 | | Approximate Significance | .216 |
| Intercessor | 54.5 | | | |
| Average | 62.5 | | | |

Note: Rank #5 retained.

Table 47. Q7 Further Ranking.

| Delphi 2 Response and Ranking | Delphi 3 % | P | CV | AS | New Rank | Notes |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------------|---|
| #6 Electronic media | 30.8% | .893 | .516 | .032 | Moves to #8 | Very strong CV, barely statistically relevant |
| #7 Ask the Holy Spirit | 29.2% | .893 | .516 | .032 | Moves to #6 | Very strong CV barely statistically relevant |

| | | | | | | |
|---|-------|------|------|------|--------------|---|
| #8 Worship music | 20.8 | .920 | .531 | .018 | Moves to #10 | Very strong CV, barely statistically relevant |
| #9 Prayer and fasting | 16.7% | .886 | .512 | .037 | Moves to #11 | Very strong CV, barely statistically relevant |
| #10 Prayer with others | 22.9% | .708 | .409 | .290 | Moves to #7 | Strong CV |
| #11 Missionary or prayer giants biographies | 29.2 | .746 | .431 | .317 | Moves to #12 | Strong CV |
| #12 Specific praying | 20.8% | .855 | .494 | .067 | Moves to #9 | Strong CV |

4.8.8 Delphi 3 Question 8 Responses and Notes

Regarding the eighth question, ‘Do you ever adjust your prayer (s) as you go along praying for missions advance? If so, how?’, the participants were asked to indicate if they agreed with the ranking of the top two answers: (1) ‘Yes, as my understanding changes’ and (2) ‘Yes, as the Holy Spirit gives new insights/refines/changes us’.

The other answers the participants were asked to rank were:

- Yes as I pray ‘not my will but yours be done’
- Yes as the body of Christ prays too prayers are adjusted
- Yes as my motives are purified
- Yes and the prayer sometimes ‘drops’ and I discontinue praying
- Yes as my faith is built up

The responses are shown in Tables 48–50.

Table 48. Q8 Response 1: Yes, As My Understanding Changes.

| Category | Agreement Percentage (%) | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|------------|--------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| Missionary | 84.6 | Phi | .438 |

| | | | | |
|------------------------------------|------|--|---------------------------------|------|
| Mission Leader | 75 | | Cramer's V | .310 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 100 | | Approximate Significance | .162 |
| Intercessor | 100 | | | |
| Average | 89.6 | | | |

Note: First place ranking retained.

Table 49. Q8 Response 2 Yes, as the Holy Spirit Gives New Insights/Refines/ Changes Us.

| Category | Agreement Percentage (%) | | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Missionary | 92.3 | | Phi | .367 |
| Mission Leader | 75 | | Cramer's V | .367 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 100 | | Approximate Significance | .091 |
| Intercessor | 100 | | | |
| Average | 91.7 | | | |

Note: Second place ranking retained.

Table 50. Q8 Further Rankings

| Delphi 2 Response and Ranking | Delphi 3 Ranking of Delphi #2 | P | CV | AS | New Rank (if necessary) | Notes |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------|------|------|-------------------------|---|
| #3 'Yes as I pray 'not my will' | #51.3 | .699 | .404 | .173 | Retains rank #3 | Strong Phi and CV |
| #4 'Yes as the body of Christ prays' | #27.1 | .611 | .353 | .460 | Moves to #6 | Strong Phi and CV |
| #5 'Yes as my motives are purified' | #27.1 | .643 | .371 | .341 | Retains rank #5 | Stronger Phil and CV than the former #4, lower AS |
| #6 'Yes prayer is dropped/ stop' | #18.8 | .643 | .371 | .340 | Moves to #7 | More people ranked this last (39.6%) |
| #7 'Yes, as faith is built' | #10.4 | .750 | .433 | .080 | Moves to #4 | Stronger statistically than the former 4 and 5. |

Note: The older the participants, the more they ranked higher 'not my will but yours be done' – youngest 40%, middle bracket 50%, 60+ 70% (.531 Phi; .375 CV; .332 AS).

4.8.9 Delphi 3 Question 9 Responses and Notes

Regarding the ninth question 'What role, if any, does the Trinity have in your praying?', the participants were asked to indicate if they agreed with the ranking of the top four answers: (1) 'Yes, very much part of my praying,' (2) 'I pray distinctly to the Trinity for different roles/purposes,' (3) 'The Holy Spirit helps me to pray,' and (4) 'I pray distinctly to the Father.'

In addition, the participants were asked to rank two other answers:

- I pray distinctly to the Holy Spirit
- I pray distinctly to the Son

The responses are shown in Tables 51–55.

Table 51. Q9 Response 1: Yes, Very Much Part of My Praying.

| Category | Agreement Percentage (%) | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Missionary | 53.8 | Phi | .496 |
| Mission Leader | 41.7 | Cramer's V | .287 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 66.7 | Approximate Significance | .223 |
| Intercessor | 90.9 | | |
| Average | 62.5 | | |

Notes:

- Retains rank #1.
- Notable difference with intercessors much higher than others (90.9%), especially compared to mission leaders (41.7%).

Table 52. Q9 Response 2: I Pray Distinctly to the Trinity for Different Roles/Purposes.

| Category | Agreement Percentage (%) | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Missionary | 38.5 | Phi | .525 |
| Mission Leader | 58.3 | Cramer's V | .303 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 50 | Approximate Significance | .151 |
| Intercessor | 63.6 | | |
| Average | 52.1 | | |

Note: Retains rank #2.

Table 53. Q9 Response 3: The Holy Spirit Helps Me to Pray.

| Category | Agreement Percentage (%) | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Missionary | 84.6 | Phi | .531 |
| Mission Leader | 50 | Cramer's V | .368 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 91.7 | Approximate Significance | .024 |
| Intercessor | 100 | | |
| Average | 81.3 | | |

Notes:

- Retains rank #3
- Barely statistically significant
- Mission leaders substantially lower (50%) than the others.

Table 54. Q9 Response 4: I Pray Distinctly to the Father

| Category | Agreement Percentage (%) | Stat Type | Statistical Measurement |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Missionary | 84.6 | Phi | .637 |
| Mission Leader | 36.4 | Cramer's V | .368 |
| Vocational Christian Leader | 75 | Approximate Significance | .024 |
| Intercessor | 36.4 | | |
| Average | 59.6 | | |

Notes:

- Fourth place ranking retained

- Intercessors and mission leaders (both 36.4%) are less than half of vocational Christian leaders (75%) and missionaries (86.4%).

Table 55. Q9 Further Ranking.

| Delphi 2 Response and Ranking | Delphi 3 Ranking of Delphi #2 | P | CV | AS | New Rank (if necessary) | Notes |
|---|-------------------------------|------|------|------|-------------------------|-------|
| #5 I pray distinctly to the Holy Spirit | 14.6% | .485 | .290 | .257 | Moves to #6 | |
| #6 I pray distinctly to the Son | 50. | .446 | .258 | .388 | Moves to #5 | |

4.8.10 Delphi 3 Question 10 Responses and Notes

The top answer to the tenth question ‘In your experience, if any, what are factors related to the timing of answered prayer?’ was ‘God is sovereign!’

The other answers the participants were asked to rank were:

- Our perseverance
- Our preparation
- Our faith level
- If we ‘stand in the gap’
- The volume (as in the amount) of prayer offered
- The spiritual opposition encountered
- Our desperation in praying
- Our ‘carnality’
- Corporate prayer
- Asking amiss
- The burden on my heart
- The ‘dropping of a prayer’ because of neglect

Note: The response was overwhelmingly positive for the top ranked answer ‘God is Sovereign’. With the multiplicity of responses, resulting in the scattering of the statistics,

the statistical reliability of the responses goes down significantly. Rankings of Delphi # 2 were maintained.

4.8.11 Delphi 3 Summary Chart

Table 56 summarizes the rankings that were changed after the Delphi 3 iteration.

Table 56. Rankings that were Changed after the Delphi 3 Iteration.

| Question | No. of Rankings Changed | Response | Ranking in Delphi 2 | New Ranking | Reason |
|----------|--------------------------|---|---------------------|-------------|---|
| Q1 | 2 lower rankings changed | Circumstances (Glimmer of hope, see arrows line up) | #5 | #6 | Statistically stronger |
| | | A 'sense' or 'knowing' | #6 | #7 | Statistically a little weaker than #6 |
| Q2 | 0 rankings changed | | | | |
| | | Peace' or 'no peace' about the request | #7 | #5 | Strong Cramer's V, p. %. |
| Q3 | 3 lower rankings changed | See the answers | #5 | #6 | Moderate to high CV Strong Phi. Statistically not significant |
| | | The body of Christ confirms | #6 | #7 | Statistically not significant |
| | | You just can't know | #7 | #5 | Majority ranked this last (73%) |
| Q4 | 2 lower rankings changed | Even when not strong, He answers | #5 | #6 | Respondents ranked this higher Strong p, moderate CV, weak AS |
| | | Positional authority is the most important element | #6 | #5 | Respondents ranked this lower. Very strong p, strong CV, reasonable AS |
| Q5A | 2 lower rankings changed | When my relationships are not right/un-forgiveness | #4 | #6 | High AS Statistically not strong |

| Question | No. of Rankings Changed | Response | Ranking in Delphi 2 | New Ranking | Reason |
|----------|--------------------------|---|---------------------|-------------|--|
| | | Praying with wrong motives, superficially or uninformed | #6 | #4 | Statistically stronger than others |
| Q5B | 3 rankings changed | Asking body of Christ to pray with you | #5 | #7 | Lower percentage than others |
| | | Go back to the Word | #6 | # 5 | Higher percentage |
| | | Fasting | #7 | # 6 | Higher percentage |
| Q6 | 5 lower rankings changed | Asking 'Where is God working' | #7 | #9 | High P, CV |
| | | Praying specifically | #8 | #7 | High P, strong CV |
| | | Praying for God's glory | #9 | #8 | High P, CV |
| | | Trusting in God's sovereignty | #10 | #11 | High AS makes statistic unreliable |
| | | Understanding the need correctly – more fully | #11 | #10 | Strong P, CV, more reliable AS than 'Trusting' |
| Q7 | 8 lower rankings changed | Electronic Media | #6 | #8 | Very strong CV, barely statistically relevant |
| | | Ask the Holy Spirit | #7 | #6 | Very strong CV barely statistically relevant |
| | | Worship Music | #8 | #10 | Very strong CV, barely statistically relevant |
| | | Prayer and fasting | #9 | #11 | Very strong CV, barely statistically relevant |
| | | Prayer with others | #10 | #7 | Strong CV |
| | | Missionary or Prayer Giants biographies | #11 | #12 | Strong CV |
| | | Specific praying | #12 | #9 | Strong CV |
| Q8 | 3 lower rankings changed | 'Yes as the body of Christ prays' | #4 | #6 | Strong Phi and CV |
| | | 'Yes prayer is dropped/' | #6 | #7 | More people ranked this last (39.6%) |

| Question | No. of Rankings Changed | Response | Ranking in Delphi 2 | New Ranking | Reason |
|----------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|---|
| | | stop' | | | |
| | | 'Yes, as faith is built' | #7 | #4 | Stronger statistically than the former 4 and 5. |
| Q9 | 2 lower rankings changed | I pray distinctly to the Holy Spirit | #5 | #6 | |
| | | I pray distinctly to the Son | #6 | #5 | |
| Q10 | 0 rankings changed | 0 rankings changed | N/A | N/A | N/A |

This section has described the three Delphi iterations with a final summary chart.

4.9 PROPOSED THEORETICAL PRAYER PROCESS

The proposed theoretical prayer process is categorized as a theory rather than a hypothesis. A theory is a potential explanation of the relationship between two social phenomena, whereas a hypothesis is a statement about the relationship between variables, that, while logically deriving from the theory, is more specific and exact (Healey, 2009:2,4).

Figure 15 presents the emerging theoretical prayer process in diagram form for the purpose of understanding and clarity.

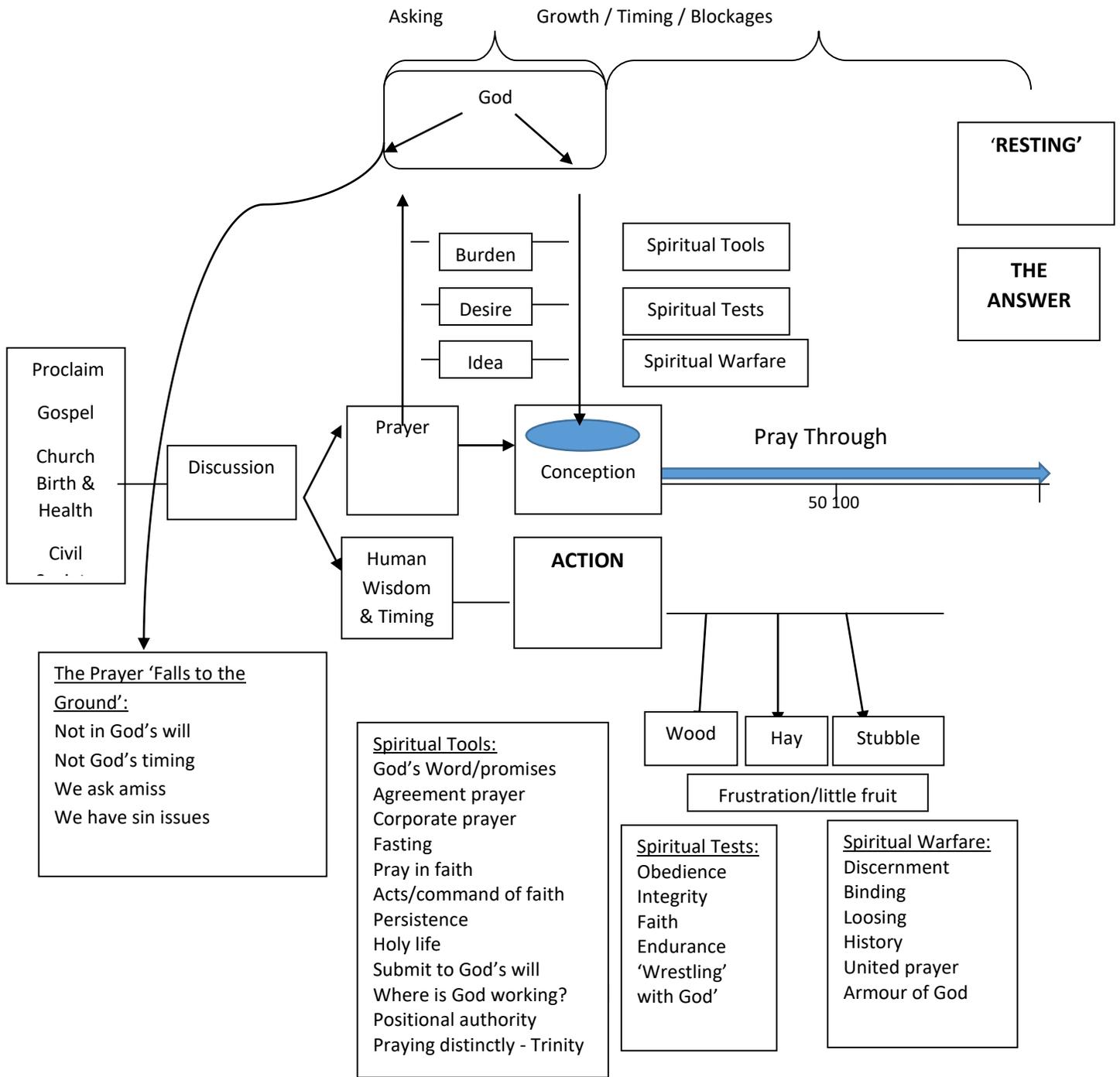


Figure 15. Proposed theoretical prayer process diagram.

4.9.1 Theoretical Prayer Process Explanation

The theoretical prayer process starts with the need/challenge of some aspect of gospel proclamation, the birth or strengthening of the church, or an issue in civil society.

Subsequently, one of three tacks is taken:

Tack 1:

A way forward or solution is proposed. It may sound like the right thing to do. There is no 'inquiry' from the Lord (c.f. the Gibeonite deception - Joshua 10). The course of action may be out of the will of God. It might be the right course of action but the wrong timing. It may not be morally wrong or done with wrong motives. There may be prayer for God to 'bless' the actions'. As time goes on, there will be increasing frustration, little fruit and it will prove to be 'wood, hay and stubble' – a metaphor for something that will not last.

Tack 2:

After discussion (there is wisdom in many counsellors), it is taken to the Lord in prayer. The request is made for the Lord to bless the plans/strategies/direction without seeking the face of the Lord and discerning his purposes for the matter. In reality, the prayer dies (falls to the ground), as it is either not in God's sovereign plans, not the correct timing, made with wrong motives or there are sin issues to be dealt with first (i.e. Achan's sin). The prayer falls to the ground. The individual/group either:

- Continues with ultimately little fruit or wood hay and stubble.
- Discerns that the prayer has not 'conceived' and adjusts the plan, timing and then once again waits upon the Lord.

Tack 3:

Upon discussion and vetting related to missions best practices and scriptural principles, the idea is brought before the Lord. As the individual/group waits before the Lord, there is an inner confirmation given by the Holy Spirit and discerned by the individual or group to be a

confirmation ('it seemed good to us and to the Holy Spirit' - similar to the Jerusalem council in Acts 15).

At that point, the prayer has 'been heard' and 'you know' (1 John 5) and you have confidence. The answer is fully given in spiritual reality and may or may not be done in physical reality ('your will be done on earth as it is heaven'). The prayer may grow progressively as illustrated by the red line – to 100%.

There may be many lessons the Lord would wish to teach the individual, group or church. Sometimes it is the employment of **spiritual tools** (using the Bible, promises, agreement prayer, corporate prayer, fasting, praying in faith, persistent prayer, holy life, learning to submit to God's will, learning to discern where God is working, using the believers' position authority in prayer and praying to distinct members of the Trinity).

Sometimes it may be **spiritual tests** – obedience, integrity, faith, endurance or learning to wrestle with God.

Sometimes it may be **spiritual warfare**, and one needs to learn discernment on how to pray, using binding or loosing prayers, understanding spiritual history, employing the power of united and congregational prayer, putting on spiritual armour and using the soldiers' equipment.

4.9.2 Summary and Conclusion

We have indicated that God often works in a pattern that is seemingly simple: a combination of God's Mission/Sovereignty + Our Participation resulting in God's mission/purposes being fulfilled. The key to this process of prayer is the intersection of the two: Determining God's will and God's timing – with the understanding that God is sovereign, and He may or may not choose to reveal them to us. He may or may not choose to process what He wants to do in and through us. That being said, there do seem to be patterns that He often chooses to work with.

We looked at a brief overview of biblical discernment and guidance focusing on four approaches, which all have application for the emerging prayer process. We have seen

that Jonathan Edwards' teaching and the Irenaeus model contribute to understanding the differences between God, human emotion or ideas, and potentially the devil's influence, and we have discovered the grid of 'revelation, interpretation and application' as a potential discernment tool.

In the four approaches related to more recent evangelical discernment, the traditional approach focuses on a specific outcome for someone's life, which Scripture does speak to. The wisdom approach shows the need for guidance decisions based on the principles of God's Word, while the relational approach points to the importance of God's nurturing and the necessity of being in tune to understand God's purposes for our lives. The 'testing the spirits' approach helps particularly in the 'asking' stage as we seek to determine and verify the source of a particular idea or plan, its meaning and how it fleshes out.

The emerging theoretical prayer process explanation is summarized by the verification of a particular ministry direction, the spiritual tools necessary to play our part, the passing of various tests both from God and the enemy and growing in our faith as we process them and finally the recognition of God's timing and if there is anything we can do to 'hasten the day' (Matthew 24:14). Ultimately, we must learn to trust and rest in God's sovereignty.

This theoretical prayer process diagram has been developed as a result of the study of the Scriptures, observation of models and practitioners and from the emerging data. These have specific implications related to mission practice, which is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

**IMPLICATIONS FOR STRATEGIC INTERCESSORY PRAYER
IN MISSIONS PRACTICE**

5.1 SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS FROM THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The final results of the Delphi 3 iteration are shown in Table 57.

Table 57. Delphi 3 Final Results.

| No. | Question | Top Ranked | Next Ranked |
|-----|---|---|---|
| 1. | If it is possible, how do you determine if what you are praying about is in God's will? | Is it Biblical? The Holy Spirit guiding my prayers Submission to God's will | The body of Christ helps to inform/shape my prayers Circumstances (glimmer(s)) of hope, see 'arrows line up' A sense, knowing Peace or not having peace about the request. |
| 2. | If you have ever had a prayer burden for missions' advancement, please describe the factors surrounding it. | Having exposure to the need from missionaries and others about difficult situations, spiritual battles and the need for more personnel ('The harvest is white but the labourers are few') The Holy Spirit giving the desire/purpose Personal, first hand exposure to the need | Passion for a particular unreached people group (or evangelism) Geographical (maps, materials) Scripture (especially the Great Commission) Anger against the enemy's devastation |
| 3. | If it is possible, how can you tell that your prayer is in the process of being answered? | Holy Spirit's confirmation/assurance/known/inner witness Glimmer of hope / sense of progression A burden that increases or dissipates – praying through | Faith – confidence in God without seeing the evidence See the answers – confirm it was God's will The body of Christ confirms You just can't know |

| No. | Question | Top Ranked | Next Ranked |
|-----|---|--|---|
| 4. | In your experience, what connection is there, if any, between your relationship with God and answers to prayer? | <p>Absolutely – it is a key James 5:16 ‘the prayer of a righteous man avails much...’</p> <p>Absolutely - as you are close to him, he helps us to know His will and what to pray</p> <p>Sin blocks answers to prayer</p> <p>Absolutely – as you are closer to him, he builds your faith and motivates me to pray</p> | <p>Even when my own personal relationship is not strong, he often answers prayer (his grace)</p> <p>Positional authority as a child of God is the most important element</p> |
| 5. | If there are seeming blockages to your prayers, how do you handle them? | <p><i>For the person praying:</i></p> <p>My own personal sin -confess</p> <p>Distractions – address worries, riches, pleasures, stress</p> | <p>Not setting aside time to pray</p> <p>When my relationships not right/unforgiveness</p> <p>Not submitted to God’s will</p> <p>Praying with wrong motives, praying superficially, uninformed praying</p> |
| | | <p><i>For the situations being prayed about:</i></p> <p>Ask the Holy Spirit what is blocking</p> <p>Persistence – pray through the blockages</p> <p>Spiritual warfare / resistance</p> | <p>Trusting God and His sovereignty</p> <p>Go back to the Word to know how to pray</p> <p>Fasting</p> <p>Asking the body of Christ to pray for/with you</p> |
| 6. | In your experience, what are some keys to seeing prayers answered? | <p>Persevering prayer</p> <p>Praying with faith</p> <p>Submitting to God’s will</p> <p>Group unity/agreement</p> <p>Having a cleansed life</p> <p>Praying with discernment</p> | <p>Asking: ‘Where is God working?’</p> <p>Praying specifically</p> <p>Praying for God’s glory</p> <p>Trusting in God’s sovereignty</p> <p>Understanding the need correctly/more fully to better pray</p> |
| 7. | What tools, if any, do you use in the process of your praying for missions advancement? | <p>Structured praying</p> <p>Missionary requests/letters</p> <p>Mission agency aids to prayer</p> <p>God’s Word</p> <p>Visual/Physical aids to prayer</p> | <p>Electronic media</p> <p>Ask the Holy Spirit/promptings</p> <p>Worship music/praise</p> <p>Prayer and fasting</p> <p>Praying with others</p> <p>Missionary/prayer giant biographies</p> <p>Specific praying</p> |

| No. | Question | Top Ranked | Next Ranked |
|-----|---|---|---|
| 8. | Do you ever adjust your prayer(s) as you go along praying for missions advance? If so, how? | Yes, as my understanding changes Yes, as the Holy Spirit gives new insights/refines/changes us | Yes, as I pray 'not my will but yours be done' Yes, as the body of Christ prays too prayers are adjusted Yes, as my motives are purified Yes, and the prayer sometimes 'drops' and I discontinue praying Yes, as my faith is built up |
| 9. | What role, if any, does the Trinity have in your praying? | Yes, very much part of my praying I pray distinctly to the Trinity for different roles/purposes The Holy Spirit helps me to pray I pray distinctly to the Father | I pray distinctly to the Holy Spirit I pray distinctly to the Son |
| 10. | In your experience, if any, what are factors related to the timing of answered prayer? | God is sovereign! | Our perseverance Our preparation Our faith level If we 'stand in the gap' The volume (as in the amount) of prayer offered The spiritual opposition encountered Our desperation in praying Our 'carnality' Corporate prayer Asking amiss The burden on my heart The 'dropping of a prayer' because of neglect |

The general implications of these results for the practice of strategic intercessory prayer in missions are understanding that:

- There is a link between God's sovereignty and His invitation to be part of the process of seeing His mission accomplished as we pray. This anomaly does not prevent respondents from continuing to pray.
- Prayer is a 'fluid' mechanism. Adjustment comes with praying, with new information and with perceived blockages.
- Prayer is, above all else, based on a relationship. The spiritual state of the pray-er can have a major impact on the results.

- Learning to pray to different members of the Trinity is in a realm of intimacy with God that is both fascinating and unclear.
- Intercessory prayer is critical for gospel proclamation – especially in cultures that are resistant to the gospel, in the birth and strengthening of the church and for transformation in civil society.

5.2 SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS FROM THE THEORETICAL STRATEGIC INTERCESSORY PRAYER MODEL AND THE THEORETICAL PRAYER PROCESS



Figure 16. Relationship between the theoretical strategic intercessory prayer model and the proposed theoretical prayer process.

5.2.1 Implications for the Proclamation of the Gospel

The implications of the strategic intercessory prayer model and the proposed theoretical prayer process for the practice of strategic intercessory prayer in missions are:

- Using the 'prayer process' as outlined in this dissertation to seek to determine strategies related to 'if' 'to go – related to God's sovereignty
- Using the prayer process as outlined in this dissertation to seek to determine 'where' to go – related to God's mission
- Using the prayer process as outlined in this dissertation to seek to determine strategies related to 'when to go' – related to God's timing
- Using the prayer process as outlined in this dissertation to seek to understand spiritual blockages and then how to approach them – related to our participation.

5.2.2 Implications for the Birth and Strengthening of the Church

Regarding the birth and strengthening of the church, the model also has several implications:

- Understanding that spiritual power is necessary for the birth and ongoing health of a church.
- Using the prayer process with every successive challenge in the life of the church and seeking to learn to pray through until God's victory is won.
- Using the prayer process as outlined in this dissertation to seek to determine if challenges to the church is a 'spiritual test' or a 'spiritual blockage'. The strategy and follow up dealing with the challenge will be quite different depending on the type of challenge.

5.2.3 Implications for Impact upon Civil Society

The link between prayer and the church and the resulting impact upon civil society is reflected in a report by The World Evangelical Fellowship and Lausanne. The two

organizations jointly commissioned a report on evangelism and social responsibility. Related to their recommendations, the first was 'intercession'. Citing 1 Tim 2:4, 'first of all I urge that supplications...' the report stated:

. . . we are convinced that the living God hears and answers the prayers of his people, and that by prayer we can enter into the unseen spiritual conflict and bind Satan in the name of Christ, and that there is special power in corporate prayer...yet we are ashamed that our practice falls fall short of the principle...often the pastoral prayer is brief and perfunctory...vain repetitions...we resolve ourselves and call upon our churches to take much more seriously the period of intercession in public worship, to think in terms of 10 or 15 minutes rather than 5, to invite lay people to pray in leading, to focus our prayers on both the evangelization of the world (closed lands, resistant peoples, missionaries, national churches, etc.) and on the quest for peace and justice in the world (places of tension and conflict, 475, poor and needy, etc.). (Sine, 1983:83)

Using the proposed theoretical model and prayer process, challenges can be prayed through. It becomes particularly germane as groups of Christians, churches, missions and denominations all join together. This cooperation, in itself, is an answer to Jesus' unity prayer in John 17.

In her excellent article 'The Sending of the Church and Civil Society: A Test Case for a Comprehensive Missional Paradigm', Hannah Reichel lays an impressive template for the church to implement the ground-breaking understanding of *Missio Deo* as articulated by Karl Barth. Commenting on the further development of the concept by Leslie Newbegin of the missional priesthood of the congregation and the Christian version of society, Reichel states 'the church's confrontation of injustice and oppression and its action for justice and peace are crucial to its participation in Christ's mission of challenging the powers and principalities that ultimately led to his death on the cross' (as cited in Welker *et al.*, 2017:245). Jesus demonstrated very clearly that He relied on the power of the Spirit to do just that. The history of the church has borne witness that

social change does not happen in isolation with only good intentions¹² (cf: Ephesians 6:10-20; 2 Corinthians 10:1-5).

¹² During one of my supervisory visits to Calcutta, India, my colleague took me to Mother Teresa's home (now a museum) where he spent many hours with her as a younger man. It was clear from many witnesses affirmed by my colleague where the motivation came from for her ministry to the 'poorest of the poor'. Her communion with God in prayer kept her motivated and persevering, in spite of her doubts at times. From there I went to a high-end handbag factory that only employed ex-prostitutes, where I spoke to the employees at their chapel time. In talking with the Director afterward, I was struck by her personal piety, compassion and perseverance, not surprisingly like the Master she claimed to serve and spend time with.

CHAPTER 6

FOR FURTHER STUDY, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1 FOR FURTHER STUDY

There are many subjects that need further clarification and elaboration as it relates to strategic intercessory prayer for missions practice. These include:

- We know from the Ante Nicene church that fasting became unbalanced and often led to asceticism. How can a balanced approach to fasting be encouraged and employed for missions' advancement (Acts 13) and for the strengthening of the church during difficult times? Study is needed to revisit learning from Eastern counterparts and how to utilize this neglected prayer tool personally as well as promote it corporately for mission advance. While there are some good resources on fasting (e.g. John Piper's *A Hunger for God*), they are largely ignored by the Western church.
- Further study is needed regarding how the Western church can incorporate a Trinitarian model of prayer as it relates to the Holy Spirit praying for us and in us concerning missions practice.
- Mission groups are increasingly moving away from 'self-selecting' missionaries and wanting affirmation from the body of Christ. Further study needs to be done to determine the ways in which the Spirit specifically directs and calls individuals in non-charismatic traditions. Can fasting be implemented at a greater level for the identification and sending of missionaries?
- The example of D.E. Hoste as leader of the China Inland Mission spending his mornings in intercessory prayer seems impossible on a human level and improbable for today's overburdened mission leaders. Further study needs to be done on how to restructure missions ministry based on the Acts 6 model of spiritual leaders focused on prayer and the ministry of the Word.

- A controlled study focusing on praying the 'Lord of the Harvest' prayer of Matthew 9:38 could be instructive. While I was with a French leader one morning, I heard his watch alarm go off at 9:38 a.m. Inquiring as to what the alarm was for, I was informed that a group called 'Forum de Evangelistes' in France and Quebec had been encouraging their members for some years to pray for labourers. Inspired by Jesus' instruction to the disciples to pray in Matthew 9:38, the members of this group stop and take time to pray for this request at 9:38 a.m. Anecdotally, there has been a marked increase in the number of labourers, but further study is required for hard data.
- Prayer as a complex adaptive system is a 'complex' topic. Further study on the interactions of spiritual tools and spiritual tests as it relates to prayer for missions could be instructive.
- Intercessors tend to be 'lone rangers', and as the Delphi study pointed out, they are less likely to ask the wider body of Christ to pray with them. Thus, many older intercessors are passing on without the benefit of younger ones learning from them. It would be very interesting to study and learn from older intercessors and set up mentoring relationships between older and younger intercessors. Pilot programs could be launched and results written about in the hope of spurring on the 2 Timothy 2:2 process of 'multiplication'.
- Further study needs to be done on training for missionaries regarding strategic intercessory prayer. Missionaries tend to be activists, as demonstrated by the Delphi study. It would be interesting to develop a training program for missionaries that monitored the results of strategic intercessory prayer in their personal and missionary lives and studied them and then was written up with the goal of inspiring others to do the same.
- Further study is needed to understand how to identify and discern where God is working. For many Christian workers today, this seems like a foreign language, particularly in the conservative Protestant wing of the church. Researching mission

leaders could be very instructive to others regarding how this subject is approached. Training in discernment as it relates to mission strategy as a whole could be instructive.

- While the explosive growth of the world-wide church that focuses on the 'Spirit' is evident, further study needs to be done to answer the question about how other Christian groups can recapture the importance of the Spirit's work (Acts 1:8; Ephesians 5:18) for missions practice. Typically, the 'Spirit' is a strong foundational aspect of doctrine in conservative evangelical mission circles, but not as much in practice.
- In Exodus 17, we read of the command of God to have the victorious battle against the Amalekites memorialized on a scroll. Evangelical tradition typically shies away from physical objects because of the fear of the objects becoming either icons or an object of prayer and worship. Interestingly, the contrast between the Lutheran church closest to Worms (where Martin Luther was brought before the Council and the purported 'Here I stand, I can do no other' speech happened) and the Catholic church on the premises is rather stark. The Lutheran church building was almost bare of art or objects save for an empty cross. The Catholic church building was quite the opposite. Further study is needed to see if there are examples of Protestant churches that successfully display physical objects that remind them of past victories and motivate them toward the future without idolizing the objects.
- Further study is needed on the intersection of a praying church and missions practice in our postmodern context. Almost without exception, former 'wine-skins' related to the supporting of missions' endeavours through prayer have been discarded or altered. There are many examples of 'mission minded churches', however increasingly in the West this is becoming an anomaly.
- The results of the Delphi survey could be studied further in the hope of understanding prayer more fully.

- Although there has been much growth of the church in the Charismatic/Pentecostal circles, in some cases historical orthodox evangelical doctrine has been swept aside or syncretized in favour of any number of 'other gospels'. This model with its safeguards in both discernment, doctrine and missions' best practises may assist in keeping a more narrow path.¹³

6.2 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

We must caution against formulaic faith or prayers and focus instead on placing more emphasis on the spiritual disciplines – including our prayer life. Ultimately, God is sovereign over all. That being said, the example of numerous Scriptures, the practice and teaching of Jesus, the early church and subsequent history give us pause about common patterns of answered prayer.

An important growth area is the rise of Christian research about unreached people groups. This research has allowed mission agencies and prayer groups to focus on specific strategies for reaching countries with the gospel. More conservative evangelical groups increasingly feel more comfortable with having this data from demographic channels and tend to distance themselves to 'spiritually discerned' methods favoured by other groups. We would argue for a more balanced approach.

The 2010 Cape Town Advance paper notes ten essential elements of the Great Commission. They are as follows:

1. Scripture Translation
2. Engaging Unengaged People Groups (where there is no gospel proclamation or church)
3. Evangelism of Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Secularists

¹³One of my personnel has a Ph.D. in African religions and is a professor at a historical and reputable residential theological college. He shared with me that it takes him some years of patient and persevering Biblical instruction to show students who come steeped and indoctrinated in the 'prosperity gospel' doctrine that, to be a Christian believer, does not automatically mean you will be 'rich'. He states that, in his experience of confronting all cultic doctrines, the prosperity gospel is the most insidious.

4. Oral Learners
5. Church Planting and Presence
6. Prayer and Unity
7. Compassion Ministry
8. Confession Repentance and the Holy Spirit
9. Mobilizing the Body of Christ – People and Finances
10. Research, Mapping and Reporting

As it relates to prayer, the following was noted:

1. We are commanded to pray for workers (Matthew 9:37-38)
2. The very act of praying does three things for us:
 - a. We acknowledge that it is His harvest field
 - b. We are reminded that the task is supernatural
 - c. We believe that Jesus moves in response to the prayers of His saints
3. What is the basis for prayer and evangelism?
 - a. Colossians 4:2-4
 - b. 1 Timothy 2:1-4
 - c. Matthew 16:10
 - d. Matthew 26:19
 - e. Isaiah 56:7b
4. The need to pray for unity – so that the ‘world may know’ – John 17.

To this wonderful list, I would suggest two changes:

- ✓ Add ‘missions best practices’ when seeking to engage non-believers. We have learned many hard lessons through mistakes in the past. The major ones include ‘colonizing’ attitudes, lack of contextualization (mixing Western culture and emphasis with the gospel) and ‘the Crusades’. We have learned much about missiological science in the past decades and the lessons learned need to be incorporated into future strategy. There will always be new approaches; however, basic missiological principles need to be engaged.

- ✓ Incorporate strategic intercessory prayer as a primary focus rather than ‘one aspect’ out of ten. This list fundamentally affirms my earlier contention that intercessory prayer is not currently a ‘primary’ tool for mission advancement amongst conservative evangelicals.

The witness of Scripture of the centrality of prayer (particularly the practice and teaching of our Lord and the early church) – confirmed by missions history – points to this reality. We ignore it at our own peril. Utilizing the proposed theoretical model from this dissertation would take ‘prayer for missions’ into a new level of strategic effectiveness of the kingdom of God in the proclamation of the Gospel, the birth and strengthening of the church and the transformation of civil society.

CHAPTER 7

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