

A model for the growth of the Evangelical Churches in Canada

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Preface and Acknowledgements

There are two things that have been drummed into my head concerning leadership. The first is that a leader is a life-long learner. That is to say, a leader is a person who hungers for knowledge, but not simply ratiocinative knowledge as much as for praxis oriented knowledge that will serve to make a person a better leader within a given context. The second aspect of leadership that I have been constantly reminded of is that good leadership is servant leadership! In the development of this thesis there are a number of people who have epitomized a servant leaders heart, I mention them later in this acknowledgement. For now, I would like to emphasize that the impetus of this thesis, and the hours and years that are represented in these pages, is a deep desire to learn how to research and how to write, but also to understand the current Canadian context and to serve as a help to my many fellow under-shepherds who are laboring under challenging conditions. A PhD thesis must, I think, be a useful and helpful piece of work that engages a current problem or issue in such a way that some contribution is made to society through an attempt to resolve the problem under review. It is my earnest hope that this thesis is a small part of a first step towards helping the Evangelical churches in Canada reframe ministry in a more missional mode. If that is accomplished, it will be by God's grace and because of the incredible help of the following amazing servant leaders:

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Chapter 1: Canadian Evangelical Churches in Decline

1.1 The Problem: The Evangelical¹ Churches in Canada are in Decline

Alain de Botton made the following incisive observation: “In writing a problem down or airing it in conversation we let its essential aspects emerge. And by knowing its character, we remove, if not the problem itself, then its secondary, aggravating characteristics: confusion, displacement, surprise.” (Dunleavy 2003: 1) The most eminent sociology researcher concerning the church in Canada, Reginald Bibby, asserts (Bibby, 2004:32) that the church in Canada is in decline. Since the 1960’s, the evangelical church in Canada has been in decline (Grenville, A. & Posterski, D. 2004). The New York Times (Krauss, 2003) in a front page article, December 2003, highlights the difference between Canada and America by highlighting the fact that 80% of Canadians agree that “you don’t need to go to church in order to be a good Christian” whereas only roughly 50% of Americans would agree with that statement. Even more recent data (Bricker, D. & Wright, J. 2005:80) highlights this concept that Canadian faith has become privatized, and states that whilst 84 % of Canadians believe in God, 81% of Canadians agree that you do not need to go to church to be a good Christian. In the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 16 and verse 18, Jesus declares, “I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it” (Bible 1984). Also, in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 28 verses 19 and 20 there occurs the Great Commission, in which the risen Christ commands His disciples to go into the entire world and to make disciples from among all the nations (Bible 1984). The implementation and consequent outcome of these verses does not seem to be a visible reality in the 21st century Canadian context. From the preceding material it would appear that the Evangelical church in Canada is in decline. This decline is a problem that warrants careful research with a view to possible models or choices that can assist the Canadian Evangelical church to fulfill the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20.

There are many possible reasons for the decline in church attendance in Canada but three key reasons are cited by researchers in the field of Canadian Evangelical Christianity (Grenville, A. & Posterski, D. 2004).

¹ Throughout this paper the term “Evangelical” refers to that group of churches that align themselves with the tenets of the Christian faith as presented in the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada statement of faith (2009).

1. After 1960, Canada “became a nation of believers, but not belongers. . . Today, Canadians do not go to church because they don’t think they need to.”
2. Many Canadians see all religions as equally true and good. For this reason, belief has moved from the realm of the exclusivity and necessity of Christianity to a concept of a moral and privatized spirituality.
3. Many Canadians believe that religion is not essential for guidance in their daily life.

In addition to the statistics given above is the telling statement given by Outreach Canada (2001): “Research shows 65% of churches have plateaued in their numerical growth. Churches are faced with many challenges. Canada's social structure has changed, and churches need to adapt to meet the needs of their communities. Many areas of our cities have no evangelical churches and the programs that do exist have not kept pace with the modern world. As a result, a generation of young people has grown up largely without church ties. It is apparent that there is a lack of robust health among Canadian evangelical churches”. Consider, in Table 1:1, the following results of research conducted by Outreach Canada (2001).

Table 1:1 Outreach Canada Research into the state of the Canadian Evangelical Church

Stage of Growth	Percent of Evangelical Churches
Initial Formation	10%
Maximum Efficiency	10%
Plateaued	65%
Declining	10%
Disintegration	5%

In contrast, to the decline in Evangelical churches in Canada in the period 1961 – 2001 (Statistics Canada) there has been a marked increase in Eastern non-Christian religions. In 1961, Eastern Non-Christian religions comprised 0.1% of the Canadian Population. In 2001, they comprised 5%. For the same period, those claiming to have no religion jumped from 1% to 16% (Outreach Canada, 2001). This increase in non-Christian religions has a two-fold effect. Firstly, it poses a spiritual alternative to those who are seeking (Emberly

2002). Secondly it strengthens the notion of pluralism and many paths to God (Bricker & Wright 2005: 78-86), since many Canadians build close and meaningful relationships with immigrant people and through that process come to see the religious perspectives of those immigrant people as both meaningful and sincere.

The Research Question: “What church model within the context of Canada in the 21st century will bring about the health and missional effectiveness of the Evangelical church in Canada?”

Within the field of Practical Theology there are many different (Lotter 2004: 3-7) research methods that one might utilize in a bid to respond to the research question as cited above. The research methodology that attempts to answer the research question for this thesis is outlined in the section below.

1.2 Research Methodology

This thesis is a practical theological interpretation (Osmer, 2008:5). In order to facilitate an effective Qualitative Practical Theological method of research, the newer model of Osmer, (2009: 7) is employed. The Practical Theological method of Osmer is helpful in a post-modern context because his goal is to assist the researcher in “coming to terms with intellectual pluralism, the reality of multiple and, often, competing paradigms within a single field.” (Osmer, 2010: 2). Osmer reminds us that the challenges confronting Practical Theology today must either be accommodated by existing paradigms or they must elicit new paradigms (Osmer, 2010: 3). This is helpful to the modern Practical Theological researcher who may need to develop new approaches to the research process, and new approaches to praxis as a result of the research, to assure the veracity of the outcomes. One of the “new” approaches within this research paper is the use of a Delphi method in chapter 2. The Delphi method was utilized in this thesis because of the scarcity (Hiemstra, 2010) of extant literature on Church growth or Church decline within the Canadian context. The use of the Delphi method in chapter 2 of this thesis falls in line with part 1 of Osmer’s (2010: 3) Model titled: “Descriptive-empirical: What is going on? Gathering information to better understand particular episodes, situations or contexts”.

The research method utilized for this thesis closely approximates the model developed by Osmer (2010: 7) because it assumes that Practical Theology, like other fields today, is

highly pluralistic. Osmer's hermeneutic is closely followed throughout this thesis as the guiding framework for the research and thus follows the four tasks of Osmer's (2010: 3; 2008: 4) hermeneutical spiral. This hermeneutical spiral comprises (Osmer, 2010: 3; 2008: 4-175) the following four tasks, each of which is attended to in this thesis, as follows:

1. *Descriptive-empirical*: What is going on? Gathering information to better understand particular episodes, situations, or contexts. (Chapter 1 of this thesis – “The Decline of the Evangelical Church in Canada.”)

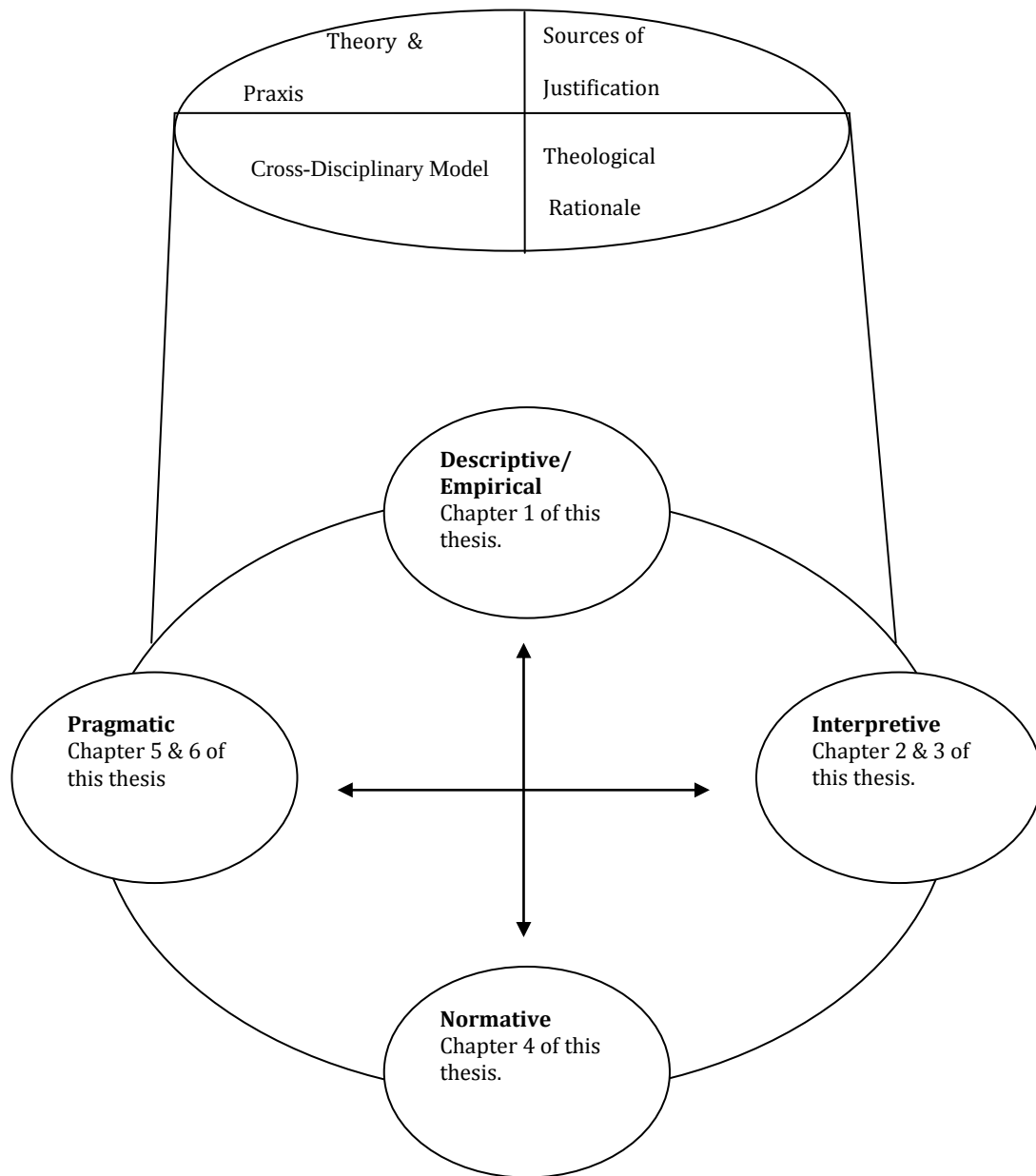
2. *Interpretive*: Why is this going on? Entering into a dialogue with the social sciences to interpret and explain why certain actions and patterns are taking place. (Chapter 2 of this thesis – “The Delphi Survey,” and chapter 3 of this thesis, “Towards a Literature Review.”)

3. *Normative*: What ought to be going on? Raising normative questions from the perspectives of theology, ethics and other fields. (Chapter 4 of this thesis – “The Missional Community of God.”)

4. *Pragmatic*: How might we respond? Forming an action plan and undertaking specific responses that seek to shape the episode, situation, or context in desirable directions. (Chapter 5 of this thesis – “Shaping a Missional Community in a Secular Context” and chapter 6, “Further Areas for Research.”)

These four tasks, that form Osmer's (2010: 3) hermeneutical spiral, are represented in Diagram 1:1 (Osmer, 2010: 7) on the following page. In this chapter we focus on the second of the four tasks, namely the “Interpretive,” (Osmer 2010: 3) in which we try to answer the question: “Why is this going on?” The practical theological endeavor is strengthened (Lotter, 2004: 4-6) when it progresses through this interpretive phase, because it is able to glean from other researchers and practitioners across a number of disciplines (Osmer, 2008: 79-128) concerning each researcher's perspective on why certain actions and patterns are taking place. At the outset of this thesis the research direction focused on a church growth paradigm (McGavran & Wagner, 1990), but this direction began to change

Diagram 1:1 Osmer's (2010: 7) Hermeneutical Spiral



when the four dynamic tensions (Engle & McIntosh 2004) related to the church growth perspective emerged. These four dynamic tensions serve to alert the reader to the potential pitfalls of the church growth methodology as follows:

Dynamic Tension #1: Is there a distinction between “the growth of the church” and “church growth?” (Engle et al 2004: 88). This may appear as mere semantics, but the distinction is important. “Church growth”, sees the church as a functional entity that serves a primarily instrumental purpose (McGavran & Wagner, 1990: 31-40). This leads to a focus upon the function described by the noun, “growth”. “This can end up subverting the character of the church by turning it into a malleable tool that is intended primarily to accomplish a particular function.” (Engle et al 2004: 88). The “growth of the church” on the other hand, speaks to the work of the Spirit in creating the church to bear witness to the redemptive reign of God in Christ. (Engle et al 2004:89). The *Missio Dei* (Bosch 2006) informs this ecclesiology, in which the church exists in the world as a witness to the redemptive power of the Gospel (Guder 1998). If the church focuses on “Church Growth” at the expense of the integration of all of the richness that is the church, into the life of the church, the missional dynamic of God’s Spirit community, the Body of Christ may, by virtue of this truncated focus, be lost (Stetzer & Putman 2006: 30).

Dynamic Tension #2: Is there a dissonance between the pragmatism of “Church Growth” and the “Theology of Church” (Ecclesiology)? Theoreticians and practitioners of church growth seek to under gird their propositions and praxis with biblical theological moorings. Yet, there is a disjuncture that surfaces in the literature on the topic of church growth as stated by Gailyn Van Rheenen in his critique of the growth of the church (“GOC” or Gospel and Our Culture) vs. Church Growth ideals: “The contrast between the two movements is stark. The beginning point for the Church Growth movement is anthropocentric. The focus is on strategy development and cultural analysis, with biblical passages appropriated to give validity to the perspectives. The GOC movement, on the other hand, begins theologically with the perspectives of the mission and kingdom of God.” (Engle et al 2004: 114).

Dynamic Tension #3: Is there dissonance between Church Health and Church Growth? Olson calls the reader to move beyond the concept of church growth (2002: 5). He proposes that churches move from modernity to post-modernity, from church growth and its modernity driven methodologies to post-modernity and an emphasis on health and

being (2002: 44). Olson expresses a tension between Church Growth and Church Health (2002: 45). Wes Roberts and Glenn Marshall express this tension between Church Growth and Church Health when they state: "There's something far more important than the size of your church. You know this. But it bears repeating that it should be the goal of your church – regardless of size – to be an authentic witness for Jesus Christ and the Gospel of his kingdom. Sadly, that goal often gets lost in the frantic push to grow." (2002: 33). The literature review, later in this proposal, will further highlight this tension with an overview of the distinctly "Church Health" and distinctly "Church Growth" materials.

Dynamic Tension #4: Are Church Growth proponents weighted towards praxis, whilst Church Growth detractors are weighted towards theological reflection? Gailyn Van Rheenen presents this tension in his presentation of a Reformist view of Church Growth (Engle *et al* 2004: 169). A sound model of the growth of the church will incorporate a plethora of multi-faceted disciplines, strengthened by their complementarity and mutual critique. This dynamic tension highlights the need to incorporate the elements of praxis and theology to derive a sound model of the growth of the Church. The elements of praxis (church growth) emerge from Sociology and Anthropology built on a solid theological foundation. The elements of theological reflection on the growth of the church find expression through Systematic Theology and inductive Biblical study. This particular dynamic tension, praxis vs. theory, permeates all of Practical Theology (Heitink 1999:148) and is a key part of a sound research methodology in Practical Theology. These four dynamic tensions form the backdrop to the research question of this thesis, formulated as follows:

1.3 Hypothesis: To be tested, developed and critiqued in the next three chapters

At this point it seems prudent to introduce a hypothesis that will align the research process in the following pages. This hypothesis is based upon the preceding material presented in this chapter and will be further developed and critiqued in the following chapters. This hypothesis serves as a guide for the research process and is an "educated hypothesis" based upon the research undertaken to formulate chapter 1 namely:

1. On-line surveys of three (Appendix 3, 4, & 5) distinct groups of Canadians namely:
 - a. The "un-churched",
 - b. Teenagers and,

c. Evangelical pastors.

2. A review of the current (2000 – 2009) literature on Church growth, Church health and Missional Church.
3. A review of the statistical evidence that the church in Canada is in decline.

Hypothesis: The Evangelical church in Canada is in decline because it has lost sight of the missional, pilgrim nature of the church and instead of calling people to discipleship (followership) of the resurrected Christ it may have inadvertently become a chaplain to a society at odds with the claims of the risen Christ. In replacing the missional nature of the church with a chaplaincy role the church may have inadvertently sacrificed the missional focus given by the Risen Christ for a focus driven by a Western Canadian society that does not grasp that their greatest need is for a redemptive relationship with the Risen Christ through His Word, His People and His Spirit.

Explanation: This hypothesis is built upon the thesis of modern missional writers (Frost 2007; Hirsch 2006; Stetzer & Putman 2006; Stetzer 2006; Johnson 1995; Hedlund 1991) that the church is missional in nature – that is, that the church has been sent into the world by the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This missional nature of the church is tested and developed in chapter 4, when we review the biblical material on the nature and purpose of the church. This “missional nature” of the church concept will also be discussed and contextualized in chapter 2, with the submissions from the panel of Canadian experts who complete the Delphi survey on the growth and health of the church. This hypothesis also presumes that the church has moved from a pilgrim people *in* the world, to a chaplaincy role *of* the world. In this chaplaincy role the living organism of “church” becomes confused with the static institution of Christendom (Frost 2007: 4) and thus a modified Constantinianism (Latourette 2003: 91-93) has become the undoing of the vibrancy, health and effectiveness of the Canadian Evangelical church. As Guder, (1998: 77-78) points out, the chaplaincy role of the church in the Christendom era meant that the churches saw themselves in a privileged relationship to society and as offering service to that society as needed. The chaplaincy metaphor portrays the church as available to society to provide services to that society whenever members of society might request one or more of the services that the churches had to offer. In contrast (Guder, 1998: 110-112) the missional church sees itself, not as providing services, but as sent by God to call people into redemptive relationship with God and then with His people. Littel (2007: xviii) presents the same contrast of the chaplaincy versus the missional role of the Evangelical church in America. In spite of the differences

and similarities between the USA and Canada, it seems that a return to the missional nature of the church will bring the health and growth of the Evangelical church in both of those countries. A paradigm shift that will need to occur in the life of Canadian (and we posit USA) Evangelicalism is an understanding that they will not have influence through political and social pressure, but rather the influence of Evangelicalism will return to pre-Constantinian (New Testament) modes of discipleship (Hull 2004; 2003; 2002) and pilgrimage. Health and growth will thus need to be measured not in terms of Social influence, church size or church budget, but in terms of effective discipleship (Frost 2007: 125-129) as manifested in transformed (Romans 12:1-3), Christ-like (Anyabwile 2008: 89) living. For churches to regain health, and with this health, to regain missional effectiveness – they will need to relinquish the role of chaplain to the world and instead become salt and light to the world through real and authentic discipleship and incarnational living. The concept of a missional church, and the health of the missional church, is developed more fully in the following chapters. For the sake of this chapter – we have established the current malaise facing the Evangelical Church in Canada and, based upon the research to date, we have presented a hypothesis of how this malaise might be addressed within the Evangelical Church of Canada to move towards health and effectiveness.

In an attempt to engage the research question above and the resultant hypothesis, a sequence of four developmentally integrated chapters emerges as follows:

Chapter 1. This first chapter outlining the decline of the Evangelical Church in Canada and an hypothesis concerning how the Evangelical church in Canada might move to a missional focus in a bid to address this decline. The research method utilizing Osmer's (2010, 2008) hermeneutical spiral is also detailed for the reader.

Chapter 2 & Chapter 3. These two chapters, through the use (Osmer, 2008: 79-128) of the thoughtfulness (Osmer, 2008: 82-83) of current practitioners reflected in their responses to the Delphi survey, and theoretical interpretation (Osmer, 2008: 83-84) reflected in the literature review seek to understand why the Evangelical Church in Canada is in decline. In chapter 2, through use of the Delphi (Skulmoski, Hartman & Krahn 2007; Linstone & Turoff 2002) method of research, further data is collected and collated. In the Delphi method of research a panel of experts is surveyed in a series of iterative syntheses. Each expert anonymously submits their responses to the survey and these responses are collated and the results are sent out anonymously to the experts with a view to a second survey built

upon their first responses. The second survey allows the expert respondents to modify their first submissions based upon the material that comes to light from the responses of the other experts. Two or three iterations should prove sufficient to surface data that is indicative of where the experts feel the Evangelical Church within Canada should position itself for effectiveness, health and consequent growth, and their perceptions of why the Evangelical church is currently in decline. This Meta-theoretical research of the second and third chapters serves as a backdrop to the fourth chapter in which the diachronic, biblical theological research (Osmer, 2008:4) seeks to determine “good practice”. Chapter 4 seeks to answer (Osmer, 2010: 3) the question, “What ought to be going on?”

Chapter 4. In chapter 4, this “normative” or “Basis Theory” will serve as a correlative and critique to chapters 2 & 3 of this thesis, as well as informing the model that is forged in chapter 5 of this thesis. Osmer (2008: 4) describes this “Basis Theory” phase as:

“Using theological concepts to interpret particular episodes, situation or contexts, constructing ethical norms to guide our responses and learning from “good practice.”

The goal of chapter 4 is that through the use of a Biblical Theological methodology (Mead, 2007: 121-167), a theological concept of a missional (Hirsch, 2007: 284-285) community will emerge. That is to say, how does God express and accomplish His mission through a redemptive community such as His chosen people, Israel (Kaiser, 2009: 84–97) or His Church (Kaiser, 2008: 343-366; Martens, 2007: 224)? Chapter 4, utilizing a Biblical Theological methodology (Mead, 2007: 121-167), develops the normative material concerning missional (Hirsch, 2007: 284-285) community, the people of God on mission for God (Hafemann & House, 2007: 20-21). The term missional refers (Hirsch, 2007: 284) to a community “whose primary commitment is to the missionary calling of the people of God”. There are many (Mead, 2007: 124) different Biblical Theological methodologies. The variety in approaches to Biblical Theology arises, as Mead (2007: 123) points out, because: “we enter into conversation with the text from different perspectives”. Will the basis theoretical material point us to a renewed focus on God’s purposes for the church in the world, and particularly in the post-modern (Kysar & Webb 2006; Wells 2005; Stetzer 2003; Dockery 1998), multi-cultural Canadian context?

Chapter 5 attempts to present a model, the “praxis” that might best serve the Canadian Evangelical churches to strengthen their capacity to grow, and to have a missional focus in

21st century Canada. The Praxis-theoretical material that emerges from chapters 2, 3, & 4 is coalesced to “determine strategies of action that will influence situations in ways that are desirable and entering into a reflective conversation with the ‘talk back’ emerging when they are enacted.” (Osmer, 2008: 4). Time prohibits the field-testing of the model that is presented in Chapter 5. However, such testing could occur as part of a post-doctoral research project.

Chapter 6. The final chapter of this thesis incorporates areas for further research that have emerged through the development of this thesis. There are certain to be a number of areas that warrant much deeper analysis and more thorough investigation, but due to their size and nature, fall outside of the scope of this thesis.

Chapter 2: The Lockean Delphi Survey

2.1 Introduction

The Literature survey of chapter 3 outlined the sparseness of current (1998-2009) Canadian literature on the Growth of the Evangelical church in Canada. In an attempt to offset this deficit in the literature, a Delphi Survey was designed and deployed amongst Canadian church ministry experts, as defined (Skumolski, Hartman & Krahn 2007: 4) by the Delphi criteria. The purpose of this Delphi survey was to garner current Canadian practitioners perspectives on the state of the Evangelical Church in Canada. The Delphi Method, itself, is explained in more detail in the next section. The goal of this chapter is to lead the reader through the iterative stages of the Delphi process in which “experts” are surveyed in a series of refined iterations with regard to what they each perceive to be the reasons for the decline of the Evangelical church in Canada.

2.2 The Delphi Method of Research

2.2.1 Introduction: Qualitative Research of a Large and Complex Issue

Why is the Evangelical Church in Canada in decline? To answer this question, one cannot simply look for linear causation (Lincoln & Guba 1985: 54) since the Canadian Evangelical Church is a complex organism comprised of many smaller, complex organisms known as “local churches”. To create even further complexity each local church organism is in turn comprised of a network of believers and adherents, each with their own needs, perspectives, struggles and complex set of realities that affect the local church of which they form a part. Two important aspects of complex adaptive systems, and complexity theory, emerge (Lucas, 2006) for the post-Christendom – post-modern church of the 21st century. First, linear prediction has given way to a non-linear world and this means we cannot control the environment in such a way that we will produce expected outcomes. Second, in a complex adaptive system, “Diverse and integrated approaches to the problem are crucial. In many cases single approaches to the problem may lead to counter-productive results.” (Heghazi *et al*, 2009). The linear approaches/solutions (Kaizer, 2006; Borden, 2003) of modernist Christianity or Christendom do not take into account the complexity (Senge, 2006: 68-91) of both the church as an organism and the environment in which the church now finds itself. This ties in well with the

methodological framework laid out in Chapter 1 and Osmer's (2010: 3) concept of "Descriptive-empirical: What is going on? Gathering information to better understand particular episodes, situations, or contexts." With an awareness of this complexity the research process employs a Qualitative study that probes the mechanisms of mutual causality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 54). Also, due to the potential interconnectedness of macro environmental factors that are exerting pressure on the Canadian Evangelical Church, it may be helpful to approach the research process with a holographic image (Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 52) concept rather than seeking a mechanical image concept. The holographic image conception of the research process is particularly germane to the Delphi method and so it is explained in more detail in the next section.

2.3 Movement from mechanical to holographic images

This notion, first propounded by Swartz & Ogilvie, and developed and expanded by Lincoln and Guba (1985: 52-53), and used more recently by Oden (2006b, 283) to describe the nature of the body of Christ, the catholic church, is extremely helpful when attempting to understand an expansive concept (the Evangelical Church in Canada) that is also by nature highly complex. The core tenet (Oden, 2006b: 283; Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 53) of this aspect of Naturalistic Inquiry is that it supports the concept of an iterative survey of experts to gain a perspective piece of the whole – since one can never hope to review the expansive whole which is almost infinite in its complexity of contributing and mutually affecting factors and outcomes. In regard to the challenge of researching such complexity within the Practical Theological field Osmer states:

“Moreover, the expansion of global telecommunication, migration, law, and capitalism have eroded local traditions, evoked fundamentalist reactions, and made encounters with cultural “others” a part of our everyday life. If reflective practice in the context of modernity could still assume fading Christendom, it can no longer do so today. Church leaders cannot even assume that a program working well in one congregation will work in a similar congregation in another part of their own country. Indeed, they cannot even assume that a program that is appealing to middle-aged and older adults will appeal to youth and young adults who belong to the same congregation . . . If reflective practice was important in the context of modernity, it has become doubly so in a post-Christendom, postmodern,

globalizing world. In this context, the practical theological paradigm of reflective practice has a great deal of plausibility”.

This extended quote reinforces the need to understand in a broad sweep sort of fashion what is perceived to be going on within the Canadian Evangelical context. No one church or even group of churches can be singled out since in the current milieu of post-modern, post-positivist complexity, a large sampling is needed with a view to some macro-trends that emerge that may have broader applicability to the Canadian Evangelical Church as a monolith and by extension to the Canadian Evangelical churches that form a part of that monolith.

For this reason a holographic (Oden, 2006b: 283) rather than a mechanical image approach is immensely helpful (Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 53) because:

“It turns out that holographs have an unusual property. If a normal recording or a normal film were damaged in some way—for instance, through the loss of some portion of the whole—then that same portion of the whole would be lost. But holographs have the property that, even if large portions of the recorded interference patterns are lost, the remaining pieces, no matter how tiny, *will all have complete information* and will be able to reproduce the original image in its entirety (and in three dimensions!). Every piece of a system has complete information about the whole, . . .”

This concept of the power of holography to contain all the aspects of the whole in a small piece is a powerful metaphor that is extremely helpful in framing the research process as it relates to the Delphi method of inquiry. This is true, because as explained in more detail below, the Delphi method surveys experts in a series of iterative refinements to obtain consensus on a complex issue under review, a holographic snapshot as it were of the larger, more complex whole. It seems that, year’s later, with greater research and further scientific development of holographic technology, this holographic metaphor very plausible (Bowen, 2009; Jain & Sharma, 2005). In essence, since we are not able to gain a true reading on the causes for the decline of the Evangelical church from a merely quantitative study (statistics do not speak to causation – only actuation), and the mutual causations are varied, widespread and complex, we need a different research method and research model. Models that can take a snapshot of the whole and through that snapshot portray the whole. This is, in essence, the holographic metaphor as expressed in the Delphi

method of research. The Delphi takes a snapshot through an analysis and synthesis of a cycle of iterative questionnaires that build consensus and move the experts to a common conclusion. This movement is neither contrived, nor forced, but is a natural outflow of the impact of the anonymous responses of one expert upon another until there is a nub of consensus, or data satisfaction. The Delphi does not render quantitative facts about the topic under research. The Delphi does render the combined submissions or perspectives of the experts who are interacting with the topic of research in meaningful and substantive ways and thus have a grasp or sense of the topic that is both helpful and enlightening. To further clarify the Delphi research method employed in this thesis the following section details the history of the Delphi, the ways in which Delphi can and has been used and how it is used in this particular thesis.

2.4 The History of the Delphi

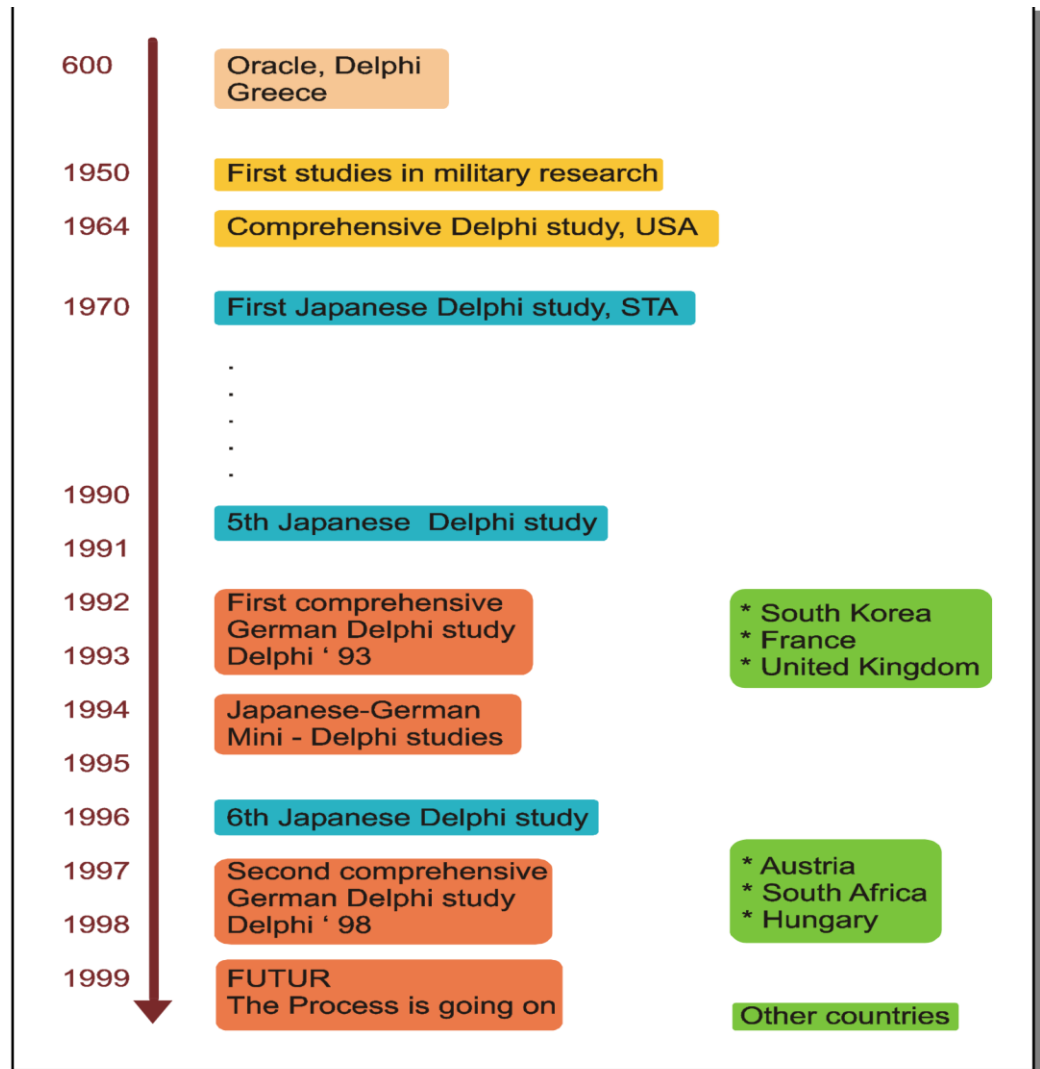
The foundation of the temple at Delphi and its oracle took place before recorded history. For a thousand years of recorded history the Greeks and other peoples, sometimes as private individuals sometimes as ambassadors, came to Delphi to consult the prophetess, who was called Pythia. Her words were taken to reveal the rules of the Gods. (Cuhls, 2009). It was not until the Rand military study that the term Delphi was coined by Norman Dalkey (cf. Skumolski, Hartman & Krahn 2007: 2; Linstone & Turoff 2002: 10). Please note figure 4:1 The Genealogical tree of Delphi (Cuhls, 2009). The original Delphi method was developed in the 1950's by the Rand Corporation's Norman Dalkey (Skumolski, Hartman & Krahn 2007: 2; Linstone & Turoff 2002: 10). As Skumolski, Hartman and Krahn (2007: 2) point out, the goal of the original Delphi project was:

“...to solicit expert opinion to the selection, from the point of view of a Soviet strategic planner, of an optimal U.S. industrial target system and to the estimation of the number of A-bombs required to reduce the munitions output by a prescribed amount,”.

Put more simply, (Linstone & Turoff 2002: 10) the goal or objective of the original study was “to obtain the most reliable consensus of opinion of a group of experts ... by a series of intensive questionnaires interspersed with controlled opinion feedback”. This first Delphi was undertaken because there were many subjective elements involved in the research process, the cost of any alternative form of research would have been too expansive and expensive and there was no extant accurate information or data concerning the topic

under research (Linstone & Turoff 2002: 10). After this initial defense application of the Delphi technique a philosophical paper on the Lockean type Delphi created impetus for a number of individuals to begin experimentation with Delphi in non-defense areas (Linstone & Turoff 2002: 11).

Figure 2-1 Genealogical tree of Delphi



Concerning the expansion of Delphi, Cuhls, (2009) states:

Shortly after the Rand study of the 1950's and further individual studies through the 1960's, the development and broader application of the Delphi method was taken over by Japan. Although the first large Delphi study in Japan did not correctly describe the oil price shock and was conducted and published just before that happened, the Japanese Delphi process continues every five years. It is

regarded as an update of data concerning the future. With the resurrection of foresight in general and the possibilities to filter all these ‘options’ of different actors, the Delphi technique was taken out of the toolbox and implemented in Europe in a different manner than in the early years. In the new wave of large-scale government foresight in Europe, Dutch and German government agencies and similar bodies were among the first, with France and the United Kingdom joining in quickly.

2.5 Definition of Delphi

There are a number of definitions that pertain to the Delphi method. Each definition suggests a different insight into the Delphi method and so, rather than simply rendering one definition, a few are given. Linstone and Turoff (2002: 3) define Delphi as “a method for structuring a group communication process so that the process is effective in allowing a group of individuals, as a whole, to deal with a complex problem.” Delphi certainly seems to be a helpful tool of choice in dealing with complexity (cf. the notes on the History of Delphi in the previous section in which Delphi is used by national governments for futuristic forecasting – this type of forecasting on a national and international level certainly qualifies as complexity!) Skumolski, Hartman & Krahn (2007: 1) define the Delphi method as “an iterative process to collect and distill the anonymous judgments of experts using a series of data collection and analysis techniques interspersed with feedback.” They further go on to clarify the strength and focus of the Delphi method as a research process that “is well suited ... when there is incomplete knowledge about a problem or phenomenon; however it is not a method for all types of IS research questions”. Much in line with the previous two definitions but expanding further upon them is the definition rendered by Hsu and Sandford (2007: 1):

“The Delphi technique is a widely used and accepted method for gathering data from respondents within their domain of expertise. The technique is designed as a group communication process which aims to achieve a convergence of opinion on a real-world issue.”

These are each fine and helpful definitions, Hsu and Sandford’s is possibly the simplest way of defining Delphi as a research tool. I personally prefer Skumolski, Hartman & Krahn’s (2007: 1) definition because that definition highlights the strength of Delphi for the collection of data “when there is incomplete knowledge about a problem or

phenomenon,” such as exists with the complex issue of the decline of Evangelical churches in Canada. It seems that the reasons for the decline of the Evangelical churches are not altogether clear, and as yet, not well researched. Skulmoski, Hartman and Krahn’s definition support the use of the Delphi survey within the current Canadian context since the experts who complete the Delphi survey will be grappling with the reasons for the decline and the possible ways forward out of the decline, until there is convergence of opinion.

2.6 The Various Types of Delphi Survey

There are five (Linston & Turoff, 2002: 18-34) different types of Delphi methodologies. Each different type of Delphi method encompasses a different philosophical mode or system. The five different Delphi methodologies’ or Inquiring System’s are listed below together with the characteristic question each of these Inquiring Systems would ask to accept the research propositions as valid or true:

1. The Leibnizian: *“How can one independently of any empirical or personal considerations give a purely rational justification of the proposed proposition or assertion? Can one build or demonstrate a rational model which underlies the proposition or assertion? How was the result deduced; is it precise, certain”*
2. The Lockean: *“Since for me data are always prior to the development of formal theory, how can one independently of any formal model justify the assertion by means of some objective data or the consensus of some group of expert judges that bears on the subject matter of the assertions? What are the supporting “statistics”? What is the ‘probability’ that one is right? Are the assertions a good ‘estimate’ of the true empirical state of affairs?”*
3. The Kantian: *“Since data and theory (models) always exist side by side, does there exist some combination of data or expert judgment plus underlying theoretical justification for the data that would justify the propositions? What alternative sets of propositions exist and which best satisfy my objectives and offer the strongest combination of data plus model?”*
4. The Hegelian (Dialectical): *“Since every set of propositions is a reflection of a more general theory or plan about the nature of the world as a whole system, i.e., a world-view, does there exists some sharply differing world-view that would permit*

the serious consideration of a completely opposite set of propositions? Why is the opposing view not true or more desirable? Further, does this conflict between the plan and the counterplan allow a third plan or world-view to emerge that is a creative synthesis of the original plan and counterplan?

5. The Singerian: *“Have we taken a broad enough perspective of the basic problem? Have we from the very beginning asked the right question? Have we focused on the right objectives? To what extent are the questions and model of each inquirer a reflection of the unique personality of each inquirer as much as they are felt to be a ‘natural’ characteristic or property of the ‘real’ world?”*

The Delphi methodology that is used in this thesis is the Lockean Inquiring System (Linstone & Turoff, 2002: 20-22). The Lockean Inquiring System, as described below by Linstone and Turoff, is chosen because it presents the following core components that contribute to researching the complex question of the decline of the Evangelical Church in Canada and possible models to address this decline:

- i. Truth is *experiential*, i.e. the truth content of a system (or communication) is associated entirely with its empirical content. A model of a system is an *empirical model* and the truth of the model is measured in terms of our ability (a) to reduce every complex proposition down to its simple empirical referents (i.e., simple observations) and (b) to ensure the validity of each of the simple referents by means of the widespread, freely obtained agreement between different human observers.
- ii. A corollary to (i) is that the truth of the model does not rest upon any theoretical considerations, i.e., upon the prior assumption of any theory (this is the equivalent of Locke’s *tabula rasa*). The only general propositions, which are accepted, are those that can be justified through “direct observation” or have already been so justified previously through direct observation.

“In brief, Lockean IS (Inquiring Systems) are the epitome of experimental, consensual systems. On any problem they will build an empirical, inductive representation of it. They start from a set of elementary empirical judgements (“raw data,” observations, sensations) and from these build up a network of ever expanding, increasingly more general networks of factual propositions. A typical

Lockean point of view is the assertion that one doesn't need any theory in order to collect data first, only to analyze it subsequently." (Linstone & Turoff, 2002: 20).

The Lockean IS (Inquiring System) presented the best Delphi method for this research project because of the sparseness of the extant literature on the growth or the decline of Evangelical churches in Canada. The questions, especially in the first iteration, were developed somewhat from a tabula rasa approach. That is why the reader will observe such questions as: "I believe the Evangelical church in Canada is facing the following challenges to its health at this time"; or "I believe that the Evangelical church in Canada would grow in size and/or effectiveness if . . . "; and again "The Evangelical Church needs to address the following areas of church life if it hopes to thrive and impact the Canadian population with the Gospel." These questions are indicative of the tabula rasa Lockean approach in which there is no pre-disposing theory either assumed or presented, rather, it is hoped that the data will develop the theory as the data is analyzed and synthesized into a second and third iteration. This Lockean approach for this particular research thesis has the strength of its "ability to sweep in rich sources of experiential data. In general, the sources are so rich that they literally overwhelm the current analytical capabilities of most Leibnizian (analytical) systems. The weaknesses, on the other hand, are those that beset all empirical systems. While experience is undoubtedly rich, it can also be extremely fallible and misleading." (Linstone & Turoff, 2002: 22).

The weakness of learning from experience is well documented when it comes to systems theory (Senge, 1990: 23). The Delphi asks experts to relay their perceptions of the factors that have led to, or are currently, contributing to the decline of the Evangelical church. This could be seen as "pooled ignorance" because though immersed in the task every day and reflecting on the task both intuitively and academically, the experts are answering from the basis of their own experience or perception. At best this potential weakness can be overcome by pooling the opinions of the experts into a synthesis of commonly expressed contributory factors. If each of the experts is expressing the same answers concerning what they perceive to be the cause of the problem, then at very least we have a measure of causation – whether real or perceived. The key then lies in the capacity to reflect on and attempt to analyze the

responses given – always with a systems perspective rather than a mere symptomatic perspective. As an example, one of the key concerns that has emerged in the initial survey is that of the perceived “lack” of expository preaching. One of the respondents challenged this perception as a catch all – since the respondent asserted that he in fact is preaching expositively as are many other practitioners that he personally knows. The problem is not with the perception, or with the data – how would one survey the hundreds of thousands of Christians across Canada to determine if their particular minister is in fact preaching expository sermons, or if they even perceive the sermons to be expository? Perhaps the challenge is not in the perception or even in the accuracy of the perception – but the subtle systemic equation that underlies the perception *inter alia*: “We see a high level of carnality and apathy within the Canadian Evangelical churches together with a very low biblical literacy, this must be a result of a lack of expository preaching!” But is a lack of expository preaching necessarily the cause of apathy and biblical illiteracy? There are so many more factors that impact a congregant throughout the week to pressurize that individual to experience a low biblical literacy and an apathy in their own spiritual disciplines and walk with the Lord as some examples. Expository preaching is never done in a vacuum and it would seem that there are many diverse factors that contribute to the sanctification and growth of a Christian. This is where Figure 2-2, in a later section below, is helpful in graphically representing the interplay of factors that impact the life of a Christian in 21st century Canada. This brief detour illustrates some of the challenges of working with a Lockean Delphi, but even with this awareness, it is still a very helpful research tool in examining the factors that contribute to the decline of the Evangelical churches in Canada and possible models to address this decline. The balance to these possible weaknesses is the Basis Theory or normative (biblical) material of chapter 4, and the literature survey of chapter 3. When all of these elements are combined a hermeneutic can be developed to present a possible alternative praxis (Osmer, 2010: 3).

2.7 The use of the Delphi Method in this research paper

In line with the three definitions rendered in the previous section, the Delphi method is used in this thesis as a tool for gathering data from experts in the field of Evangelical church ministry in Canada. A series of on-line surveys were constructed in an iteratively developmental process whereby each successive survey distills and builds upon the previous survey. The surveys can be viewed in their entirety in Appendix 4. The synthesis

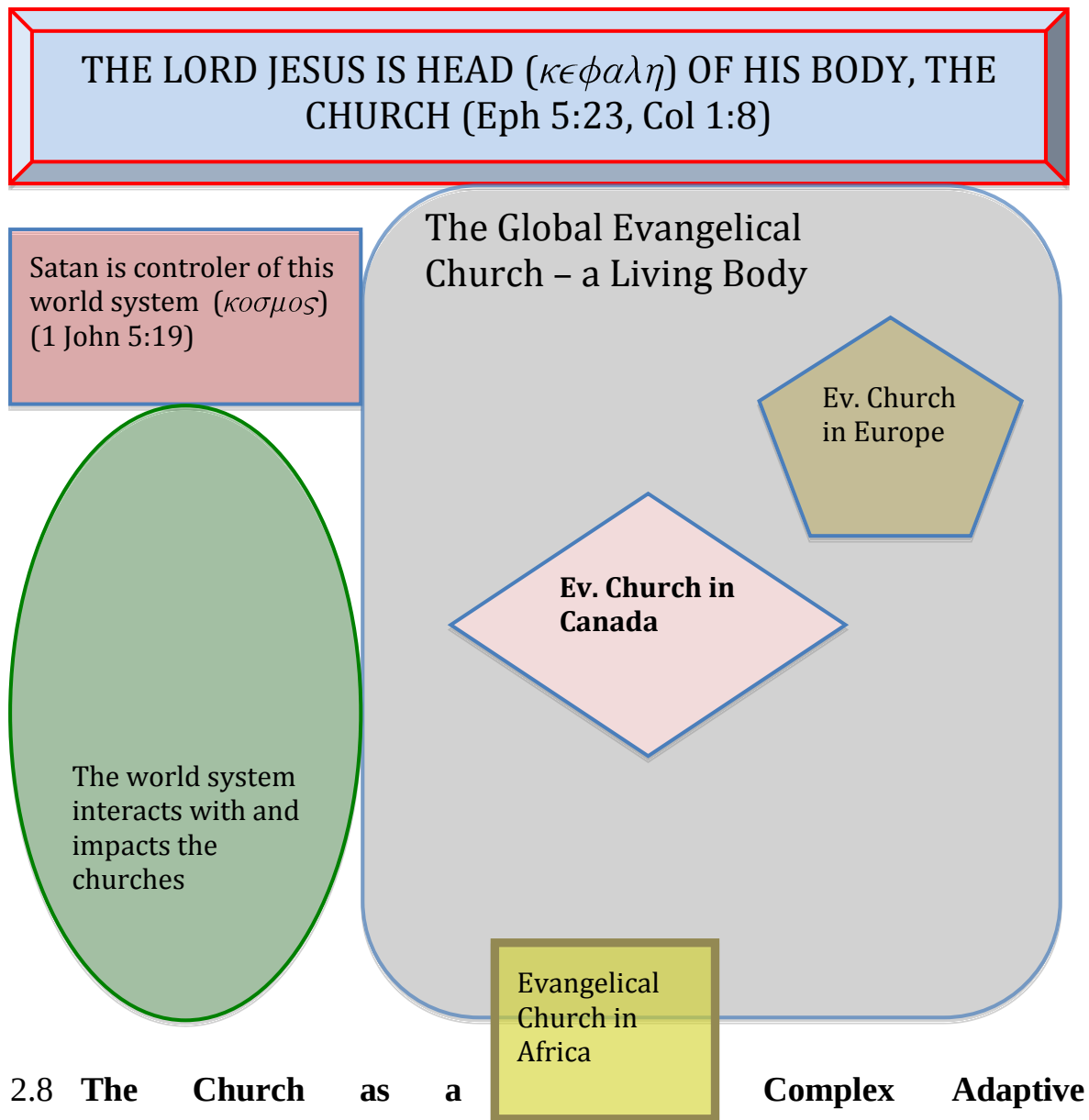
of each progressive survey is rendered in the sections below. The selection of “experts” followed the criteria for experts suggested in: “The Delphi Method for Graduate Research” (Skumolski, Hartman & Krahn, 2007: 4) as follows: i.) knowledge and experience with the issues under investigation; ii) capacity and willingness to participate; iii) sufficient time to participate on the Delphi; and iv) effective communication skills. With these four criteria in mind an initial survey was developed and then sent out to Senior or Lead pastors in churches with an attendance of 100 people or more. To have a church of 100 people or more would imply that the lead pastor has some knowledge of the Evangelical church in Canada, and probably has a modicum of good communication skills - which certainly proved to be the case, as the reader will observe in Appendix 4.

The decline of the Evangelical Church in Canada may incorporate many intersecting factors, especially since the church itself is both a living organism and an organized system. As a living organism it is affected by its macro-context and its internal functions – a change to either can readily spell decline and disintegration or health and flourishing. This also means that one cannot ascribe any single causation to either the decline or the health and growth of an organism, like the Evangelical churches in Canada. In a bid to inquire into the nature of the various mutual causes for decline, the Delphi method, a form of Naturalistic Inquiry (Lincoln & Guba 1985: 14-46) is employed, since it enables the researcher to engage at a holographic level – since anything larger may be impossible to render, and is certainly beyond the scope of this thesis. Delphi is best suited to researching, at a Meta-theoretical level, the causation of decline and possible remediation for the Canadian Evangelical Church because it is “a method for structuring a group communication process so that the process is effective in allowing a group of individuals, as a whole, to deal with a complex problem.” (Linstone and Turoff, 2002: 3).

In the case of the Evangelical Church in Canada the complexity intersects at many levels. There is the complexity that arises from the Evangelical Church’s very nature as an organism (Minear, 2004: 173-220). As an organism, there are many external and internal factors that act upon the church. Those factors acting upon the church are in turn shaped or impacted by the church as a respondent, non-static, agent. This notion of the church as an organism, as a living system affects any perception of linear causality versus mutual

causality (Oden, 2006a: 283; Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 54). In looking at the decline of the Evangelical Church in Canada the researcher may need to remain alert to the external (macro-environmental / societal) factors, the internal (people dynamic) factors and the interrelated concept of mutual (macro and internal) interaction. This conception of mutual interaction and mutual causation or shaping is a foundational premise of Bibby's book, "Restless Churches" (2004). Whilst Bibby may not conceive of it as such – he has picked up on the mutual intersection of the change in society and the impact of this change (macro) on the church. Bibby is also acutely aware that the changes the macro-context (change in society) has wrought on the church is, in fact, part of the reason the church now interacts negatively with society and is thus losing ground (Bibby, 2004: 85-119). It is very helpful, when thinking through the concept of mutual causation and complexity, to engage some of the literature that defines, describes and distills the notion of complexity (Gell-Mann, 1994) – especially as complexity relates to mutual causation and complex organisms, complex adaptive systems (Gribbin, 2004: 110-144). This means that the Evangelical Church in Canada undergoes many complex aspects of mutual causation. This mutual causation process is diagramed in Figure 2.2: "The Evangelical Church as a Complex Adaptive System."

Figure 2-2 Canadian Ev. Church as a Complex Adaptive System



It is germane at this juncture to expand on the notion of the local church as a complex adaptive system. The conception of the church as a complex adaptive system lies at the heart of the model proposed in Chapter 5 of this thesis since it is a way of viewing the Evangelical Church as comprised of many (1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4:17) different and distinctive but interacting elements. As Chan (2001: 1) points out: “Complexity results from the inter-relationship, inter-action and inter-connectivity of elements within a system and between a system and its environment.” If one thinks of the Christian Church in the world today, there are many different churches that comprise this global entity of the church. These churches each in turn exist in

particular contexts with particular cultural variations that impact how each particular church views itself and in turn structures itself and then relates to the world and to other churches from within that structure. Within each church there is the further complexity of families and individuals, each with their own worldview and with their own particular spiritual gift or gifts. The result is that there is a complex pattern (Gell-Mann, 1994: 30) of communication and mutual interaction between the various components of the system or living organism known as the “church.” In its fullest sense the church is “the community of all true believers for all time.” (Grudem, 2000: 853). Grudem (2000: 855-856) argues that there is an invisible aspect to the church and a visible aspect. Grudem (2000: 856) defines the visible church in this way:

The visible church is the church as Christians on earth see it. In this sense the visible church includes all who profess faith in Christ and give evidence of that faith in their lives.

The visible church as defined by Grudem (2000: 853-858) is, by its very nature, a complex system because it comprises many different people who profess faith in Christ. Another way of understanding the visible-invisible distinction of the church is Grudem’s (2000: 857) definition of the church as “Local and Universal.” Grudem gives a clear definition of the Local church and the Universal church when he states:

In the New Testament the word “church” may be applied to a group of believers at any level, ranging from a very small meeting in a private home all the way to the group of all true believers in the universal church.

This definition of the local and universal church enhances our understanding of the church as a complex adaptive system, in that within a complex adaptive system apparently complex behaviors emerge “as a result of often nonlinear spatio-temporal interactions among the larger number of component systems at different levels of organization.” (Chan, 2001: 1). This notion of the church as a complex adaptive system is extremely helpful when reflecting on the decline of the Evangelical church in Canada for two reasons. Firstly, according to Grudem’s definition of the local and universal church, the church of the Lord Jesus is much larger than the church in any single country or context. This means that even if the church in Canada declines, or

even ceases to exist, the promise of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 16:17-20 still holds true. The one aspect that is hard to measure is the degree to which the interrelatedness of the components of the system will impact the global church. Health in one part of the system impacts the rest of the system, so too does un-health? At a more micro-cosmic level, each member of a local church impacts every other member of a local church in a positive or negative way, this is the nature (Chan, 2001: 1) of a complex system. According to many passages in the New Testament, such as Ephesians 4:15-16, 1 Corinthians 12, Philippians 1, the church is a complex adaptive system comprised of many distinctive elements that are interconnected and have mutual “non-linear spatio-temporal interactions.” (Chan, 2001: 1). So then, as Chan (2001: 1) points out: “Complexity results from the inter-relationship, inter-action and inter-connectivity of elements within a system and between a system and its environment.” The internal and external dynamics and the inter-action and inter-connectivity of these dynamics within the Canadian Evangelical church and between the Canadian Evangelical churches and their environment is well reflected in the responses to the Delphi survey that follows. It is extremely helpful to understand that the Evangelical church may be in decline because of systemic inter-relationships, both internally and with the world, externally. The tension of the impact of these inter-relationships is clearly expressed in the responses of the Delphi experts, to which we turn our attention in the sections following.

2.9 First Delphi Iteration: The Formative Questionnaire

The first questionnaire was developed to build a profile of the “experts” who would be responding and to set a baseline for the data being gathered. Since Delphi respondents do so anonymously, it is helpful to know somewhat of their background both in terms of experience in the field under review and in terms of their level of formal research into the field under review. To fulfill the requirements of a Delphi survey, all responses were submitted in an anonymous framework. That is to say, whilst the respondents are known, what is not known is which of the 8 response sets submitted actually belongs to a particular respondent. The strength of this particular Delphi is that the respondents all came from diverse age, educational, theological and denominational backgrounds. However, all have

a common interest in and commitment to the Evangelical church in Canada, though diverse in background as outlined below:

2.9.1 Vocational Profile

The diversity of the respondents as reflected in their respective vocations, ages and levels of education enhanced the Delphi survey. Three of the eight respondents serve as the lead or senior pastor in their local church. Three of the eight respondents serve as a denominational leader (regional director, president) of their particular Evangelical denomination. Another three respondents shared that they each serve as an academic involved in research related to the Evangelical Church in Canada. There is an anomaly in the tally of responses since there are nine vocations listed but only eight respondents. From this anomaly we may infer that one of the respondents holds two vocational positions, i.e. lead pastor and academic, or lead pastor and denominational leader.

2.9.2 Academic Profile

The respondents to the Delphi survey were as diverse academically as they were vocationally. For instance, one of the respondents holds a non-theological Doctoral degree whilst four of the respondents hold a Masters degree in a theological discipline. Two of the respondents hold non-theological undergraduate degrees whilst three of the respondents hold undergraduate theological degrees. One respondent holds a high school certificate. Again the data presents a somewhat anomalous picture in that there are eleven educational levels represented by eight respondents. To resolve this anomaly it may be helpful to consider that of the five undergraduate degrees four of those went on to further study at a Masters level and one respondent pursued non-theological study at a doctoral level. The table below may help to clarify this anomaly further as one possible permutation of the academic profile of the respondents:

Figure 2-3 Academic Profile of Respondents

High School	Undergraduate Non Theology	Undergraduate Theology	Masters Theology	Doctoral Non-Theology	
1			1		1
	1				1

	1		1		1
		1			1
		1			1
		1	1		1
				1	1
			1		1

2.9.3 Denominational Profile

The denominational diversity strengthens the integrity of the Delphi survey because the challenges to the growth of the Evangelical church are experienced across a range of denominational perspectives. This implies that there is no single practice or doctrinal persuasion that is hindering the growth of that particular denomination. Rather it would appear that the challenges being faced are germane to a broad cross section of the Evangelical church in Canada. Presbyterians, Wesleyans, Baptists and Pentecostals formed the profile of the 8 respondents to the Delphi survey.

2.9.4 Age Range Profile

It was also extremely beneficial to have a broad spectrum of ages involved in the first iteration of the survey. The youngest respondent was 38 years of age and the oldest was 69 years of age. The other ages indicated were 39, 46, 52 and 63. The diversity of age did not diminish the commonality of the expression of awareness that the Evangelical church in Canada is facing difficulty in the 21st century.

2.9.5 Theological Profile

A broad range of theological categories were given for the respondents as follows with the number of respondents to that particular theological category placed in brackets: Fundamentalist (0), Conservative (0), Traditional (2), Progressive (0), Evangelical (4), Emergent (1), Liberal (0), Reformed (1). It is also interesting to note that every respondent attached some theological label to himself or herself, even though the labels were not clearly defined. None of the respondents placed themselves at either end of the scale as either Fundamentalist/Conservative or Liberal. Again, the slight and nuanced diversity of Reformed (1) and Traditional (2) through Evangelical (4) and on through Emergent (1)

serves to strengthen the integrity of the Delphi data because the respondents have a range of theological perspectives and yet, all agree, that the Canadian Evangelical church is facing real challenges to its ongoing health and strength.

2.9.6 Length of Current Ministry Profile

There was great diversity in the length of current tenure as reported by the eight respondents to the first iteration of the Delphi survey; ranging from the shortest that was two years in the current (lead/senior pastor) ministry position to the longest which is fourteen years. The range of years in their current position was as follows: two years, six years, eight years, twelve years, thirteen years, fourteen years. The length of one's ministry tenure in a particular situation can (Brown 1993: 19-31) affect one's outlook on the Evangelical church in Canada as a whole. To balance this statement one would have to ensure a full understanding of why a particular tenure is shorter – for instance the individual may have just started in ministry, or this may be a person's second pastorate after twenty years in their first pastorate. What is gratifying or helpful to this particular Delphi study is that there is diversity in terms of length of current tenure, but general unanimity (as outlined below in the summary results for the first iteration).

2.10 Results of the First Iteration of the Delphi Survey

The Delphi survey, in its fullness, is a compilation of a series of at least two or more iterations. The key to the effectiveness of the Delphi is a process of obtaining the data from “expert” respondents, placing the various responses side by side, analyzing the responses and then, after attempting a synthesis of the responses, creating a new questionnaire. The new questionnaire attempts to reflect the synthesis of the responses and then attempts to refine and clarify the data rendered through a series of further questionnaires, each of which follows the same cycle of analysis, synthesis and further probing until a form of “consensus” by the experts is reached. The goal of this consensus is to gain a clearer picture on how the “experts” view the suggested challenges now facing the Evangelical church in Canada. Do the “experts” think we have a problem, are they able to identify and articulate the various components of this problem, do they suggest possible plausible solutions?

Performing a Delphi survey is akin to dynamic exposure, in real time, of the thoughts of an author before that author has even captured those thoughts on paper or had time to research the validity of those thoughts as they emerge. This type of research fits well within the Naturalistic paradigm as espoused by Swartz and Ogilvie and expanded upon by Lincoln and Guba, (1985: 47-69) especially the notions of: “Movement from mechanical to holographic images” (1985: 52), and movement from “objective to perspectival views” (1985: 55). These concepts were explained in greater detail in an earlier section of this chapter (the Delphi method of research) and are repeated here to highlight for the reader the processes undertaken in the following sections and the rationale for those processes as an attempt to analyze and synthesize the data rendered by the eight experts who kindly completed the Delphi survey. Not every response is given, rather the question is stated and then a synthesis and analysis of the eight responses to the question is given. Each survey with results can be viewed in its entirety in Appendix 2: Delphi Survey Results

2.10.1 Question: I believe the Evangelical Church in Canada is facing the following challenges to its health at this time:

The challenges listed below are those given by the eight Delphi respondents. This material is a synthesis of the perspectives of the respondents as reflected in their responses. Other respondents repeated some responses; some responses were unique to one particular respondent. The goal of the Delphi is to synthesize the responses into a platform for a second Questionnaire that will further focus the respondents and refine their responses.

1. There is a declining biblical literacy and a widespread declining knowledge of the major tenets of the Christian faith. The platform for presenting the Gospel has been eroded because there is no longer a “Christian” or “biblical” pre-understanding of the message.
2. There is a desire for a customized and individualized spirituality. This erodes community and common mission because there is no central doctrinal authority as a reference point to “norm” the community.

3. There is, within Evangelical churches, a lack of strategic planning and implementation. This is tied to the fact that the church leadership is insecure and continuously looking for the latest thing that works rather than developing a strategic plan that employs the giftedness of the believers within the church to meet the needs of that particular church and community.
4. There is a lack of equipped leaders, a lack of training leaders and a lack of good methods to train leaders within churches.
5. There is a weakness in terms of Bible preaching and, tied to this, a lack of Bible preaching that relates to real life issues. Biblical preaching is replaced by therapeutic, moralistic, deism.
6. There is a sense in which, tied to response (5) above, there is a lack of connection between the ministry of Evangelical churches and real life struggles. The Evangelical church has become a moralist without compassion for those who are trapped in sin. Instead of developing a theology of engagement which enables the church to become a redemptive and missional community, the Evangelical church seems to have withdrawn with a longing for the (Christianized?) past. The Evangelical church is not living and acting by faith.
7. There is, within the Evangelical church, a lack of corporate prayer.
8. There is, within the Evangelical church in Canada, a lack of commitment from the members and adherents.
9. Materialism pervades and weakens the ministry capacity of the Evangelical church in Canada! Resources abound to do the work, but a lack of commitment and materialistic world-view hinder the ability of the church to deploy the latent resources within.
10. Syncretism permeates and weakens the Evangelical church in Canada. We have become indistinguishable from the community at large and so we have nothing to offer. We need to return to living out the Kingdom ethic in our fallen world by the power of the Holy Spirit for the Glory of God!
11. The Evangelical church needs to becoming more involved in Incarnational evangelism. As children of God living out the ethics of the Kingdom and thereby touching broken lives in profound ways to lead them to the saving grace of a living and holy God who sent His only Son as the perfect sacrifice for sin.
12. The Evangelical church needs to provide a mechanism for Christians to grow and experience transformative life change into Christ likeness.

2.10.2 Question: The Evangelical Church needs to address the following areas of church life if it hopes to thrive and impact the Canadian population with the Gospel:

1. Return to biblical and expository preaching that intersects the real issues of life.
2. Return to daily practice of the spiritual disciplines of prayer, meditation, bible reading and sacramental living.
3. Return to the church as community which means larger time investments by those who are the church to actually *be* the church.
4. Return to visionary leadership that develops a sustainable strategic plan which utilize the giftedness of those within the church to meet the needs of the church body and the community at large.
5. Return to the individual priesthood of the believer as gifted by God to minister to the community of God and to serve together with other believers as part of the missional community of God.

2.10.3 Question: I think that the Canadian Evangelical Church has been affected by the following cultural or macro-environmental trends:

1. The de-Christianization of Canada and Western culture.
2. The influx into Canada of immigrants with differing religious backgrounds and perspectives.
3. A pervasive consumerism and materialism that absorbs people's focus and priorities.
4. A post-modern worldview that presents Truth as relative and subjective.
5. The powerful silencer of political correctness which put immense pressure on Christians to minimize important truths for the sake of tolerance.
6. Militant feminism and a consequent redefinition of all gender roles across society in Canada.

2.10.4 Question: I believe that the type of leadership needed to bring health and growth to Evangelical Churches across Canada is leadership that is characterized by:

1. Compassion blended with mission, vision, passion, intention and action.
 2. The courage to speak Biblical truths even when these may seem to contradict the traditional Evangelical meta-narrative.
 3. A leadership that is servant focused - not leadership focused in a narcissistic way.
 4. Leadership that is spiritually vibrant, disciplined, humble and enduring.
 5. Leadership that is willing to suffer ignominy, financial loss, humiliation and weakness.
 6. Leadership that is communally focused rather than individualistically narcissistic.
- This is a leadership that is interconnected and interdependent.

2.10.5 Analysis of the responses to the first iteration of the Delphi

The eight respondents to the first iteration of the Delphi survey displayed a remarkably incisive grasp of the macro, micro, external and internal trends that are wracking the soul of the Evangelical church in Canada at this time. There is a remarkable synergy between their answers and an authentic transparency that these trends are pervasive not only within Canadian society, not only within the Canadian Evangelical church, but also within the leadership of the Canadian Evangelical church, of which they form a part.

As one reads through the responses of these eight experts, one is struck by the sense that these leaders perceive that the Evangelical church in Canada has been invaded by pervasive cultural trends and is now reeling under the weight of these trends, which actually become attacks to its very existence. These experts are courageous in their diagnosis of the problem and in their concept of the prescription. They are also aware of the complexity of the issues before them. Perhaps what is most helpful in the responses of these eight experts is that they propose a remedy that is both profound and simple, impossible yet realistic. In short – return to Biblical Christianity in a post-Christian world! This summum bonum of the issue – return to Biblical Christianity in a post-Christian world is extremely helpful in constructing a possible model for the growth of the

Evangelical church in Canada. However, the next iteration of questions in the Delphi survey will attempt to crystallize from the respondents how exactly they feel such a return to Biblical Christianity might occur in tangible ways. As an example of how the next iteration of questions might crystallize and clarify the methodology or praxis of Biblical Christianity in 21st century Canada consider the following examples from the synthesis of the responses above:

1. Return to Biblical and Expository preaching that intersects the real issues of life.
 - a. Question: How can pastors structure their church ministry in such a way that they can ensure they expend the time needed to develop effective expositional preaching that truly represents the authorial intent of the Holy Spirit with life changing application to the issues of Canada in the 21st century?
 - b. Question: How can Evangelical churches, Bible Colleges and Seminaries partner together to ensure that a new cadre of leaders who are biblical expositors is produced?
 - c. What are the hindrances to biblical expository preaching in 21st century Canada?

The full expression of this second iteration of questions and the responses of the “experts” to these questions are recorded in the next section of this chapter.

2.11 The Second Iteration of Delphi

The second Delphi attempted to synthesize and refine the responses from the first Delphi iteration. To fulfill the requirements of Delphi “the validity of the resulting judgment of the entire group is typically measured in terms of explicit degree of consensus among the experts”. (Linstone & Turoff 2002: 22). The results of the second Delphi do display a measure of refinement, but the reader will also observe that some questioning arose from the respondents concerning the validity of some of the responses to the first Delphi questionnaire – especially concerning the idea that part of the current decline can be attributed to a decline in “expository preaching”. Where such disparities emerge they are highlighted for the reader and discussed. However, such disparities do not undermine the validity of the Delphi but actually support because as Linstone and Turoff point out (2002: 22): “What distinguishes the Delphi from an ordinary polling procedure is the feedback of the information gathered from the group and the opportunity of the individuals to modify

or refine their judgments based upon their reaction to the collective views of the group”. This modification and refinement of views is undoubtedly what occurred in this second iteration of the Delphi survey. Whilst this process of refinement and modification is both helpful and validating in terms of the Delphi survey as a research tool into the possible causes for decline in the Canadian Evangelical church there still remain two caveats as follows:

1. “While experience is undoubtedly rich, it can also be extremely fallible and misleading (Linstone and Turoff 2002: 22).”
2. “The judgments that typically survive a Delphi procedure may not be the “best” judgments but, rather, the compromise position (Linstone & Turoff 2002: 22).”

The responses to the second iteration of the Delphi survey are presented below. The two caveats mentioned above serve as a filter to the responses and the comments on those responses. One further important notation regarding the second iteration of the Delphi is that in the first iteration, eight experts responded, whilst in the second iteration only five of the previous eight experts responded. The reason for this attrition is hard to ascertain – other than the realization that some of the previous respondents may have lost sight of the value of the Delphi – since it is purely voluntary and there is no remuneration for the time expended.

2.11.1 Declining Biblical Literacy:

The previous Delphi surfaced a concern over the declining biblical literacy and knowledge of the major tenets of the Christian faith. How would you suggest the Evangelical church in Canada address this decline?

1. Faith in the home initiatives.
2. Expository preaching and Bible studies
3. Wholistic (sic) integrated living in community.
4. A catechism of theology for children.
5. Elevate Grade 1-8 “Sunday school” programs from being an afterthought to being a core, highly resourced ministry.

6. A return to active Christian education in the church for all ages: children, youth and adults. Revitalize Sunday School.
7. Return to Biblical preaching.
8. Revive the concept of church-based theological training.

2.11.2 Individualized Spirituality:

There is a strong trend in Canada towards an individualized and customized spirituality. How can the Evangelical church in Canada address this trend? As you reflect on this question, can we use this trend to strengthen people in their discipleship? How do we help Christians to understand the need for and the benefit of Christian community?

1. NT teaching, expression of local church in oikos (sic) like social settings.
2. I am not sure that the ‘individualized’ approach/trend is helpful. Community/others and service is lessened by the individual approach.
3. I still think that the best way to do this is through the community of small groups. While it is good to strengthen the individual I also believe that as Scripture says “Iron sharpens Iron”.
4. It begins with child and youth training. I would submit that a significant cause of “individualized” spirituality is because the majority of 20-30 something’s have never learned the core doctrines together. They don’t know why or what they believe, and certainly can’t be sure they believe the same thing as the person next to them, even though they grew up in church together.
5. Through Biblical preaching and an emphasis on true Christian community.

2.11.3 Lack of Strategic Planning:

Many in the previous survey lamented the lack of strategic planning and consistent, sustainable, enduring implementation of the planning within the life of the church. What mechanisms would you suggest to address this perceived need for strategic planning within Canadian Evangelical churches?

1. Strategic planning is part of the business model that has lost the life of the church as a Spirit movement of Jesus followers.

2. Pastors need to discuss this in their fraternals.
3. I think that Boards need a yearly retreat to reflect upon their mission and vision to make sure that all that they are doing is fulfilling the their vision. To (sic) often we are busy not being wise in spending the energy we do in effective ministry. So I feel we need a yearly evaluation and assessment as to the programs we are carrying out or implementing are accomplishing our goal. (vision). (Sic).
4. Increased inter-church projects. Less reinventing what others are already doing. Take a city-scale approach to the evangelical church to foster co-operation and by necessity each partner/participant will need to think bigger/longer term/ and more strategically in order to participate at a multi-church, city-wide scale.
5. Strong, elder-led congregations where accountability and vision is stimulated through shared leadership.

2.11.4Lack of Equipped Leaders

Most respondents lamented the lack of trained and equipped leadership within the local church. What suggestions do you have to address this issue of a lack of trained leadership within the local church? How can local churches train and develop leaders to ensure that there is a broad base of godly leadership within any given local church?

1. Rabbi model, dust of the rabbi's sandals life on life in place of curricular plans
2. Encourage the members to attend less church services to free themselves up for more 'church service'. So much of what we do is 'in house' and cognitive. We need to help them with 'hands on' practical service in the community and train them to the presence of Christ, making the invisible God visible.
3. There are several things that can happen; 1. We have invited a person with a great deal of knowledge in leadership development to come and speak to us over a weekend, 2. We do leadership development for the first half hour at all our Board meetings, 3. We find a seminar to which you can take your leaders (we have chosen Willow Creek Leadership Summit).
4. Just do it. Develop a leadership philosophy that says the church identify and mentor emerging leaders internally before posting a job advertisement for their next vacant staff position. Hiring from outside the church is rarely a good idea. It's a unique

solution to a specific problem, it should not be the normal response to leadership needs. By establishing leadership training as the requirement for all spiritual leaders within the local congregation.

2.12 Summary, Synthesis and Analysis of the Responses to the Second Iteration of the Delphi

In this second iteration of the Delphi survey, some clear and strong suggestions emerged from the respondents. This second iteration of the Delphi is a response by five of the eight initial contributors to this author's synthesis of their initial answers to the first iteration of the Delphi. Each respondent was able to review the anonymous responses of the other contributors to the first round of the Delphi before giving their responses in the second round. This enabled the participants to review and reflect on the various submissions of their colleagues with a view to impacting their own thoughts on each specific topic. The key points that emerged from this second iteration are as follows:

- Declining Biblical literacy can be best addressed by wholistic integrated living that is supported by early childhood Biblical literacy initiatives within the church and home and by expository preaching for adult learning.
- Individualized spirituality can be best addressed by the New Testament teaching of the church as a family, household of God as manifest in the expression of Small Group ministry within the larger church body.
- Lack of Strategic Planning was denigrated as a sign of the business model creeping into the church at worst and something that needed to be fostered by joint collaboration of shared leadership at best.
- Lack of Equipped Leaders may be best addressed through a mentorship process and through church based theological training and ministry learning as well as through seminars by "experts".
- The majority of respondents refuted the supposed weakness in Biblical Preaching as both self-refuting and somewhat of a popular "meme". In other words, although in the first iteration of the Delphi a lack of Biblical preaching was presented as one of the areas that has created weakness within the Canadian Evangelical church, the second iteration undermined this proposition as untenable. The reason this position

that there is a lack of Biblical preaching within the Canadian Evangelical church is seen as untenable is due to the fact that each of the respondents felt that they were, indeed, preaching Biblical, expository sermons and that any of their colleagues that they ran into would affirm that they too are preaching biblical, expository sermons. This response is important on many levels because it speaks to the perception of the “experts” (church leaders / practitioners) that somehow there is a disconnect between the message being taught from the pulpits each Sunday and the lifestyles of believers across Canada. In other words, because Canadian Evangelical Christians are living lives that are not very different from their “secular” unbelieving contemporaries there must be a weakness in the contemporary preaching methodology. The equation is a simple one – if I preach the Bible lives will be transformed and therefore people will live differently, more like citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven and less like citizens of this world. Conversely, if we look at the lives of believers across Canada and we see that they are not living as citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven we may think it is because the Bible is not being effectively and faithfully expounded. The thought may be, even though I may be doing this, others must not be, since the results as seen in people’s lifestyles, testify to the supposed lack of such preaching. Of course, such thinking is simplistic and mitigates the testimony of great prophets like Isaiah (5, 6 & 28) and Jeremiah (20-22) who preached the Word of the Lord fearlessly and faithfully and yet the lifestyles of those to whom they preached never evidenced such a faithful ministry of the Word, but instead stood in sharp contradistinction to it! The question remains, what is it in our churches that needs to be done to reverse the decline of the Evangelical church in Canada, since it would seem that Biblical, Expository preaching is not enough. If we look at the models of Isaiah and Jeremiah we may have to acknowledge that God’s call to those of us who are leaders of Evangelical churches across Canada may need to focus more on faithfulness at this time rather than clear evidences of fruitfulness! That is not to say that every effort to uncover those things that we might do to address the current decline. However, we undertake these changes with a clear understanding that the life and death of any church (Revelation 2 & 3) and of the Evangelical church in Canada is truly within the Sovereign control (Acts 6:7, 12:24, 19:20) of a wise and loving God. It may be true that God asks only that we do our very best to faithfully honor His name and proclaim His truth and that we make this the true measure of

success rather than the size of our churches or the rapidity of our growth. Together with the Basis Theory material of chapter 2 and the literature survey of Chapter 3, this Delphi survey suggests that the best model for the Canadian Evangelical church is to move to a missional and multi-ethnic modality rather than the traditional church growth homogeneity model. The following chapter, Chapter 5, attempts to presents a way for the Canadian Evangelical church to move to a missional mode of function as a model for the growth of the Evangelical church. At the outset the material in chapter 5 is prefaced with the pro-viso that missional is the best way for the Evangelical Church in Canada to function and that part of the missional dynamic is for the Canadian Evangelical church to move toward multi-ethnicity to better reflect the culture in which the church now finds itself.

Chapter 3: Towards a Literature Review

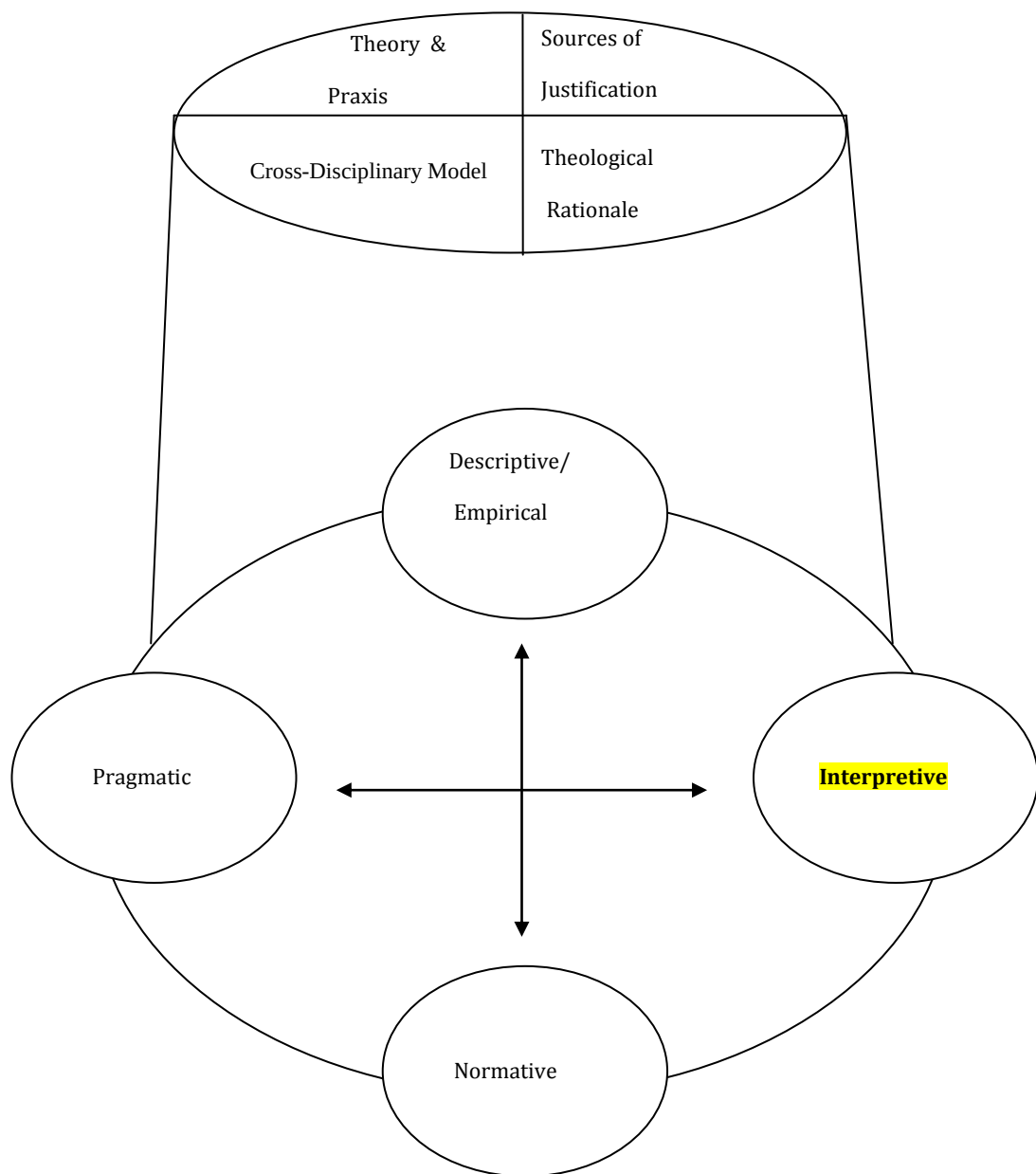
3.1 Introduction: The Literature Review as a Part of the “Interpretive” Process

The methodological approach for this thesis follows the four tasks of Osmer’s (2010: 3; 2008: 4) hermeneutical spiral. This hermeneutical spiral comprises (Osmer, 2010: 3; 2008:4-175) the following four tasks, each of which is attended to in this thesis as follows:

1. *Descriptive-empirical*: What is going on? Gathering information to better understand particular episodes, situations, or contexts. (Chapter 1 of this thesis – “The Decline of the Evangelical Church in Canada.”)
2. *Interpretive*: Why is this going on? Entering into a dialogue with the social sciences to interpret and explain why certain actions and patterns are taking place. (Chapter 2 of this thesis – “The Delphi Survey” and chapter 3 of this thesis, “The Literature Review.”)
3. *Normative*: What ought to be going on? Raising normative questions from the perspectives of theology, ethics and other fields. (Chapter 4 of this thesis – “The Missional Community of God.”)
4. *Pragmatic*: How might we respond? Forming an action plan and undertaking specific responses that seek to shape the episode, situation, or context in desirable directions. (Chapter 5 of this thesis – “Shaping a Missional Community in a Secular Context” and chapter 6, “Further Areas for Research.”)

These four tasks, that form Osmer’s (2010: 3) hermeneutical spiral, are represented in Diagram 3:1 (Osmer, 2008: 11) on the following page. In this chapter we focus on the second of the four tasks, namely the “Interpretive,” (Osmer 2010: 3) in which we try to answer the question: “Why is this going on?” The practical theological endeavor is strengthened (Lotter, 2007: 4-6) when it progresses through this interpretive phase, because it is able to glean from other researchers and practitioners across a number of disciplines (Osmer, 2008: 79-128) concerning their perspective on why certain actions and patterns are taking place.

Diagram 3:1 Osmer’s (2010: 7) Hermeneutical Spiral



Chapter 2 of this thesis utilized the Delphi survey to ascertain from “experts” their perspective on certain patterns and actions that are occurring within the Canadian church landscape. In this chapter an extensive literature review (Shrensky, 2006: 1-4) is presented with a view to understanding how others view the ecclesiastical landscape in North America². The Canadian church context is different (Grenville & Posterski, 2004: 1) from the American church context, but there seems to be a comparative scarcity of modern

² Throughout this thesis the term “North America” as used by this author refers to the United States of America and Canada.

(1990 – 2010) literature in Canada concerning Evangelical church praxis. Due to this scarcity, materials developed within North America are utilized, with a view to reflecting on how this international body of literature both differs from and applies to the Canadian Evangelical church context.

3.2 The Structure of this Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to reflect on and interact with the current literature that engages the hypothesis presented in chapter one of this thesis, namely:

Hypothesis: The Evangelical church in Canada is in decline because it has lost sight of the missional, pilgrim nature of the church and instead of calling people to discipleship (followership) of the resurrected Christ it may have inadvertently become a chaplain to a society at odds with the claims of the risen Christ. In replacing the missional nature of the church with a chaplaincy role the church may have inadvertently sacrificed the missional focus given by the Risen Christ for a focus driven by a Western Canadian society that does not grasp that their greatest need is for a redemptive relationship with the Risen Christ through His Word, His People and His Spirit.

To engage this thesis statement effectively the literature review will survey current (1990-2010) literature in the following subject areas:

Sociology: Exploring the current Canadian context (Beaman, 2006: xi), especially as this relates to the Canadian Evangelical Church.

Ecclesiology: incorporating missional church (Stetzer & Putman, 2006: 16-28), and emergent church (Jones, 2008: 1-254).

Pneumatology: The necessity and possibility of Spirit empowerment (Oden, 2006b: 1-297), as an aspect of missional living, for the individual believer and the missional community.

Christology: incorporating the notion of Christ and culture (Carson, 2008: 1-30) as it relates to the current Canadian milieu.

Leadership: incorporating missional leadership styles (Hirsch, 2006: 101-125), servant leadership styles (Fleming, 2004: 117-132; Spears & Lawrence, 2004: 1-241; Lundy, 2002: 1-232), and suggested church leadership styles for the Canadian context.

Discipleship: exploring the notion of what discipleship (Hull, 2004: 29-252; Hull, 2003: 15-244) means in the 21st century Canadian context and how this intersects the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20 especially as this relates to the missional community.

Spirituality: Current Canadian perspectives on religiosity (Beaman, 2006: 1-274) and spirituality (Coates *et al*, 2007: 1-11) and how the Evangelical Church is affected by those perspectives.

Systems Theory: Here we review the notion of the church as a complex adaptive system, (Gribbin, 2004: 174-186; Armour & Browning, 2000: 5-313) and seek to determine if systems theory and systems praxis enhances or hinders the missional function of the church?

Overview and Synopsis: Tying the various components of the literature review together into a synthesized whole with a view to some preliminary conclusions gained from the literature review.

3.2.1 A Review of the Sociology Literature that relates to the current Canadian context with special reference to the Evangelical Church

In his book, “Mustard seed versus McWorld” Tom Sine (2002: 37) urges church leaders to understand the environmental factors and changing social landscape that will affect the life of the church. Canada, like most Western nations in the last two decades, has undergone momentous change (Bibby, 2009: 12; Beaman, 2006: xi, 1) with the influx of immigrants who bring with them their own religious perspectives and beliefs. This influx of immigrants into Canada has resulted in a multiplicity of religions, which creates (Beaman, 2006: xii) complexity (Beaman, 2008: ix) both in terms of defining religion and in terms of practicing religion. Beaman’s hypothesis (Beaman, 2006: 1) is that the Canadian religious landscape is in transition away from a Christian hegemony (Beaman, 2008: 3; 2006: 2) towards a more diverse and secular identity. Beaman’s (2006: 1) hypothesis is supported by the range of articles in Part II (Beaman, 2006: 96-156) titled “Transitions”, and Part III

(Beaman, 2006: 157-268). Thiessen (2006: 1-2) agrees that the Canadian religious landscape is both more diverse and more secular than it was forty years ago. Thiessen (2006: 2) presents this thesis in contradistinction to Bibby (2004: 7-27) who believed that there was a renaissance of religion in Canada, but in his latest research acknowledges, “religion in Canada is not what it used to be” (Bibby, 2009: 10). Bibby (2009: 10-11) concludes in his latest article that there is a definite and sizable trending of 70% of the population away from religion and religious devotion and that this number will only grow unless the religious service providers do a better job in meeting the perceived needs of those who are departing. Bibby’s (2009:11) thesis that the problem lies with the “suppliers” is not a new one, but one he advocated in his book: “Restless Churches” (Bibby, 2004: 85-119). Bibby (2004: 121-124) proposed that in the light of the massive sociological changes occurring in Canada, changes that impacted the church and people’s spiritual preferences, the church would do well to attend to four key areas. These areas, according to Bibby (2004: 121-124) have to do with giving a high priority to, locating, understanding and actually ministering to those who are “affiliates” of a particular denomination. The problem with this “service to affiliates” model is that from 2003 to 2010 those who had become affiliates by 2003 became tentative and agnostic by 2009, something that Bibby (2009: 8-9) acknowledges. The concept of “service to affiliates” thus takes on a whole new dimension if those “affiliates” are agnostic. It is hard to see that a “service to affiliates” model is either sustainable, or strategically prudent, given the fact that Christianity in general, and Evangelical Christianity in particular, are in rapid decline (Noll, 2006: 256-273)! A better model to employ, but one, which runs contraire to the “service to affiliates” model, is the concept of a “Post-Christendom Ecclesiology” (Shenk, 2005: 73-79).

A “post-Christendom” ecclesiology (Shenk, 2005: 73-79) fits the Canadian context well, because Canada is now a post-Christian (Noll, 2006: 256-273), secular country. Within a post-Christendom model the church moves to a “missional ecclesiology” (Shenk, 2005: 78). This missional ecclesiology is described in a number (Martens, 2007: 247-254; Hirsch, 2007: 15-286; Frost, 2007: 3-327; Stetzer, 2006: 1-363; Stetzer & Putman, 2006: 1-237) of texts. In the section following we turn our attention to ecclesiology in general and to missional and emergent ecclesiology’s in particular, as well as reviewing some governance models that impact the modern Evangelical church in Canada.

3.2.2 A Review of Modern Ecclesiological Reflections together with Missional and Emergent Ecclesiological Literature

Ecclessiology (Oden, 2006b: 261) is the study of the doctrine of the church. Yet, as Stackhouse (2003: 9) points out:

When we, the church, are confused about who we are and whose we are, we can become anything and anyone's. We can become a goose-stepping, Hitler saluting abomination, as we were in the middle of the last century in Germany. We can become a self-righteous, self-centered, and racist boot on the neck of our prostrate neighbors, as we were in South Africa until the end of Apartheid. We can become a machete-wielding, genocidal horror, as we were in Rwanda just a few years ago. We can become a corpulent, self-important irrelevance, as we are in so much of America today. And we can become a sad, shrunken ghost pining for past glory and influence, as we are in Canada, Britain and most of Europe.

These are strong words, but well stated since they highlight the fact that "Theology at its best has perceived that logos and praxis, Word and Spirit belong together. Doctrine without devotion is empty; devotion without doctrine is blind." (Bloesch, 2002: 18). To study the doctrine of the church is both important and challenging (Minear, 2004: 11-16). Challenging because the word "church" (Minear, 2004: 18-27) both biblically and culturally is layered with meaning. Our understanding of the word "Church" will determine what we perceive the church to be (Hammett, 2005: 11-49) and this in turn will determine how we perceive the church to function, ontology impacts praxis. In the following pages we review the modern (1990-2010) literature that relates to ecclesiology, especially within the North American context, and where possible, within the Canadian context. Our view of what the church is truly impacts how the church functions within the North American context, as the following review of the ecclesiological literature highlights. Is the church missional, emergent, conservative/traditional, and if she is any of these, how does that identity or nature affect how she functions? We begin by reviewing some of the recent general ecclesiological reflections and then move on to focus on missional writings, followed by emergent conceptions of the church and closing with a review of some of the writing on church governance.

There is a great deal of confusion (Erickson, 2007: 1036) regarding the church, even though there are visible attestations to her existence. Some (Erickson, 2007: 1036) of the misunderstanding related to the church has to do with the multiple uses of the word “church”. Some of the misunderstanding related to the church results from a truncated study of the church that neglects (Ferguson, 1996: 1-69) the Old Testament foundations of the people of God. Another prominent challenge within ecclesiology is what Stackhouse (2003: 9) bemoans as a pragmatic approach to ecclesiological praxis rather than a principled approach. Along with the struggle to allow one’s ecclesiology to shape church function, is the question (Hindmarsh, 2003: 17) of what actually constitutes the true church, and if Evangelicalism is the true church, why it is that there is not greater visible unity across denominational lines? Flowing from this trajectory of the visible unity of the Evangelical church, is the apparent neglect of Trinitarian theology within ecclesiology (Dearborn, 2003: 40). If the Evangelical church is the true church, why is it so splintered, and why does it not more readily reflect (Fakre, 2007: 12-14) the character of the Trinity? As Volf (1998: 191) poignantly asserts, “the way one thinks about God will decisively shape not only ecclesiology, but the entirety of Christian thought.” This is certainly true (Franke, 2009: 106) when one reflects on missional ecclesiology and the concept that the church is sent (Franke, 2009: 109-114) by a God who is, Himself, on mission. A wonderful attempt to balance the concern rendered by Dearborn (2003: 40) concerning the neglect of Trinitarian thinking is the volume, “Trinitarian Theology for the Church: Scripture, Community, Worship.” (Treier & Lauber, 2009). This work is a collection of contributions by leading scholars, and the goal (Treier & Lauber, 2009: 17) of this work is “to have an opportune trickle-down moment for the doctrine of the Trinity to influence church life more explicitly and intentionally.”

Ecclesiological thinking and praxis is also aided by interaction with what the New Testament writers presented concerning the nature of the church. In this regard, comprehensive and informative work has been presented by Paul S. Minear (2004: 28) who states: “Is it actually possible to grasp at once all the images in the New Testament that refer, in one way or another, to the church?” Minear gives a brief overview of the minor (2004:28-65) images of the church, and then attempts (2004: 66-220) to render a comprehensive treatment of the major images of the church in the New Testament. Minear’s work is extremely helpful in presenting an Evangelical ecclesiology that causes

the reader to “ask whether the New Testament’s ways of imaging the church can enliven their own imaginations and so energize afresh their commitment to the Gospel.” (Minear, 2004: xxvii). Whilst Minear seeks to review the way the church is presented through images in the New Testament, many writers (Erickson, 2007: 1035-1059; Oden, 2006b: 261-297; Hammett, 2005: 25-49; Grenz, 2000: 463-467; Ferguson, 1996: 71-129; Berkhof, 1996: 562-578; Clowney, 1995: 13-83; Grudem, 2000: 853-864;) develop their ecclesiology upon the foundation of the “Nature of the Church”. Once one has reviewed the nature of the church from a New Testament perspective, one then moves on to review the “Marks of the Church”. (Oden, 2006b: 297-365; Hammett, 2005: 51-66;). The marks of the Church are those evidences (Oden, 2006b: 297) that make the church recognizable. Once one understands the nature of the Church and the marks of the Church one can then move on to look at the “Role of the Church”. (Erickson, 2007: 1060-1078). It is within this realm of the “role of the church” that both missional and emergent ecclesiology’s are situated, and to which we now turn our attention. If the church reflects (Fakre, 2007: 12-14) the Trinity in its relational unity, and is (Minear, 2004:29-220) the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13), a letter from Christ (2 Corinthians 3:2-3), branches of the Vine (John 15), God’s planting (1 Corinthians 3:9), God’s building (1 Corinthians 3:9), fellows citizens with the saints (Ephesians 2:19) and the many other images that relate to the church’s nature within the New Testament, then how does the church’s praxis reflect her ontology? Interestingly, Oden (2006b: 261-365) who does a great deal of work on both the nature, and the marks of the church, does not render anything on the praxis of the church in the 21st century milieu. At the opposite end Oden’s leaning towards rendering theology, apart from developing the implications of that theology for praxis, is the more praxis-theological rendition of Bloesch (2002: 27-295). Bloesch (2002) seeks to develop a current and contextual ecclesiology that eruditely incorporates previous scholarship, whilst at the same time continually seeking to explicate the implications of that prior scholarship for current contextual realities. Bloesch (2002) takes the nature and marks of the church and integrates these into a dynamic, praxis oriented ecclesiology. To ensure strength and balance, one needs both the strongly theological and the strongly praxis-theological orientations to avoid falling into the trap or confusion mentioned in the opening paragraph of this section. Another praxis oriented, dynamic ecclesiology is the one rendered by Couch *et. al.* (1999). This ecclesiology presents a dispensational (Couch, 1999: 13-48) perspective of the church. It spends very little focus (Couch, 1999: 49-67) reviewing the nature of the church. The books does focus on discussing praxis-theological issues such as the gifts of the Spirit

(Couch, 1999: 77-95), the Apostasy of the Church (Couch, 1999: 107-117), the rewards for the Church (Couch, 1999: 145-152), and the governance and ministry of the Church (Couch, 1999: 153-296). Both Bloesch (2002) and Couch (1999) render helpful treatise on the function of the church, but these treatise would be far richer if the authors had also presented both the nature and marks of the church as a foundation to the function of the church, since ontology seems (Stackhouse, 2003: 9) to impact function, and a wrong view of what the church is can lead to a wrong praxis of the Church. With these thoughts concerning ontology and praxis we now progress to review the writings of missional thinkers and practitioners. To have a missional view of the Church is to view the very nature (ontology) of the church in a certain way, and if one has a missional ontology, one will have a missional praxis.

The concept of missional church, or the church on mission with God, is not new (Shenk, 2005: 73). However, like most adjectives, the meaning of the word “missional” has evolved (Hirsch, 2008: 1-2) to take on a broader meaning than when originally conceived. This expansion (Hirsch, 2008: 1-2) of the meaning of the word missional is outlined in Diagram 3:2 (Hirsch, 2008: 1-2). This review of the missional literature in the following sections, attempts to reflect some of the breadth and depth of the term missional. This review of missional literature also attempts to relate the concept of missional Church to the Evangelical Church in Canada, with a view to the ways in which the Evangelical church in Canada might move from a chaplaincy (Bibby, 2004: 85-142) model to a missional (Stetzer & Putman, 2006: 44-71) model. This mode of critical interaction with the current (1990-2010) missional literature, especially as this literature informs and critiques the Canadian context outlined in section 3.2.1, follows Osmer's (2008: 79-128) paradigm of the interpretive task and the employment of the “sagely wisdom” of other writers in the missional field.

Diagram 3:2 The Expansion of the meaning of the word “missional”



For the sake of continuity and in faithfulness to Diagram 3:2 this literature review begins with the book, “Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America” (Guder, 1998). Whilst Hirsch (2008: 1-2) claims that Guder began the missional movement with this book, the concept of the church as a missional community began (Shenk, 2005: 73-79) as early as 1945. Later writers like Bosch (2006) and Hedlund (1985) refined and distilled the concept of God’s mission to the world, through His people. The focus (Roxburgh, 2010: 87-110; McNeal, 2009: xiii-18; Stetzer & Putman, 2006: 1-4; Stetzer, 2006: 16-36) of the modern missional writers is predominantly on the North

American context. The driveshaft (Guder, 1998: 1-17) of this focus upon the North American context, and particularly the United States, is the rapid and rampant decline of the Evangelical church within North America. This decline, due to (Guder, 1998: 18-45) the rise of post-modernity and secularism, has undermined the church's role (VanGelder, 1998: 47-76) as chaplain to a society that once esteemed the church as an institution of value. In one sense, such a shift (Van Gelder, 1998: 46-76) from a position of social prominence to a place of marginalization is not necessarily a bad thing, since it forces the church to embrace her pilgrim status (Guder, 2004: 129-138) once more, and to embark on the journey of mission for which she was created!

Many Evangelical churches across North America need to adapt (Stetzer & Putman, 2006: 7-28) to a missional ontology. That is to say, the church needs to see herself (Stetzer & Putman, 2006: 21-58) as a missionary community, sent by God, to reach her community with the Gospel message. Such a shift (Guder, 1998:6) to a missional mindset, in a post-Christendom milieu, is essential (White, 2006: vii-17) for the effective (Frost, 2007: 28-49) proclamation of the Gospel. The reality (Guder, 1998: 7), and pressure (Guder, 1998: 8), of a post-Christendom context for the North American church has been a welcome catalyst (Guder, 1998: 6-17) in moving practitioners and thinkers to reflect (Suderman, 2005: 6) on their current praxis with a view to re-shaping both (Suderman, 2005: 1-51) their ecclesiology and their praxis. The eminent Lutheran theologian, Braaten (2008), has developed an excellent treatise on the confluent forces (Braaten, 2008: 143-147) that have led to the post-Christendom reality, and the need (Braaten, 2008: 147-151) for the North American church to shift from a Christendom to a missional focus. This shift in ecclesiology also gave rise to the realization that a new kind (Suderman, 2005: 25) of "missional" leadership is needed. A new ecclesiology, and a new leadership paradigm, are needed to engage the post-Christendom reality of North America, but so too (Frost, 2007: 3-129) is a new individual, missional lifestyle needed. In a missional lifestyle the Christian views herself (Frost, 2007: 8-27) as an exile, a pilgrim in a foreign land. This combination of missional ecclesiology, missional leadership and missional lifestyle is an essential (Frost, 2007: 81-327) combination of the psyche of the church in North America if she is to accomplish the purpose for which God has sent her! The Canadian Evangelical church, and the leadership of the Canadian Evangelical church, needs new maps (Roxburgh, 2010: 1-224) to define the way forward in a post-Christendom era. The

Canadian Evangelical church also needs a new scorecard (McNeal, 2009: 1-224) in defining success.

There are two models (MacIlvaine, 2009: 1-195; Stetzer & Putman, 2006: 4-240; Stetzer, 2006: 1-372) presented for moving the faith community from a Christendom focus to a missional focus. The first model (MacIlvaine, 2009: 1-195; Stetzer & Putman, 2006: 4-240) espouses missional leadership (Stetzer & Putman, 2006: 73-88) transforming and transitioning existing churches. This transitioning (MacIlvaine, 2009: 3-4) of existing, Christendom aligned churches model, is extremely important for the Canadian context, where Christendom structured Evangelical churches are facing rapid (Bibby, 2009: 9-12) decline. The planting of missional churches model (Stetzer, 2006: 1-372) is also extremely important for the Canadian context, since there are new immigrants (Bibby, 2009: 12; Beaman, 2006: xi, 1) coming to Canada each year and new communities (Statistics Canada, 2008) starting up in many parts of Canada. These new communities of immigrants would be well served by a missional church plant in their area, a church plant that does not mirror the Christendom model but rather lives out the Incarnational (Stetzer & Putman, 2006: 65) model. This Incarnational (Hirsch, 2006: 127-147) model (Stetzer & Putman, 2006: 65) amongst immigrant populations is important because it will seek to come alongside the newcomer to Canada, and through relationship and priestly listening (Osmer, 2008: 31-73), will find ways to minister to the immigrant. This ministry to the immigrant has the goal of living (Stetzer, 2006: 161-169), and sharing, the Gospel, to bring blessing (Hirsch, 2006: 142-144) to the nations.

The missional church model, and missional church thinking, is not the only paradigm extant within the Canadian Evangelical context. The Emergent church (Anderson, 2006: 3-219) model is also (Sanguin, 2008) in vogue. The Emergent church and the Missional church, seem to have the same desire (Bolger, 2007: 133-134), which is to minister incarnationally (Anderson, 2006: 217) in a post-Christendom culture. This incarnational impetus, however, is where the similarity between these two perspectives, Missional and Emergent, ends. Missional and Emergent thinking is so radically different because of how Emergent thinkers view Christ (Anderson, 2006: 46-49; Sweet *et al.* 2003: 169-171), view (Miles, 2008: 88-93) the church and God's purposes in the world through (Miles, 2008:

94-95) a modified, realized, Kingdom eschatology. In essence, the Emergent church movement has moved away (Rhodes, 2008: 2-26) from the core tenets (Selmanovic, 2007: 190-199) of Evangelical belief to such a degree that they cannot actually, any longer, be termed “Evangelical”. The Emergent Church movement could actually undermine (Miles, 2008: 97-100) the strength and missional capacity of the Evangelical Church in Canada because of its minimalistic (Sawyer, 2007: 41-50; Maddock & Maddock, 2007: 80-88) orthodoxy.

3.2.3 Literature that Relates Pneumatology and Missional Community

The Holy Spirit anointed, and empowered (Schreiner, 2007: 436-442) Jesus, to fulfill the mission of God. The Holy Spirit anoints, and empowers (Schreiner, 2007: 442-448) the church, to fulfill the mission of God. Missional writers recognize (Frost, 2007: 17) that a missional community is the product (Stetzer, 2006: 41-43) of the Holy Spirit, and also that the missional community is empowered (Goheen, 2005: 11; van Engen, 2004: 4) by the Holy Spirit to fulfill God’s mission. The Lausanne Committee on Issues (Claydon & Bolger, 2004) highlighted the fact that the Holy Spirit is also the One who calls a church to become missional, to embark on the wonderful pilgrimage of living as a missional community! Perhaps one of the most comprehensive treatments of the Holy Spirit’s central role in the missional community is that of Cornelis Bennema (2010). Bennema (2010) reviews the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, Luke-Acts, John and then the Pauline epistles. He concludes (Bennema, 2010) with the following ten assertions, which are quoted directly from Bennema, that arise from his synopsis of the biblical material on the Holy Spirit and the mission of God:

1. God’s mission or *missio Dei* is to create and sustain *life-giving communion* between himself and human beings by means of the Spirit. Although the Fall complicated matters, it did not abrogate God’s mission. It is crucial to recognize the continuity between creation and re-creation or salvation in terms of the provision of life and God’s desire for divine-human communion. The *Spirit* is the agent or means of this intimate, life-giving communion between God and humans.
2. In the *missio Dei*, *pneumatology* and *Christology* are intrinsically connected in that God sent both the Spirit and Jesus into the world to create and sustain life-giving divine- human communion. Yet, there are distinctions. Jesus is the source of

life/salvation and the Spirit is its agent, in that the Spirit mediates this life/salvation and aids people in appropriating the unique work of Christ. The Spirit is “Christocentric” in that the Spirit is “the Spirit of Jesus” (Acts 2:33–34; 16:7; Rom. 8:9; Gal. 4:6; Phi. 1:19) and only communicates Jesus’ words (Jn 16:13–15), which are in fact God’s words (Jn 3:34; 12:49–50). Only with a proper understanding of the Spirit’s role in the divine economy can we call mission “Christocentric.”

3. The church’s mission is an extension or continuation of the *missio Dei/Jesu*, in which Jesus appoints his followers as *witnesses* in this world with the Spirit as their co-witness (Luke, John). Although the first-commissioned witnesses were those who had been with Jesus from the beginning (John 15:26; Acts 1:2, 8, 21–22), mission cannot be limited to the original apostles. Both Luke and John indicate that the concept of witness applies to believers in general, and Paul expects that the church will engage in mission.
4. This mission is *expansionist* in scope (spanning the entire world) and nature (all people are invited to be part of God’s people). The church expresses *unity in diversity* – there is only one church with one Lord (Luke), one flock with one shepherd (John), one humanity in Christ/one body with one head (Paul), which at the same time is multi-ethnic and multi-cultural. God’s mission is to make for himself one people and therefore the good news about Jesus Christ is for everyone – Jew and Gentile alike.
5. The main missional activity is *proclamation* – whether the proclamation of repentance and forgiveness of sins (Luke), the truth (John), or the good news (Paul). The Spirit is depicted primarily as *the power of proclamation* (Luke, Paul) or *testimony* (John). As such, the Spirit informs and enables the proclamation/testimony, but also effects repentance and conversion (Luke), belief (John), or “obedience from the Gentiles” (Paul). The Spirit is thus both an empowerment for mission and a soteriological necessity. In their proclamation/testimony to the world, believers will face *persecution* but they are encouraged not to be silent (this would amount to discontinuing the proclamation/testimony and hence God’s mission) but to ask for and expect the help of the Spirit for boldness of speech.
6. Although *miracles* are an integral part of the church’s mission, they appear to be attributed directly to God rather than to the Spirit. We explained this as follows: while believers are explicitly commanded to proclaim or testify, with the Spirit

empowering them, they are never commanded to perform miracles (even though they should expect them). God performs miracles as he chooses, to validate or initiate the proclamation and hence there is no need for another divine agent.

7. The Spirit is the *hermeneutical key* for mission. In teaching believers the meaning of Jesus' historical teaching and its significance for any context and time (John), the Spirit assists believers to contextualize the Gospel. Since the first-century Graeco-Roman world and its religious-cultural plurality is not dissimilar to many modern societies, we should study how the New Testament authors engaged culture and contextualized the Gospel. In the difficult process of contextualization and engaging culture, the Spirit is the hermeneutical key to unlocking Jesus' teaching (and by extension, the bible) for an increasingly complex, pluralistic world. The Spirit unlocks cultures and makes inroads for the Gospel, and assists believers to rethink their earthly culture in the light of their new heavenly culture, in order to transform the former.
8. Mission involves a *spatial* and *socio-religious relocation*. First, the proclamation of God's salvation in Christ aims at *transferring* people from the realm of darkness to that of light (Luke, John, Paul), from the world below to the world above (John). Second, mission aims at calling people, Jew and Gentile alike, *out* of their respective socio-religious environments *into* a new humanity in Christ – the body of Christ (Paul), the church or community of faith (Luke), the flock or family of God (John). The bible as a whole also stresses this socio-religious relocation: God first took Abraham and Israel from all the nations to be his people (Gen. 12:1–3; Deut. 7:6), then he desired to take from the nations or Gentiles a people for his name (Acts 15:14), thus creating a new multi-ethnic humanity in Christ among whom he will dwell forever (Rev. 7:9; 21:1–3).
9. Christian mission aims at *conversion* in that people are *called out* of their respective socio-religious environments, whether “nominal Christianity,” Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, atheism, agnosticism or materialism, into a new humanity in Christ. Conversion involves socio-religious relocation and is thus incompatible with “secret” or “anonymous” Christianity – one cannot stay as and where they are.⁵¹ Becoming a follower of Jesus involves a socio-religious transfer into a new community (the church) with a new culture (the Kingdom of God). God's new community is both multi-cultural and mono-cultural – an Indian Christian does not stop being Indian, but adopting the values of the world above and living them out in the world below, an Indian Christian has to rethink his

Indianness in the light of the Gospel and behave according to the new family norms. The church, or people of God, is an otherworldly society – it does not belong to this world, and yet it exists and operates (often subversively) in this world in order to transform it (cf. Jn 17:14–16; 18:36). This will eventually lead to conflict at various levels, including an identity crisis, rejection by family, ostracism in the workplace, exclusion from local communities, and religious violence at the hands of extremists from former communities.

10. The Spirit functions as the *boundary* and *identity marker* of the community of faith. The Spirit facilitates the spatial-socio-religious relocation described above, thereby creating a new socio-religious identity. First, the Spirit is the hallmark of a Christian (“to have” the Spirit means belonging to God’s people) and as such provides the believer with a new identity “in Christ” or as part of God’s family. Second, the Spirit shapes this new identity, providing believers with direction, worth and a sense of belonging. For Luke, the community of faith is indwelt by the Spirit and shaped by the Spirit through the apostles’ teaching and fellowship (Acts 2:37–47). For John, the Spirit’s “guiding into all truth,” i.e., teaching about Jesus and the divine reality (16:12–15), mediating the presence of the Father and Son (14:17, 23), and facilitating the new worship of God as Father (4:23–24), will naturally have a transforming effect on the believer’s thought, will and motivation. For Paul, the intimacy created by the Spirit between the believer and God as Father (Rom. 8:15–16; Gal. 4:6), and the work and resulting fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:16, 22–25), will also influence the believer’s personality and behaviour. The goal of this Spirit-wrought identity is to make believers one with the Father and Son (Jn 17:23), and to mould them like Christ (Gal. 2:20). Hence, the Spirit is the community’s ethical or moral force.

This treatment of the Holy Spirit’s central role in the missional community is, in many respects, in line with much of the research rendered in chapter four of this thesis “The Missional Church of God”. Perhaps our Christendom model (Frost, 2007: 6-7) of church life and church leadership has somewhat inhibited (Hirsch, 2006: 219) the free reign of God’s Holy Spirit within and through His people? In Canada, perhaps, we need to embark on a journey of prayerful liminality (Hirsch, 2006: 220-229) and its resulting *communitas*. This liminality (Hirsch, 2006: 220-229) will result in real, missional *communitas* when the post-Christendom church is willing to embark on a journey (Frost, 2007: 3-327) of risk and possible marginalization, to accomplish the mission of God.

3.2.4 A Review of the Literature that Relates to Christology and North American Culture

The church, as a living organism (Oden, 2006b: 287-297; Rendle, 2002: 73), is a complex (Hirsch, 2006: 179-216) adaptive system (Rendle, 2002: 49-73). As a complex adaptive system, the church continually faces the challenge of being “in” the world but not “of” the world. The thinking and philosophy of the world may permeate the life of the church because the church, as an organism, is surrounded by and constantly in contact with the world system. It may be that the Christendom of North America may reflect a spirit of worldliness in a way that many of us would be loathe to acknowledge. This worldliness exists precisely because the church is a complex adaptive system, and so may have adapted to her environment, rather than seeking to live in disequilibrium with that environment. Our very desire to be “in the world” but not “of the world” may be difficult (Hirsch, 2006: 229-233) to fulfill, precisely because we are immersed (Moody, 2006: 1-219) in the North American western cultural mores that tend to diminish our capacity to live out the truth of Romans 12:1-3! The missional church needs to grapple (Theron & Lotter, 2008: 1-24) with an effective theology of engagement, precisely because to live missionally is to live incarnationally (Frost, 2007: 50-77), to come alongside those who are caught in sin and lead them to the redemptive power of the cross of the risen Lord Jesus Christ. How does a christian live incarnationally in a fallen world? Unlike the Lord Jesus Christ, the christian is not impeccable (Grudem, 2000: 537). How to live incarnationally (Webber, 2002: 112-113) in the world, whilst not being “of” the world, is a question that is very pertinent (Bricker & Wright, 2005: 78-89) to the Canadian Evangelical church, and to the Canadian Evangelical christian! A number of modern (1990 – 2010) writers such as Carson (2008:1-243), Kysar & Webb (2006: 1-239), Wells (2005: 1-339), Linthicum (2003: 1-216), Dockery (2001: 1-218) seek to address this question of a theology of engagement, and for that reason a brief overview of the main tenets of their writings is now presented.

Perhaps the most comprehensive, and incisive, modern writer concerning the question of Christ and Culture is D.A. Carson (2008). He states (2008: viii):

“First, ever since Pentecost Christians have had to think through the nature of their relationships with others. Christians soon multiplied in number and across an

amazing number of racial and social barriers, constituting a church, a fellowship, a body, that transcended the established categories of empire, ethnicity, language, and social status. Even within the pages of the New Testament, Christians are told both to view government as something ordained by God and to view at least one particular government as representative of antichrist. ... Beyond the pages of the New Testament, even a casual knowledge of the history of the church discloses and incredible diversity of situations in which Christians have found themselves: persecuted and reigning, isolated and dominant, ignorant and well educated, highly distinguishable from the surrounding culture and virtually indifferentiable from it, impoverished and wealthy, evangelistically zealous and evangelistically dormant, social reformers and supportive of the social *status quo*, hungry for heaven and hoping it won't arrive too soon.

This paragraph by Carson summarizes the challenge that Christians face in the 21st century as they live in the world, whilst seeking to also live under the Lordship (MacArthur, 1988: 196-210) of Jesus Christ in every aspect of their daily lives. How do Canadian Christians engage (Webber, 2002: 114-122) the Canadian postmodern culture, and in what ways does the Lordship of Christ manifest (Webber, 2002: 125-236) itself in the way we relate to our culture? The missional church needs to embark on the arduous task of answering these questions of cultural engagement and the Lordship of Christ, since so many times those things that the Canadian Evangelical church may identify as “worldly” are nothing more than a preference borne (Hirsch, 2006: 218-220) out of some middle class desire for safety and security! Such a system of quantifiably worldly pursuits (Duin, 2008: 67-81) may actually dull our senses and curb our capacity to critique those things that may be truly “worldly”. It is much easier to retrograde (Duin, 2008: 79-80) one’s spiritual life, to withdraw from the challenges and the complexity of modern living. However, such withdrawal diminishes (Duin, 2008: 73-76) our capacity (Carson, 2008: 7-8) to live incarnationally and to bridge the gap for those who have no faith relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ! This massive question of how the missional community lives incarnationally, whilst also fulfilling demonstrative holiness, could fill volumes. Such a treatment, though, may still not be comprehensive enough to address this thorny dilemma of being “in the world” but “not of the world” – and some guiding principles intermixed with a good deal of gracious latitude on debatable matters may be the best the missional community can hope for. It is these guiding principles that Carson

(2008) seeks to develop, in an update (Carson, 2008: xi) and extension of Niebuhr's (1956) monumental (Littell, 2007: 163) work, for the benefit (Carson, 2008: 4) of the missional community. Carson's key concepts are summarized following, with special reference to the concept of the Lordship of Christ and the interplay of His Lordship with the concept (Carson, 2008: 2) of culture and a potential model for a theology of engagement inter-alia Theron & Lotter (2008: 1-24).

Carson (2008: 13-30) provides a helpful summary and interaction with Niebuhr's (1956) five propositions of the relation of Christ to culture. In the first proposition (Carson, 2008: 13-16), Carson discusses the concept of Christ against Culture. If one adopts the position of Christ against Culture one must assert "the sole authority of Christ over the Christian and resolutely rejects the culture's claims to loyalty." (Carson, 2008: 13). In this view the loyal Christian must pursue (Carson, 2008: 14-15) a life of monasticism and almost total withdrawal from culture. Such a position is inadequate (Carson, 2008: 15-16) because even the most radical Christian must inevitably make use of the culture, or parts of the culture.

In the second proposition (Carson, 2008: 16-20), Carson discusses the concept of the Christ of Culture. In this position these Christians hail Jesus as the Messiah of their society, "the one who fulfills its best hopes and aspirations." (Carson, 2008: 16). These Christians (Carson, 2008: 16) do not seek to sanction everything in their culture, but only that which is best in the culture. The problem (Carson, 2008: 19) with this position is that it presents a truncated and culturally manipulated Christ. This position also does not grasp (Carson, 2008: 19) how endemic (McMinn, 2004: 63-126) sin is, and thus God becomes easily redefined (Carson, 2008: 20) as the immanent divine spirit that works in men.

The third way (Carson, 2008: 20) of viewing the relationship of Christians to culture is titled: "Christ above Culture". In this view (Carson, 2008: 20) the Christian holds strong convictions concerning the pervasive and radical nature of sin as well as the primacy of grace and the necessity of a visible, works obedience. Carson (2008: 20) highlights the

notion that the Christ above Culture paradigm surfaces in three distinct forms which form the three final entries in Niebuhr's fivefold typology and that Niebuhr labels these three together the "church of the center". These three groups might be called the "synthesists", the "dualists", and the "conversionists". The first group, synthesists, insist (Carson, 2008:21) that Christ is as sovereign over the culture as over the church. The synthesists comprise such notables as Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and Thomas Aquinas. They saw the synthesis of Christ above Culture expressed in such verses as Matthew 22:21 and Romans 13. In Matthew 22:21, the call to render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and to God that which is God's, and the understanding in Romans 13 that civil government is established by God synthesize the notion of the Christian's relation to Christ and to culture, so that the Christian must be a good person, in accordance with the standards of a "good culture", and yet Christ invites people to attain even more than this civil goodness and gives them the grace to do so (Carson, 2008: 21). Carson (2008: 22) points out, though, that Niebuhr is not blind to the problems of the synthesist version of Christ above culture, because all such syntheses are themselves culturally conditioned. This cultural conditioning of the synthesists approach undermines the veracity of the approach because the synthesist does not own up to the radical evil present in all human work. This failure on the part of the synthesists brings us to the next conception of the relation of Christ and Culture, namely, Christ and Culture in paradox (Carson, 2008: 22 – 25).

The Christ and Culture in paradox paradigm belongs to the "Christ above culture" pattern. It was noted in the previous section that the first group of the Christ above culture pattern were synthesists, the second group of the Christ above culture pattern are dualists (Carson, 2008: 22). In this dualistic conception of the relationship of Christ and culture, the dualist acknowledges (Carson, 2008: 23) that the whole world of human culture is godless and sick unto death, and that he, the dualist, belongs to that sick and depraved culture and cannot get out of it. Yet, the dualist takes comfort and hope (Carson, 2008:23) in the notion that God sustains him in the midst of this fallen, sinful world and that God also sustains the world in all of its sin. The criticism (Carson, 2008: 25) raised against this position is that it tends to move either to antinomianism or cultural conservatism. This brings us (Carson, 2008:25) to the final of the five categories listed by Niebuhr and the third of the Christ above Culture pattern, namely, Christ the

Transformer of Culture.

Christ the Transformer of Culture, unlike the synthesist and dualist, is conversionist (Carson, 2008: 25). In this view the goal (Carson, 2008: 25) is not so much the conversion of the individual, as it is the conversion of the culture itself. This view is espoused by such luminaries as Augustine, Calvin and Maurice. For the conversionist, history (Carson, 2008:26-27) is a dramatic interaction between God and men, and the conversionist lives with a somewhat more realized eschatology than those who hold to the other four positions, since the conversionist lives less between the times and somewhat more in the now. The conversionist position relies (Carson, 2008: 27) heavily on the concept of the Logos in the Gospel of John and the notion that the eternal life provided by the Logos is enjoyed here and now. If this is true, then the Christians approach (Carson, 2008: 27) to culture under this paradigm of Christ as Transformer of culture is that Christ is transforming culture through the good works of regenerated people. However, whilst Christ is currently transforming culture through redeemed people, the fullness (Carson, 2008: 28) of this transformation, according to both Augustine and Calvin, will occur only in the eschaton with the creation of a spiritual society.

Once Carson has completed the comprehensive summary and analysis of Niebuhr, he moves on (Carson, 2008: 44) to suggest that in the 21st century we need to recapture a renewed perspective both in terms of the person of the Lord Jesus and in terms of culture. His suggestion is that a Biblical Theology approach can assist the Christian in gaining a renewed perspective on the person of the Lord Jesus and a renewed perspective on culture. Carson (2008: 45-66) then submits a rudimentary biblical theological outline from which he purports to derive certain non-negotiables that serve (Carson, 2008: 67) as a template to assist the believer in thinking about the relationship between Christ and culture.

Carson's book is extremely helpful because it enables the missional believer and the missional community to critically engage (Stetzer & Putman, 2006: 51) the current culture through the process of Biblical Theology. Perhaps Carson's greatest contribution

to the post-Christendom missional community is to alert (Carson, 2008: 224-228) the missional community to the tension that exists as one seeks to live incarnationally within a fallen culture, and the earnest need for a biblical theological, meta-narrative approach, to developing a theology of engagement. One thing is certain; one cannot withdraw from the culture and the people who are a part of that culture, if one is on mission with God. Perhaps the best symbol for this life in tension of an incarnational, missional Christian in a post-Christendom culture is that of an exile (Frost, 2007: 2-8). Leading the missional community, comprised of exiles and pilgrims, in a post-Christendom milieu, may (Hirsch, 2006: 117-125) require a different style (Stetzer & Putman, 2006: 192-224) of leadership, than the leadership style that thrives in the Christendom era. Some well-founded criticism (Duin, 2008: 117-133; Roberts & Marshall, 2004: 31-163; Rima, 2002: 9-121) has been leveled at the Christendom style of leadership that is very similar to the North American business leadership model. This critique of current church leadership styles, as well as a review of missional leadership styles, is further expanded in the following section.

3.2.5 A Review of the Literature Concerning Leadership and Church Leadership Styles within North America

Perhaps one of the most helpful treatise on the nature of leadership required for missional ministry is MacIlvaine's (2009) dissertation. In this dissertation MacIlvaine presents a very clear thesis in which he states (MacIlvaine, 2009: 5-6)

“As this researcher began to explore potential hypotheses, I initially thought that senior leaders initiating *missional* change did it in a conventional way: set down a strategic plan, recruit leaders, cast vision, and move confidently in a *missional* direction. Early reading, however, suggested that this was not the way *missional* culture-change takes place.

On the contrary, the most important contributions in the literature suggested that *missional* change is quirky, non-linear, and generally precipitated by a crisis. While the “crisis-might-lead-to-missional-change” theme usually shows up in

missional texts, few authors seem to connect the dots that crisis is most likely *the* key that God uses to spark *missional* change.

Frost (2007: 217-241) has developed an extremely helpful overview of the crisis catalyst in missional momentum, which he terms “*liminality*”. It seems (MacIlvaine, 2009: 6-9) that crisis is both imperative, and invaluable, for the church leadership to move (Rendle, 2002:27-47) from a Christendom model of success driven paradigms to missional paradigm. MacIlvaine (2009:30-39) presents an excellent overview of the “crucible” model of leadership. In this model the leader is broken, shaped and prepared for leadership through the crucible of crisis. MacIlvaine (2009: 29-32) shows how this crucible theory has become a major leadership theory among secular leadership theorists. He also gives biblical examples (MacIlvaine, 2009: 34-38) of the crucible model of leadership preparation and leadership function, as well as examples (MacIlvaine, 38-39) from Church History. The shift from the Christendom model of pastoral leadership to the post-Christendom model of missional leadership is so radical, that for those ensnared in the former (Christendom) it will often take nothing short of some form of crisis (MacIlvaine, 2009: 39-48; Kotter, 1996: 30-66) to release the leader to change paradigms. The missional leadership paradigm is essential to transition (Bridges, 2003: 1-10) the Evangelical church in Canada from its current Christendom model to the missional model. Perhaps, as stated earlier, the crisis of the current rapid decline of many Evangelical churches across Canada may be the catalyst that moves Christian leaders to explore and embrace the missional model of leadership and church life. Roxburgh and Romanuk (2006: 12) express the distinction between the Christendom leadership paradigm, and the missional leadership paradigm, in Table 3:1 inserted below.

Table 3:1 Operating Models of Leadership

Pastoral	Missional
Expectation that an ordained pastor must be present at every meeting and event or else it is not validated or important.	Ministry staff operate as coaches and mentors within a system that is not dependent on them to validate the importance and function of every group by being present.
Ordained ministry staff functions to give attention to and take care of people in the church by being present for people as they	Ordained clergy equip and release the multiple ministries of the people of God throughout the

are needed (if care and attention are given by people other than ordained clergy, it may be more appropriate and effective but is deemed “second class”).	church.
Time, energy, and focus shaped by people’s “need” and “pain” agendas.	
Pastor provides solutions.	Pastor asks questions that cultivate an environment that engages the imagination, creativity, and gifts of God’s people in order to discern solutions.
Preaching and teaching offer answers and tell people what is right and wrong.	Preaching and teaching invite the people of God to engage the Scriptures as a living word that confronts them with questions and draws them into a distinctive world.
➤ Telling ➤ Didactic ➤ Reinforcing assumptions ➤ Principles for Living	
“Professional” Christians	“Pastoring” must be part of the mix, but not the sum total.
Celebrity (must be a “home run hitter”)	
“Peacemaker”	Make tension OK.
Conflict suppressor or “fixer”	Conflict facilitator.
Keep playing the whole game as though we are still <i>the</i> major league team and <i>the</i> major league players. Continue the mythology “This staff is the New York Yankees of the Church World.	Indwell the local and contextual; cultivate the capacity for the congregation to ask imaginative questions about its present and its next stages.
“Recovery” expert (‘make it like it used to be’)	Cultivator of imagination and creativity
Function as the manager, maintainer, or resource agent of a series of centralized ministries focused in and around the building that everyone must support.	Create an environment that releases and nourishes the missional imagination of all people through diverse ministries and missional teams that affect their various communities, the

Always be seen as the champion and primary support agent for every-one's specific ministry.	city, the nation, and the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.
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The issue of leadership (Herrington, Bonem & Furr, 2000: 1-15) is paramount to any shift of Canadian Evangelical churches away from the Christendom paradigm to the missional paradigm. To facilitate this change towards a missional leadership paradigm, the leader will need to adopt a systems (Senge, 2006: 341-403; Rendle, 2002: 49-75) perspective in which the church is seen as a living organism. The church is not a static entity that is unaffected by both the external environment and internal health mechanisms. This systems or “church as organism” perspective is vital because the move from Christendom church to missional church will (Hirsch, 2006: 217-241) move through liminality to greater cohesion in the form of *communitas*. The leader who is embarking on the missional journey with the missional community will apply all of the distinctives of the right hand side of Table 3:1 above. These “missional” distinctives reflect the missional leaders belief that the church is an organism, and thus (Lucas, 2004: 1-4; Jost, 2003: 1-17) a complex adaptive system. Within a complex adaptive system, collaboration (Bellinger, 2004) is most highly valued as opposed to cooperation. Cooperation (Bellinger, 2004) will become self defeating, whilst collaboration gives freedom of contribution to all parts of the organism that in turn contributes to the health of the organism, in this case, the Church, as per Ephesians 4:1-13.

Missional leaders who understand that the missional community is a complex adaptive system, will naturally (Lichtenstein *et al*, 2006: 2-12) gravitate towards a servant leader/relational (Greenleaf, 2004: 1-7) and non-hierarchical (Spears & Lawrence, 2004: 9-24) approach to ministry leadership. Lundy's (2002: 1-232) work on servant leadership is also helpful when reflecting on missional leadership. Whilst there is a plethora of books and journal articles discussing a wide range of leadership paradigms and leadership styles, the missional leader is well served by an approach (Fleming, 2004: 11-193) that supports and strengthens the notion of the missional community as a complex adaptive system. The missional leader can strengthen (Brady & Woodward, 2005: xi-xiv) personal leadership qualities by reading and absorbing the many (Covey, 2006; Maxwell,

2005; Kouzes & Posner, 2004; Covey, 2004; Chand & Murphey, 2002; Kotter & Cohen, 2002; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Maxwell, 2002; Lundy, 2002; Collins, 2001; Herrington, Bonem & Furr, 2000; Ruhe & Burleigh, 2000; Maxwell, 1999;) diverse perspectives on leadership theory and leadership practice. However, the missional leader will look to leadership development with a view (Fleming, 2004: 11-18) to how those enhanced leadership qualities strengthen the rest of the community in their call to accomplish the mission of God.

3.2.6 A Review of the Literature Concerning Discipleship within the North American Church Context

Matthew 28:19-20 renders for the reader a clear (Hendricksen, 2002: 999-1001) understanding that part of the task of the missional community is to make disciples (Blomberg, 1992: 431-432) from amongst all kinds of diverse people groups. How effective (Singlehurst, 2010: 97-105; Hunt, 2004: 251) have Canadian Evangelical churches been in accomplishing the task of discipleship? Judging by the rapid decline (Emberley, 2002: 10) indicated in chapter 1 of this thesis, not too effective. Dever (2004: 194-219) suggests that one of the nine marks of a healthy church is a concern for discipleship and growth. Bill Hull (2003: 205) suggests that a church can structure itself for disciple-making by establishing and following eight principles as listed below:

1. An intentional strategy
2. The Great Commission at the heart of ministry
3. Multiplication as a methodology
4. Accountability as a catalyst to obedience
5. The small group as the primary discipling vehicle
6. Apprenticeship in developing leaders
7. Leadership selection by gifts and character
8. Decentralization of ministry

These eight principles are extremely helpful in crystallizing a process through which a church can become a disciple-making church. Hull (2003: 206-220) unpacks each of these principles in more depth for the reader. A possible weakness (Stetzer & Putman, 2006: 48-49) of Hull's discipleship method, together with the church health method, is that they seem to miss the one crucial step that would work together with the church health and

growth elements to reverse the decline of the Canadian Evangelical church, namely to disciple for mission. Malphurs (2009: 19) exemplifies this missing step in his “Non Disciple, New Disciple, Growing Disciple” continuum, to which could be added the fourth phase, missional disciple. A disciple can be seen to have reached maturity when that disciple embarks on mission with God. The table (Stetzer & Putman, 2006: 48-49) below is extremely helpful in discerning this distinction of church health, discipleship for personal spiritual growth verses discipleship for mission.

Table 3:2 Operating Models of Leadership

Church Growth	Church Health	Missional Church
Members as inviters	Members as Ministers	Members as Missionaries
Conversion / Baptism	Discipleship	Missional Living
Strategic Planning	Development Programs	People Empowerment
Staff-Led	Team Leadership	Personal Mission
Reaching Prospects	Reaching Community	Transforming Community
Gathering	Training	Releasing
Addition	Internal Multiplication	Group Church Planting Multiplication
Uniformity	Diversity	Mosaic
Anthropocentric	Ecclesiocentric	Theocentric
Great Commission	Great Commandment	Mission Dei

The reader can immediately grasp how distinctive these three nuances of approach to ministry of the church are, especially in the realm of discipleship. The statement of Stetzer and Putman (2006: 49-50) is incisive for the reader who reviews these three differences with a view to their distinctive emphases:

Many leaders who call themselves missional focus on condemning church growth and church health. That is hardly a kingdom mentality. The reality is that each of these movements was blessed by God to help the church care about reaching the

lost (church growth) and become a holistic body (church health). The missional church builds on these things; it does not need to tear them down. Instead a missiological, discerning application of the eternal principles from each movement can and does help the missional church.

If the Canadian Evangelical Church is to reverse the current rapid decline discipleship is essential (Chester & Timmins, 2008: 111-125), but it needs to be discipleship towards maturity (Malphurs, 2009: 96-97), and maturity should be measured (Stetzer, 2006: 161-169) by, amongst other things (Malphurs, 2009: 105-117) the degree to which the disciple embarks on mission with God! One of the aspects of a sustainable discipleship model is the concept (Comiskey, 2003: 20-54) of Small Groups as a discipleship and leadership-training tool. It seems that modern practitioners prefer (Malphurs, 2009: 87-104; 2005: 371-392; Hull, 2004: 141; 2003: 221-249; Comiskey, 2003: 19-189) small group ministry as the best profile for maturing disciples. The trajectory of growth within small group ministry would possibly follow the path outlined in Malphurs (2009: 19) with the missional aspect added as a fourth dimension:

Nondisciple	New Disciple	Growing Disciple	Missional Disciple
Prebirth (unbelief)	New Birth (belief)	Maturity (growth)	Incarnational living (mission)

The challenge facing the Evangelical church in Canada is the same challenge (Malphurs, 2009: 21-26) for Western Europe and the USA, namely that the Evangelical church is in decline. Malphurs believes (2009: 26) that a strong and effective disciple-making program will address this decline. Malphurs is certainly on to something when he calls the church back to an intentional, strategic disciple-making ministry. However, the one possible weakness in Malphurs model is that he is still functioning within an attractional (Mittelberg, 2000: 11-19) ministry model rather than an incarnational, missional (MacIlvaine, 2009: 10) ministry model. In a sense it may be that Malphurs falls short of the fourth important component in the discipleship process and that is the missional component. It seems that the goal (Malphurs, 2009: 33-35) of this intentional discipleship

is maturity, which is a biblical goal (Matthew 28:19-20). However, within the Canadian Evangelical church context, maturity (Christlikeness) (Malphurs, 2009: 34-35) needs to be marked (John 20:20-22) by missional living. This missional component of discipleship needs to be woven into the entire discipleship process so that it becomes a part of the “DNA” (Stetzer, 2010) of the growing believer to such a degree that Canadian Christians equate maturity with a capacity to be Christlike amongst those who are without Christ.

3.2.7 Spirituality within the Canadian context

Canadians may be leaving the Evangelical church, but this does not mean (Emberley, 2002: 246-266) they are spiritually averse. Canadians are searching for spiritual meaning outside (Emberley, 2002: 246-268) of the Evangelical church. For this reason it may prove helpful to render a brief review of the literature concerning spirituality within the Canadian context since, as Coates *et al.* (2007: 1) points out: “In regards to social work, the area of spirituality is undergoing a resurgence of interest in Canadian social work literature and practice.” One of the key aspects of Canadian spirituality is the burgeoning (Kilgour, 2009) inter-faith ecumenicity that is driven by the influx of many different faiths to Canada. This inter-faith ecumenicity gives validity (Kilgour, 2009) to all religions and, thereby, affirms the notion that God (god or gods) is broadly defined and spirituality is the means (Graham *et al.*, 2007: 32-33) to tap into (Marvin, 2006) this God (god or gods) for beneficial (Kilgour, 2009) pragmatic outcomes.

Within Canada, spirituality often manifests itself (Emberley, 2002: 148-201) in the form of “fusion faith.” For many Canadians (Emberley, 2002: 148-149) this fusion faith syncretizes many different aspects of a number of different religious and spiritual traditions into a smorgasboard of personal and privatized belief. In this “fusion faith” the concept of “God” is far less important (Emberley, 2002: 149) than the well being of “spirituality”. It seems that the key aspect (Emberley, 2002: 246-266) of the Canadian spirituality market is the capacity to meet the perceived needs of the consumer. It is interesting to note that spirituality is presented by many theorists (Coates *et al.*, 2007: 1-349), and practitioners (Coles *et al.*, 1995: 1-217) in the health sciences, as a component of healthy living, and as a mechanism for recovery from at risk situations. Spirituality has

become a mechanism for self-betterment and serves to replace institutional religion (especially the Christian hegemony), and since it is designed for self-betterment (Coates *et al* 2007: 111-191), it takes the form that best suites the individual using it for personal rehabilitation or meaning. The literature concerning spirituality on the Internet is extensive and reflects the massive industry that spirituality in Canada has become. In the following few paragraphs we attempt to summarize and review some of the e-literature relating to spirituality in Canada.

David Kilgour (2009) is the member of Parliament for Edmonton, a city in the Province of Alberta. In his speech (2009) to the Presbyterian college in Montreal, Kilgour presents the ecumenical global prayer breakfast held in Washington as a model for spirituality in Canada. It is interesting that in this speech Kilgour (2009) presents faith of any kind, and spirituality in any form, as both valid and helpful. Kilgour presents the generic, formless faith conception seems to be more and more representative of the Canadian context as a greatly beneficial force in a world of materialism and greed. It is interesting that this speech is rendered to the Presbyterian college of Montreal, a once strongly Evangelical group in Canada that is now exploring and supportive of multi-faith and inter-faith initiatives. In Kilgour's speech, God is god to all, no matter which faith expression one holds to, as long as a person is spiritual, and their spirituality causes them to do good, Kilgour suggest that they are loved by God and are expressing the love of God. Quite what the Evangelical will do with the exclusivity of John 14:6 in such a context is an interesting and daunting challenge. However, Kilgour's speech (2009) serves to affirm that we are in a post-Christendom context in which the Evangelical church is a pilgrim people, living as exiles (Frost, 2007), in a foreign land.

For further information on some of these forms of spirituality one need only consult the Internet for information on Native Spirituality (National Defense, 2009), New Age Spiritism (Marvin, 2006), Nature reverence (Todd, 2008), spirituality and mental health (Koenig, 2009), Unification (Robinson, 2009b), Theosophy (Robinson, 2006), Islam (Elmasry, 2003), and many of the other religions and forms of spirituality listed in Table 3.3. The availability of so many different forms of spirituality and the capacity to blend many different forms of spirituality into a self-beneficent package is very appealing to

many Canadians, who (Emberly, 2002) are on Spiritual walkabout. This competition, in the realm of spirituality, is a great challenge to the survival of the Evangelical church, which is assessed (Bibby, 2004: 69-73) by many (Bricker & Wright, 2005: 78-89) in Canada to exist for itself with no real personal benefit to the average Canadian.

Within the Canadian context, spirituality imbibes many different forms, as indicated (Robinson, 2009a) in Table 3.3 below.

Table 3:3 Spirituality in Canada 1991-2001

Group	Membership, 1991	Membership, 2001	Percentage Growth
Large religious groups (over 100K):			
Muslim	253,265	579,645	+128.9%
Jewish	318,185	329,990	+ 03.7
Buddhist ¹	163,415	300,345	+ 83.8
Hindu	157,010	297,200	+ 89.3
Sikh	147,440	278,415	+ 88.8
Eastern Religions:			
Baha'i	14,730	18,020	+ 22.3
Jains	1,410	2,455	+ 74.1
Shinto	445	545	+ 22.5
Taoist	1,725	3,440	+ 99.4
Zoroastrian	3,185	4,955	+ 55.6
Eastern religions, n.i.e. ²	4,825	8,125	+ 68.4
Small religious groups (under 100k)			
Aboriginal spirituality	10,840	29,825	+175.1
Pagan	5,530	21,080	+281.2
Unity - New Thought - Pantheist	4,610	4,000	- 13.2
New Age ³	1,200	1,530	+ 27.5
Scientology	1,215	1,525	+ 25.5
Gnostic	765	1,160	+ 51.6
Rastafarian	460	1,135	+146.7
Satanist	340	850	+150.0
Unitarian ⁴	16,535	17,480	+ 05.7
Other non-Christian religions, n.i.e.	3,090	2,870	- 07.1

3.2.8 A Review of the Literature Concerning Systems Theory

Missional writers (Hirsch, 2006: 179-216) present the church as an organic system. This makes sense since the Bible presents (1 Corinthians 12:12-31) the church as a living body (Ephesians 4:3-6; Colossians 1:18). The relationship between Christ and culture was reviewed earlier in this literature review. At this juncture, and with an awareness of the rapidly changing Canadian macro-religious environment, it seems prudent to review some

of the vast literature (Gribbin, 2004; Gell-Mann, 1994) on complex adaptive systems, with a view to grasping the interplay between Canadian macro-environmental factors, and the Canadian Evangelical Church. Since the church is an adaptive system (Richardson, 1996) this has implications (Armour & Browning, 2000) for church leadership styles, as well as the process of transitions (Bridges, 2003) to new ways of functioning.

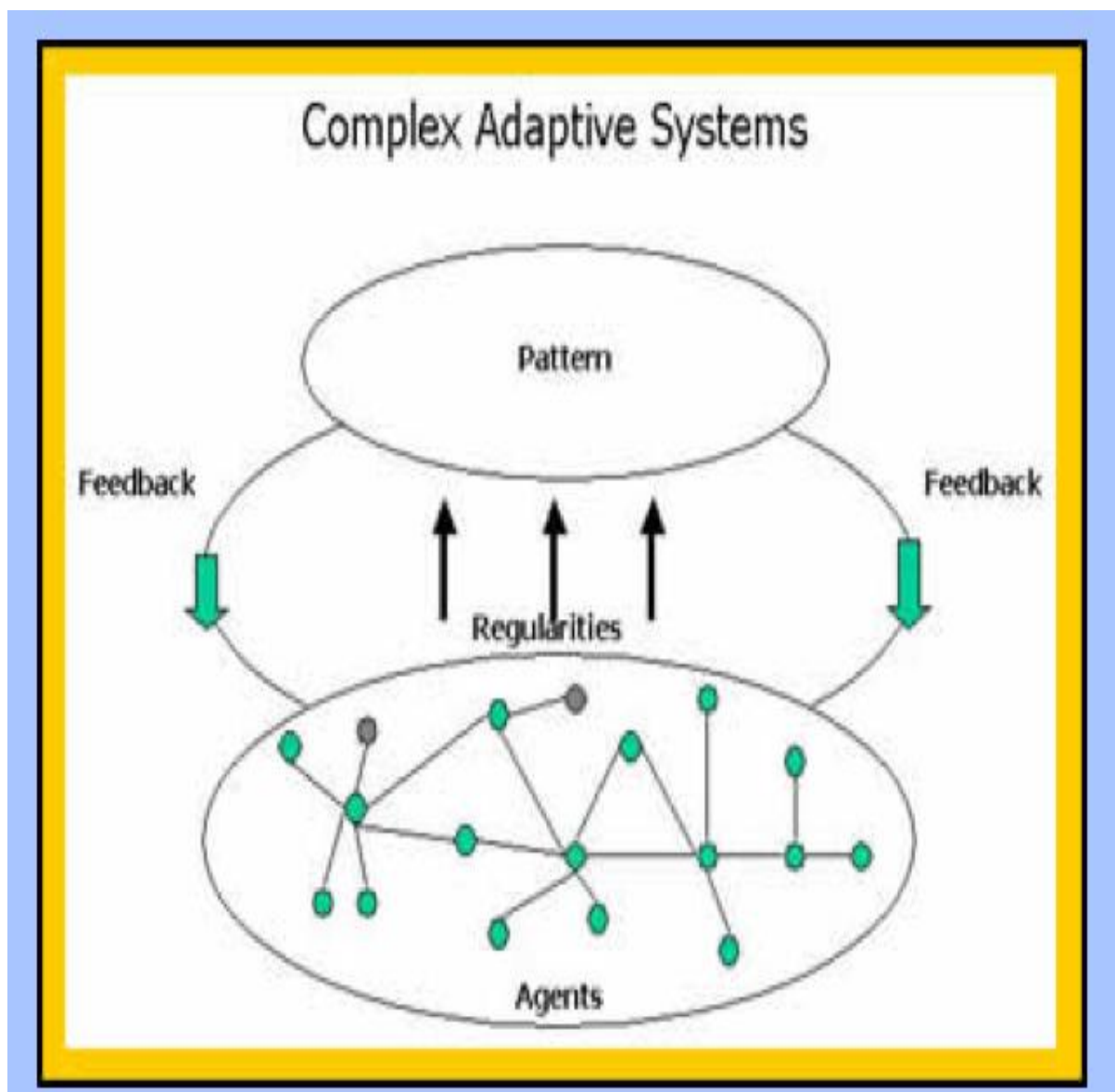
“A system is always taken to refer to a set of elements joined together to make a complex whole.” (Chapman, 2002: 29). Within systems thinking there are three (Chapman, 2002: 29) types of systems:

1. Natural systems. Studied by biologists and ecologists, amongst others. Examples include the human body, frogs, forests and catchment areas.
2. Engineered or design systems. These are artifacts that are planned to exhibit some desirable emergent properties under a range of environmental conditions. Some examples of engineered or design systems include a motor vehicle, a computer and nuclear power stations.
3. Purposeful or human activity systems. All institutions and organizations fall into this area. Some examples of purposeful or human activity systems include churches, schools, prisons, and hospitals.

Bellinger (2004) defines a system as “an entity which maintains its existence through the mutual interaction of its parts. The key emphasis here is one of “mutual interaction,” in that something is occurring between the parts, over time, which maintains the system. A system is different than a heap or a collection, mostly.” Also associated with systems thinking and systems functions is the concept (Bellinger, 2004) of “Emergence,” which Bellinger (2004) defines as “characteristics which can not be found as characteristic of any of the individual parts.” When thinking of the notion of emergence, the church as a complex adaptive system is comprised of many different parts that interact to maintain the system. “A *complex adaptive system* may be conceived as one that typically comprises a *large number of interacting parts*, is interactively complex, and is *self organizing*.” (Tan & Payton, 2010: 327). This conception of complex adaptive systems emerged (Fryer, 2010) from the growth of “complexity theory,” which maintains that the universe is full of systems, immune systems, weather systems, social systems etc and that these systems are complex and continually adapting to their environment, hence, complex adaptive systems. The

concept of complex adaptive systems is represented (Fryer, 2010) in Diagram 3.3, “Complex Adaptive Systems.” This systemic, mutual interaction of the many different parts within the system for the maintenance and strength of the system, seems to be the point of many New Testament passages concerning the church, passages such as Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 2:19-22; 4:1-16; Philippians 1:27-30; Colossians 1:18. When the system is healthy and functioning well in maintaining itself, it seems that missional outcomes emerge. As an example of mission emerging from a healthy system, one need only review (Kistemaker, 2002: 52-54) 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10; 3:6 – 4:12.

Diagram 3:3 Complex Adaptive Systems



In explanation of diagram 3.3 “Complex Adaptive Systems,” Fryer (2010) states:

The agents in the system are all the components of that system. For example the air and water molecules in a weather system, and flora and fauna in an ecosystem. These agents interact and connect with each other in unpredictable and unplanned ways. But from this mass of interactions regularities emerge and start to form a pattern which feeds back on the system and informs the interactions of the agents. For example in an ecosystem if a virus starts to deplete one species this results in a greater or lesser food supply for others in the system which affects their behaviour and their numbers. A period of flux occurs in all the populations in the system until the new balance is established.

Two important aspects of complex adaptive systems, and complexity theory, emerge (Lucas, 2006) for the post-Christendom – post-modern church of the 21st century. First, linear prediction has given way to a non-linear world and this means we cannot control the environment in such a way that we will produce expected outcomes. Second, in a complex adaptive system, “Diverse and integrated approaches to the problem are crucial. In many cases single approaches to the problem may lead to counter-productive results.” (Heghazi *et al*, 2009). The linear approaches/solutions (Kaizer, 2006; Borden, 2003) of modernist Christianity or Christendom do not take into account the complexity (Senge, 2006: 68-91) of both the church as an organism and the environment in which the church now finds itself. Barna (1990) had an intuitive conception of the need for the Evangelical Church in North America to grasp how radically her culture had changed, especially in the face of Christendom’s seeming unawareness of both the nature of the church as a Complex Adaptive System, and the systemic failure (Lucas, 2006) of the linear model of leadership and decision making. The most difficult aspect of systems thinking (Senge, 2006: 73) is transitioning from linear causality to circles of causality. A helpful tool that aids in modeling circles of causality is the i-See systems (2010) modeling software.

The literature on Complex Adaptive Systems is helpful in both describing and analyzing the complexity of the North American ecclesiological context. The transition from linearity to circularity is immensely beneficial. However, in terms of the conception of emergence, most authors argue that solutions emerge from the interactions of the agents within the system. This notion certainly seems plausible as described in the Systems literature.

However, emergence within Complex Adaptive Systems is plausible with one small caveat, namely, the Holy Spirit is the One who acts to bring health (1 Corinthians 12) and the One who gives expression and direction to the mission (Acts 13-15) when the system is healthy. The Evangelical Church in Canada proclaims Jesus as Lord and is indwelt by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13). The Holy Spirit (Oden, 2006b: 279-280, 286) is the key, and primary agent, that acts to define and direct the complex adaptive system known as the Evangelical Church in Canada, and more precisely the local churches that make up the Evangelical Church in Canada.

Chapter 4: The Missional Community of God

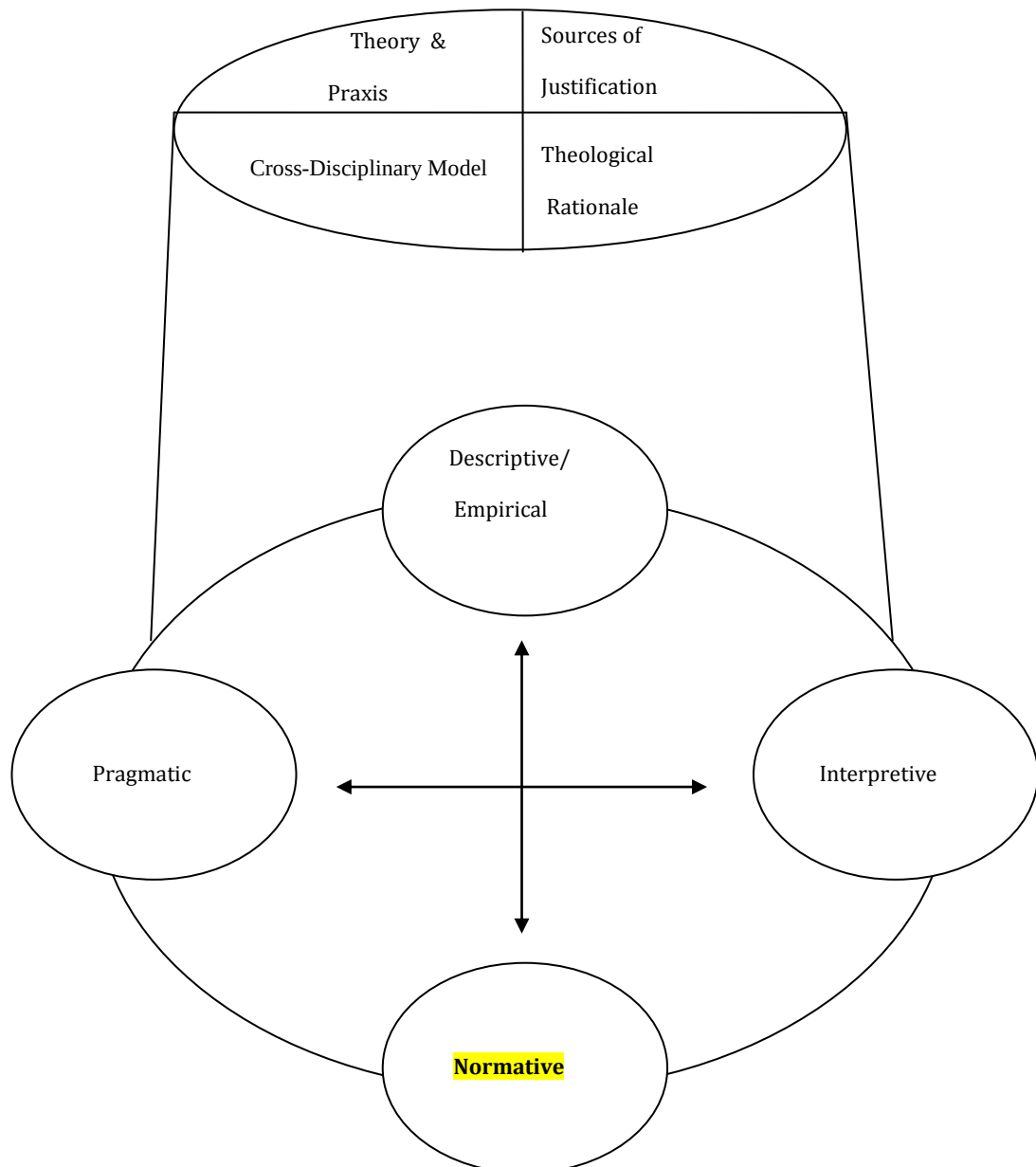
4.1 Introduction: The Why and How of a Biblical Theological, Normative (Basis Theory), Approach

The methodological approach for this thesis follows the four tasks of Osmer's (2010: 3; 2008: 4) hermeneutical spiral. This hermeneutical spiral comprises (Osmer, 2010: 3; 2008:4-175) the following four tasks, each of which is attended to in this thesis as follows:

1. *Descriptive-empirical*: What is going on? Gathering information to better understand particular episodes, situations, or contexts. (Chapter 1 of this thesis – “The Decline of the Evangelical Church in Canada.”)
2. *Interpretive*: Why is this going on? Entering into a dialogue with the social sciences to interpret and explain why certain actions and patterns are taking place. (Chapter 2 of this thesis – “The Delphi Survey” and chapter 3 of this thesis, “The Literature Survey.”)
3. *Normative*: What ought to be going on? Raising normative questions from the perspectives of theology, ethics and other fields. (Chapter 4 of this thesis – “The Missional Community of God.”)
4. *Pragmatic*: How might we respond? Forming an action plan and undertaking specific responses that seek to shape the episode, situation, or context in desirable directions. (Chapter 5 of this thesis – “Shaping a Missional Community in a Secular Context” and chapter 6, “Further Areas for Research.”)

These four tasks, that form Osmer's (2010: 3) hermeneutical spiral, are represented in Diagram 4:1 (Osmer, 2008: 11) on the following page. In this chapter we focus on the third of the four tasks, namely the “Normative,” (Osmer 2010: 3) in which we try to answer the question: “What ought to be going on?” This attempt to derive a normative component by which to correlate and compare meta-theory is common to much Practical Theological writing (Hendriks, 2004: 19-34; Browning & Reed, 2004: 75-98; Heitink, 1999: 101-123; Hiltner, 1958: 15-29) and as Osmer (2010: 3) points out, is common in the Practical Theological process. Another name for the normative aspect of the Practical Theology method is “Basis Theory” which is described as “the expounding of theological perspectives that are derived primarily from Scripture” (Parker, 2008: 12).

Diagram 4:1 Osmer's (2010: 7) Hermeneutical Spiral



This “normative” or “Basis Theory” will serve as a correlative and critique to the preceding chapters of this thesis as well as informing the model that is forged in chapter 5 of this thesis. The goal of this chapter, chapter 4, is that through the use of a Biblical Theological methodology (Mead, 2007: 121-167), a theological concept of a missional (Hirsch, 2007: 284-285) community will emerge. That is to say, how does God express and accomplish His mission through a redemptive community such as His chosen people, Israel (Kaiser, 2008: 84-97) or His Church (Kaiser, 2008: 343-366; Martens, 2007: 224). This chapter, utilizing a Biblical Theological methodology (Mead, 2007: 121-167), develops the Basis

theory material concerning missional (Hirsch, 2007: 284-285) community, the people of God on mission for God (Hafemann & House, 2007: 20-21). The term missional refers (Hirsch, 2007: 284) to a community “whose primary commitment is to the missionary calling of the people of God”. There are many (Mead, 2007: 124) different Biblical Theological methodologies. The variety in approaches to Biblical Theology arises, as Mead (2007: 123) points out, because: “we enter into conversation with the text from different perspectives”. In the section below the various approaches to Biblical Theology are set forth for the reader. A critique of each approach is also rendered. The last part of this next section motivates the *diachronic, multi-topic* approach as the methodology for the Basis Theory segment of this thesis.

4.2 Biblical Theology: Definitions and Methodologies

In this section I set before the reader some definitions of Biblical Theology. The definitions are rendered to assist the reader gain clarity on the nature of Biblical Theology as a discipline. After the definitions of Biblical Theology are rendered, the section moves on to describe the various methodologies related to Biblical Theology.

4.2.1 Definitions

It is important to attempt to define Biblical Theology because there are many perspectives on what exactly Biblical Theology is. Flowing from how one defines Biblical Theology, one must then determine how Biblical Theology is to be undertaken. Below three definitions of Biblical Theology are rendered, those of Mead (2007: 2), Childs (2002: 13) and Alexander, Rosner, Carson & Goldsworthy (2000: 3).

4.2.1.1 Mead

Mead’s (2007:1) definition is helpful in that it asserts that the goal of Biblical Theology is to understand the Bible’s theological message and the Bible’s themes – especially as this theology and those themes relate to humankind. A proper Biblical Theological method, according to Mead’s definition, should assist the researcher in addressing this question of how the Bible’s theme and the Bible’s theological message relate to mankind and thus may be helpful in analyzing the situation of the Evangelical Church in Canada to reflect God’s relation to all mankind. Mead (2007: 2) states:

As a working definition, biblical theology seeks to identify and understand the Bible's theological message and themes, that is, what the Bible says about God and God's relation to all creation, especially to humankind.

I shall explore Mead's definition of Biblical Theology further in this chapter with special reference to how God relates to humankind through His missional community.

4.2.1.2 Childs

Brevard Childs (2002:13) canonical approach encourages the researcher to view the Bible as a *whole* comprised of two parts, the Old and the New Testaments. This canonical (Childs, 2002: 11) approach is important in the development of the Basis Theory material because it encourages the researcher to take into account the material of both the Old Testament as well as the material of the New Testament. With Childs in mind one can comfortably ask: "Was Israel a missional community and is the church called to be a missional community?" Childs (2002:13) defines Biblical Theology as follows:

Biblical Theology is by definition theological reflection on both the Old and New Testament. It assumes that the Christian Bible consists of a theological unity formed by the union of the two testaments.

The Basis Theory material seeks to surface theological perspectives, as cited in the opening paragraph of this chapter. Childs supports the notion that there is theological unity formed by the union of the two testaments and so it seems plausible that a theological unity concerning the missional community of God will surface in both the Old and New Testaments.

4.2.1.3 Alexander, Rosner, Carson & Goldsworthy

The definition of Biblical Theology that is rendered by Rosner *et al.* (2000: 3) is one of the most comprehensive definitions of Biblical Theology. What is most striking about this definition by this team of erudite scholars is that it alludes to and supports the *diachronic* approach to Biblical Theology.

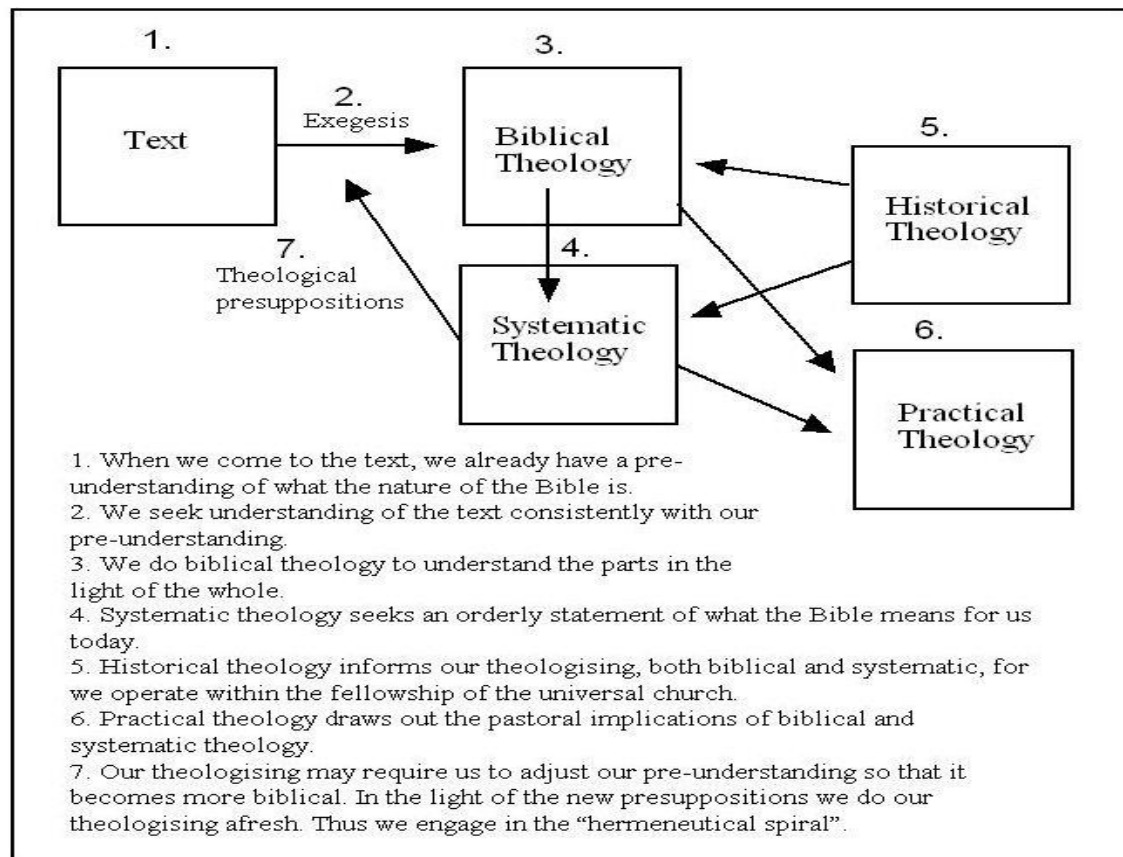
Biblical theology is principally concerned with the overall theological message of the whole Bible. It seeks to understand the parts in relation to the whole and, to achieve this, it must work with the mutual interaction of the literary, historical, and theological dimensions of the various corpora, and

with the interrelationships of these within the whole canon of Scripture.
(Alexander, Rosner, Carson & Goldsworthy, 2000: 3)

The diachronic approach that is utilized to develop the Basis Theory material of this chapter is an approach that looks at changes or developments over time as these changes and developments are recorded in the ongoing revelation of God's Word, the Bible (Goldsworthy, 2010). Within the *diachronic* approach that is utilized in the development of the Basis Theory material of this thesis, particular focus is placed on the missional community of God and how that missional community motif or concept developed through time within the Bible. Principles derived from the *diachronic* missional motif can then be weighed to determine how those Basis Theoretical principles apply to the modern Canadian context, especially in light of the concerns raised by the Delphi survey in chapter 2 and the literature review of chapter 3.

The Basis theory material of this thesis follows a diachronic approach along the lines of the definition above as rendered by Alexander *et al.* How Biblical Theology relates to the other disciplines in general and to Practical Theology specifically is illustrated in the diagram (Goldsworthy, 2010) following. This diagram highlights the idea that one can move from Biblical Theology directly to Practical Theology, and this linkage from Biblical to Practical theology is the approach for the Basis Theoretical material of this chapter. The diagram also alludes to the perception that there are times where the researcher can develop a Systematic Theology based upon a sound Biblical Theological approach. Whether or not one utilises a Biblical Theology to form a Systematic Theology and then out of a Biblically Theologically derived Systematic Theology one develops a Practical Theology, depends (Goldsworthy 2010) in large measure upon the approach to Biblical Theology that one employs. The approach in this thesis is to move directly from the data rendered by a diachronic Biblical Theology to the implications of this data for the Practical Theological endeavour. The use of any Systematic Theological treatise serves as a correlative to the data rendered by the diachronic Biblical Theological method, as outlined in diagram 4:2 (Goldsworthy, 2010) below.

Diagram 4:2 The Relationship of Biblical Theology to the Other Theological Disciplines (Goldsworthy, 2010)



4.3 Biblical Theological Methodologies

There are many different approaches to Biblical theology, and for the sake of clarity a broad overview of these approaches is given in the next section with special focus on the diachronic approach to Biblical Theology, since it is the diachronic model that is used in this chapter to develop the Basis Theory material.

4.3.1 A Brief Overview

Biblical theology is a specific approach (Childs, 2002: 13) to the revelation of God in the Bible and some preliminary definitions will be discussed later in this chapter. Biblical theology does not seek to develop a systematic approach (Mead, 2007: 11) to theology in which a topic is selected and then supported from a range of texts found throughout the Bible. A systematic theology method is valuable, and has a specific place within the field of Christian biblical scholarship. However, in a Biblical theology approach the Bible is viewed *diachronically* (Kaiser, 2008: 13) and the subject matter is thus allowed to unfold (Alexander, Rosner, Carson & Goldsworthy, 2000: 3) as the revelation of God progresses

throughout the Bible in space-time history. The diachronic method allows the reader to discern the primacy of specific topics as they emerge in the Word of God (Kaiser, 2008: 13). With a view to providing the reader with clarity concerning the *diachronic* approach, the various Biblical Theological methodologies (Mead, 2007: 121-167; Hasel, 1991: 28-114) are briefly outlined below.

4.3.2 Approaches to Biblical Theology

There are many approaches to Biblical Theology.

The diversity of approaches arises from a number of factors that relate to the Biblical scholars background and focus. It is helpful, according to Mead (2007: 123-124) to locate the approaches to Biblical Theology into three (Mead, 2007: 124) major groups – “**Content, Shape and Perspective**”. Within these three major groupings of Biblical Theology there subsist a number of sub-groupings as rendered by Mead (2007: 124) in a concise table as rendered on the following page:

Table 4:1 The Major Foci of Biblical Theology and their Particular Expressions

Major Focus	Particular Expression
<i>Content</i>	Systematic / doctrinal Cross-section / central theme / topics Story / Narrative
<i>Shape</i>	Tradition history Canonical authority Witness / testimony
<i>Perspective</i>	Existential Experiential Social Communal

In the section below, and building on Table 4:1 above, is a brief overview of each of the major foci mentioned in Table 4:1. This overview is then followed by a brief description of

each of the particular expressions within those major foci. The *diachronic* approach is rendered last since this is the method that will be utilized for the development of the Basis Theory material of this thesis.

4.3.2.1 Content Approaches

This approach (Mead, 2007: 124) seeks to describe and explain the Bible's theological content in terms of its connections with doctrinal concepts, central themes that emerge throughout the core of the biblical material, or the content of the primary story line of the Bible. Mead (2007: 124) highlights three key expressions within the major focus of "Content".

1. The connections of biblical content with *doctrinal* concepts
2. The development within the biblical content of a *central theme* or themes
3. The *primary narrative* or story line within the biblical content.

It is to these three expressions that I now briefly turn my attention.

4.3.2.1.1 Content Approaches - Doctrinal

The doctrinal approach to Biblical theology emerged because of the "close connection between theological interpretation of Scripture and the doctrinal systems of Protestant orthodoxy" (Mead, 2007: 124). Mead (2007: 125-127) lists and describes representatives of this Doctrinal approach as follows, Th. C. Vriezen (Outline of OT Theology – 1949), Alan Richardson (New Testament Theology – 1958), Donald Guthrie (New Testament Theology – 1981). Mead (2007: 126-127) highlights the concerns of a number of writers with regards to the Doctrinal approach to Biblical Theology. Mead states (2007: 126): "A traditional criticism of this approach is that it imposes a set of ideas that are external to its theology, rather than letting the categories arise from the Biblical text". The goal of this researcher in employing the *diachronic* Biblical theological method is to attempt to allow the categories of missional community to emerge from the Old and New Testament texts rather than imposing this theme onto the text. For this reason the Basis theory in this thesis does not reflect a doctrinal biblical theological methodology.

4.3.2.1.2 Content Approaches – Cross Section, Central Theme, Multiple Topics

Mead (2007: 129) describes this group of methods as ones that seek to get at the "inner structure" of the biblical canon – to identify a textually derived centre. These approaches reject a purely descriptive understanding of the Bible since it holds that: "If a form of unity

may be found in either testament or the whole Bible, then there is potential for a normative Biblical theology” (Mead, 2007:129). There is a strong desire within this method to discern and develop the connections between the Old and New Testaments (Mead, 2007: 129). We turn now to a brief description of each of these “Content Approaches” and a short critique of each approach.

4.3.2.1.3 *The Cross Section Approach:*

Hasel (1991: 47-60) renders a comprehensive description of the cross section approach. Hasel (1991: 47, 49-50) points out that Walter Eichrodt was the major proponent of this approach to Biblocal theology and that this approach achieved a cross section through the world of the Old Testament by making the covenant the centre. There is no doubt that covenant is a key and central theme in the Bible as a small sampling of the many verses on covenant clearly shows (Genesis 6:18, 9:9-17, 15:18, 17:2-21, 31:44; Exodus 2:24, 6:4-5, 19:5, Joshua 3:14, 17, 4:7-9, 18, 6:6-8; Judges 2:1-2, 20, 27, 1 Samuel 4:3-5, 18:3, 20:8, 16, 22:8, 23:18, 15:24, 23:5, 1 Kings 3:15, 6:19, 8:1-23; Psalm 25:10, 14, 44:17, 50:5, 16, 55:20, 60:1; Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:2; Luke 1:72, 22:20; Acts 3:25, 7:8, Romans 9:4, 11:27; 1 Corinthians 11:25; 2 Corinthians 3:6; 3:14; Galatians 3:15-17, 4:24; Ephesians 2:12; Hebrews 7:22, 8:6). But is covenant the one unifying theme that holds the Testaments together and gives theological unity to the canon? In critiquing this “cross section” approach championed by Eichrodt, Mead (2007: 130) is concerned that the over simplistic search for synthesis may sacrifice the wide range of diversity within the Biblical revelation, thus rendering a truncated or weakened biblical theological method. The depth of Eichrodt’s ground breaking scholarship (Mead, 2007: 130) led to many others attempting to develop a Biblical Theology based upon the unifying content of the Bible. This leads us to the next sub-focus of the content approach, the “Central Themes” approach to Biblical Theology.

4.3.2.1.4 *The Central Theme Approach*

Mead (2007: 131) does not give a great deal of attention to this approach. He does point out the following concerning this Biblical Theological method championed by Walter Kaiser in which Kaiser seeks to identify the promise-blessing theme as the key and major theme of the entire biblical revelation (*cf.* Kaiser, 2009: 1-529). It is surprising that Mead does not have a great deal by way of critique for the “Central Theme” approach of Kaiser. However, Hasel (1991: 53-54) renders a strong critique of this approach, his core concern

being that Kasier sacrifices the breadth of diversity within the Old Testament revelation for a focus on one key theme among many. It is difficult to see just one theme in the Bible as central above all others. It is for that reason that numerous other Biblical theologians have tried to describe the subject matter of the Bible without focusing on one theme or claiming to have grasped the cross section of either testaments religious idea. It is those “Topical” approaches (Mead, 2007: 132-134) that are now described and critiqued in the next section.

4.3.2.1.5 The Multiple Topics Approach

Mead (2007: 134) describes a number of Biblical Theological approaches that focus on at least two or more topics that emerge in the Bible. Mead (2007: 134) states: “Other scholars have expressed the basic structure of Old Testament theology in related pairs, such as Ronald Clements emphasis on law and promise.” Mead (2007: 133) also refers to Ronald Youngblood’s list of nine themes that to Youngblood constitute the heart of the Old Testament. These nine topics are, monotheism, sovereignty, election, covenant, theocracy, law, sacrifice, faith, and redemption. Within the multi topics approach Mead (2007: 133) also lists Werner Kummel for whom, Mead says, the New Testament theology has a two-fold message.

4.3.2.1.6 Content Approaches – Narrative & Story

This third content type approach focuses less on religious ideas or theological themes and more on the sweep of the larger biblical (or testamental) narrative (Mead, 2007: 135).

Mead (2007: 135-136) cites as examples of this approach the following scholars: George Lindbeck, Darrel Jodock, George Stroup and James Barr.

4.3.2.2 Shape Approaches

Within this approach to Biblical Theology the concern is with “the development of theological views and the forces that went into shaping the Bible’s theological witness” (Mead, 2007: 138).

4.3.2.2.1 Shape Approaches - Tradition History

The methodological question here is: “how the Bible presents its theology” (Mead, 2007: 138). A good example of the Tradition History approach is Gerhard von Rad’s Old Testament Theology which offered a compelling alternative to Eichrodt’s “more systematic and thematic presentation (Mead, 2007: 140). Mead points out (2007: 140) that von Rad “uses the notion of historical development as the key to identifying Israel’s theology”. Von Rad’s method, as Mead (2007: 141) states, “returned a sensitivity to the matter of continuing divine activity in history”.

4.3.2.2 Shape Approaches – Authoritative Canon

Brevards S. Childs is the major contributor to this area of Biblical Theological Studies (Mead 2007: 142). Child’s book, “*Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments*” is the culmination of Child’s thinking on a canonical approach to Biblical Theology (Mead 2007: 142). For Childs the primary goal of Biblical Theology is “to understand the various voices within the whole Christian Bible, New and Old Testaments alike, as a witness to the one Lord Jesus Christ, the selfsame divine reality” (Mead, 2007: 143). Meade also points out that “Childs seeks to recover a diachronic dimension within the canonical form grasping the depth of theological reflection among the different witnesses” (Mead, 2007: 143).

4.3.3 The Diachronic and Synchronic Approaches to Biblical Theology

Within this thesis the *diachronic* approach to Biblical Theology is employed. The goal of this *diachronic* approach to Biblical Theology is to determine how the concept of the missional community of God is both revealed and developed throughout the Bible. The researcher can employ either a *synchronic* approach or a *diachronic* approach to this section of the research process. Brief descriptions of each approach are rendered below. An explanation of why the *diachronic* approach is preferred for this thesis is rendered at the end of this section.

4.3.3.1 The Synchronic Approach to Biblical Theology (Goldsworthy, 2010)

In the *synchronic* approach (Goldsworthy, 2010) one may look at a particular prophet, book or corpus to look at synchronous events or things that happen at a certain time. Goldsworthy (2010) describes how the *synchronic* approach is different to the *diachronic* method in thaty the *synchronic* approach cuts across the progressive revelation to observe

what is going on at any given point in time. However, to understand (Goldsworthy, 2010) how the particular text under review in the *synchronic* approach fits within the entire Biblical revelation, one will need to employ the *diachronic* method. The synchronic approach is helpful when studying a particular book of the Bible or a specific series of synchronous events. For purposes of this thesis the focus is not on a specific book of the bible or even a series of synchronous events. The focus of this chapter of the thesis is the *biblical* motif of “missional community” and, how the Bible describes and develops the concept of “missional community” through time and history (*diachronically*).

4.3.3.2 The *Diachronic* Approach to Biblical Theology (Goldsworthy, 2010)

Hasel (1991: 71-79) has written extensively concerning G. von Rad and the *diachronic* approach to Biblical theology. For the purpose of this thesis we will utilize the description and definition given by Goldsworthy:

This refers to the approach that looks at the developments or changes over time. This is the “long-cut” approach. It is particularly important in understanding the dynamics of biblical revelation. We may trace a particular concept or theme through the whole process that may take us from (say) Abraham to Jesus and ultimately the consummation of the kingdom.

The *diachronic* approach to a Biblical Theology of missional community will track this motif of missional community from the beginning of the Old Testament through to the final book of the Bible, the book of Revelation.

4.4 The Missional Community of God in the Old Testament: A Diachronic Biblical Theology

As per Goldsworthy’s (2010) diagram, inserted earlier in this chapter, the goal in this section is to develop a *diachronic* Biblical Theology of missional community in a way that will shape and inform our Practical Theological reflection and outcomes. As Goldsworthy (2010) states in the notes section of his diagram, “Practical theology draws out the pastoral implications of biblical and systematic theology.” After the preliminary research in Chapter 1 into the question of the decline of the Evangelical Church in Canada a hypothesis was developed as follows:

The Evangelical church in Canada is in decline because it has lost sight of the missional, pilgrim nature of the church and instead of calling people to discipleship (followership) of the resurrected Christ it may have inadvertently become a chaplain to a society at odds with the claims of the risen Christ. In replacing the missional nature of the church with a chaplaincy role the church may have inadvertently sacrificed the missional focus given by the Risen Christ. This exchange of the missional nature of the church is for a focus driven by a Western Canadian society that does not grasp that their greatest need is for a redemptive relationship with the Risen Christ through His Word, His People and His Spirit.

The Biblical revelation unfolds progressively through time and history. It is for this reason that this study into the missional community of God begins in Genesis and ends in Revelation, since Genesis speaks of origins (Genesis 1:1) and Revelation speaks of the *eschaton* or completion of the redemptive work of God (Revelation 21-22). With this diachronic (through time and history) perspective in mind this thesis now seeks to trace the theme of missional community as it emerges in the first book of the Bible and spirals its way through the entire Bible until its completion in the book of Revelation. As Merrill (Zuck *et al.*, 1991: 7-8) points out, the Pentateuch is foundational to the biblical canon and are thus the source of theological enquiry. If the Pentateuch is the fountainhead of theological enquiry then it is germane to begin in Genesis, the first book of the Pentateuch, and therein seek to uncover the theme of missional community. Beginning with Genesis is proper, since if the theme of missional community exists in Genesis it may by virtue of its existence in Genesis, be a key theme that spirals its way throughout the Biblical revelation. Merrill asserts that the Pentateuch is the written expression of God's will for Israel, but that this written will exists within a larger context, namely God's "larger purposes in creation and redemption" (Zuck 1991: 8). What is Israel's role within God's larger purposes in creation and redemption? This question of the role of Israel in God's larger purposes of creation and redemption is the focus of the next few sections of this thesis.

4.4.1 Genesis: The Origins of the Missional Community

Allen P. Ross (Walvoord & Zuck, 1985: 15) points out that Genesis is the book of beginnings, and that as such it provides a dramatic account of the origins of the universe and of humanity as well as an account of the intrusion of sin into the world, the

catastrophic effects of its curse on the race, and the beginnings of God's plan to bless the nations through His seed. The blessing & cursing motif and the actions of humanity in community are central (Wenham, 2002: xxii) to the message of Genesis. Why was the call and election of Abraham and of Israel necessary? What was God's purpose in creating humanity, in calling Abraham, in forming a covenant people named Israel? These questions form the backdrop for our study of the Genesis material and beyond.

4.4.1.1 Genesis 1-11 and the Creation/Fall/ Blessing Motif

Genesis 1:1 begins with the statement, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth". This is, perhaps, one of the most sublime and theologically rich statements in the entire bible. Yet, for the purposes of this thesis, we cannot become immersed in the detail and minutiae of the first chapters of Genesis. The first eleven chapters of Genesis serve as a background (Wenham, 2002: 45) to the subsequent story of the patriarchs. These first eleven chapters also highlight that God, because of the disastrous consequences of sin, must intervene to restore the situation. It is helpful to note the progression within Genesis 1-11(cf. Wenham 2002: 50-51). This progression moves from Creation (Genesis 1-2), to the Fall (Genesis 3), to the terrible manifestations of the Fall in jealousy and murder (Genesis 4). After the horrific events of Genesis 4 the reader is given a small glimmer of hope in the expression (Genesis 5:24) of a man who "walks with God" and therefore does not die. This hope is soon dashed when the reader is returned to the dismal state of fallen humanity (Genesis 6:1-8) and God's global judgment in a cataclysmic flood (Genesis 6:8-9:1). In this flood, only the righteous Noah, his wife and his three sons and their wives are saved, as well as the animals that God designated to join Noah's family in the ark. Genesis 10-11 renders a genealogy, and then Genesis 11 also illustrates that fallen humanity is no better after the flood than it was before the flood, as evidenced in the Tower of Babel episode and the consequent judgment of God in the scattering of humanity and the confusion of languages. Indeed, the reader of Genesis is left with a very dismal outlook by the end of chapter 11. Even the righteous, evidenced in people like Noah (Genesis 9:20-29), also sin and also die. What hope is there for the future of humanity when sin is so pervasive, detrimental and destructive? As Wenham (2002: 51) points out; "Without the blessing of God the situation of humanity is without hope: that seems to be the chief thrust of the opening chapters of Genesis". We find the answer to the question "where will this blessing come from, and how will this blessing be mediated to fallen humanity?" in Genesis 12ff. Abraham is the answer to both of those questions (Reyburn & Fry, 1997:

271) because in Abraham we have the beginning of the story of the line chosen by God to bring blessing to the nations. How does the theological and historical development of the nation of Israel unfold in the rest of the Pentateuch? Are there developments and an expansion of the reader's understanding of the nation of Israel and the purpose of this nation as one progresses through the Pentateuch? A closer look at Genesis 12-50 may provide clarity and focus on Israel as a missional community of God.

4.4.1.2 Genesis 12-50 God's Missional Community Emerges

As explained in the previous section, the reader of Genesis is left with a dismal picture by the end of chapter 11. The sinfulness of humanity leads only to rebellion, sin and destruction. Genesis 3 and Genesis 6 have shown that God's judgment on sin does not stop humanity from sinning and the genealogies of Genesis 5 and Genesis 10-11 are very clear, man – due to the fall, lives and then dies. The beauty and goodness of Genesis 1-2 are quickly replaced by the darkness and reality of Genesis 3-11! However, there are subtle, quiet rays of hope as evidenced by those who “walk with God” (cf. Genesis 5:22-24; 6:9). Genesis 1-11 is preparatory for Genesis 12-50, both in terms of its structure and its content. Concerning the contribution of the structure of this narrative portion (Genesis 1-11) Matthews (2001: 49) points out that the literary order of genealogy-flood-genealogy has a parallel in the Sumerian King List in which the event of a flood interrupts the listing of the kings. This is significant because Matthews sees the biblical flood as an extended parenthesis within the genealogy of chapter 5, since Seth's genealogy finishes only after the flood with the death notice of Noah at Genesis 9:29. Matthews point is that: “Human sin, despite its damaging severity, cannot undermine the determined progress of God's salvation for his people. This is notably true for 11:10–26 since it points to Abraham, whereas chap. 5 is followed by the cataclysmic event of the flood.” (Matthews, 2001: 49). The person of Abraham is pivotal to God's redemptive purposes in the Genesis narrative as the quote in the above paragraph highlights. In terms of the missional community of God, how does Abraham fit since it can easily and quickly be pointed out that Abraham was not a community, but a man who walked with God? Yet, Abraham is the progenitor of God's missional community, Israel. In Genesis 12:1-3 God appears to Abraham and calls him to leave his land, family and people. This call of Abraham is significant (Wenham, 2002: 281) after the narrative flow of Genesis 1-11 in which God's good creation is marred by the Fall, and humanity's ongoing sin and God's consequent judgment of that sin. The significance of this call is seen in 12:1-3 in which God promises Abraham land and

descendents, and this promise becomes a promise that through Abraham “all peoples on earth will be blessed”. With the promise to Abraham of land and descendents the stage is set (Wenham, 2002: 282) for the coming nation of Israel. With the promise of blessing through Abraham to all the people of the earth the stage is set for the missional role of Israel, since it is through Abraham’s descendents that all nations of the earth will be blessed. God’s purpose in the face of the fall and the curse is to bring blessing first to Abraham, and then through Abraham, to bring His blessing to all people. Genesis 12:1-3 is a significant narrative portion in fact, “in this narrative the direction of the book changes” (Walvoord & Zuck, 1985:46-47). It certainly seems that at this juncture the tenor and direction of the book of Genesis changes dramatically (cf. Kaiser 2008: 62). The central role of Genesis 12:1-3 in the entire Genesis narrative cannot be overstated. God promises land and descendents to Abraham (Kaiser, 2008: 63) and promises that He will make Abraham into a great nation. How the community of Israel is formed and how this community becomes a blessing to all nations is now traced through the rest of the Genesis narrative and on into the Exodus narrative.

A great deal of significant revelation occurs from Genesis 12 to Genesis 50. For the sake of focus and clarity, the highlights germane to this study are summarized below, with a view to explaining how the community of Israel came into being and how Israel came to serve as a blessing to all people as the Old Testament missional (Merril 1991: 12) community of God. Kaiser (2008: 65) speaks to this concept of Abraham’s call and the consequent formation of Israel as God’s missional community when, concerning Genesis 12:1-3, he incisively states:

The text was so clearly a response to the needs of the swarming multitudes listed in the table of nations (chap. 10) and the multiplication of Shem’s line (chap. 11), that it easily could be classified as one of the first great worldwide missionary texts of Scripture. Thus far, the emphasis was on God’s word of blessing. There was a deliberate attempt to connect this new phase of theology with the pre-patriarchal emphasis. Five times God had promised his blessing in the short space of two verses, but Abraham was to be the focus of attention: he was to be a great nation, he was to have a great name, and he was to be blessed by God and by all people.... Interestingly enough, the actual realization of the

promise of nationhood would have to wait for several centuries until Israel was delivered from Egypt.

Here then, as Kaiser points out, is the first intimation and promise that God is going to form, from Abraham's seed, a lineage that would become a great nation. This nation, Israel, would in turn bring great blessing to all the nations.

4.4.1.2.1 *The “prototypical” story in Genesis 32:22-32 (Alexander, Rosner, Carson & Goldsworthy, 2000: 581-586)*

The previous section focused on Abraham and God's promise to Abraham to make his name great and through Abraham to create a nation that would be a blessing to all nations. This nation would take on the name “Israel”, but where did this name “Israel” come from and what is the significance of this name “Israel”? Is it correct to propose that it is through the nation Israel God would bring blessing to all nations? Genesis 32:22-32 renders adequate response to these questions as Alexander *et. al.*(2000: 581-586) point out:

The prototypical nature of this story is indicated in several ways: 1. it describes the origin of the name ‘Israel’; 2. it declares that all future generations of Israelites will identify themselves with it through an eating custom (32:32); 3. it is twinned with the story of Jacob's reunion with Esau which is similarly ‘typical’ expressing Israel's future tense relationship with Edom; 4. it takes place at the crossing of a river, and is thus connected with all the other water events which mark significant encounters with God in the Bible (the crossing of the Red Sea, the coming of water from the rock, the crossing of the Jordan at the entry into the promised land, and of course the baptism of Jesus); 5. it is treated as typical of Israel's relationship with Yahweh by Hosea (Hos. 12:2-5). So what does this story say about Israel from a ‘biblical-theological’ perspective? . . . The whole history of Israel can be conceived in this way. . . . For ‘Israel’ is always inclined to be ‘Jacob’, the deceiver and idolater who, instead of submitting to God, tried to obtain power over him. . . . This is the paradox at the heart of Israel's life. God is both their enemy, fighting against them, and their Saviour, striving to bless (cf. Is. 63:9-10).

This prototypical story encapsulates the nature of Israel as a missional community. It enables the reader to grasp where the name “Israel” comes from and what this name means.

It highlights the truth that to truly be the Israel of God one must trust God for blessing rather than human effort and human ingenuity. The Israel of God as a missional community refers to those who hunger for God and their wrestling with God gives them a new boldness as Wenham (2002: 94) points out in his commentary on this portion of Scripture:

And the transformation of Jacob into Israel, the father of the nation, that takes place here is momentous. The man who cheated his brother out of his blessing is now concerned that he is about to meet that brother again and prays to God not to leave him in the lurch. “The night attack, the life and death struggle, and finally the unexpected conclusion, the gracious blessing and bestowal of a new name, that is ... God’s answer to the deceiver Jacob ... , whereby God’s sovereignty and faithfulness to his promise despite all human unworthiness is demonstrated. Jacob is no longer the strong victorious controller of the divine but Israel who is totally dependent on God’s grace and lame” (de Pury, TZ 35 [1979] 18).

It is helpful to see the diachronic progression from Genesis 12 to Genesis 32. In Genesis 12:1-3 Abraham is given the promise of Land and Descendants. God also promises Abraham that all nations of the earth will be blessed through him and through his descendants. Here now in Genesis 32:22-32 the narrative progresses to Jacob and the change of his name to Israel, as Wenham (2002: 94) states in the previous quote, this is a demonstration of God’s sovereignty and faithfulness to his promise to Abraham. How will the nation, Israel (*cf.* Merrill, 1991:8), emerge from the progeny of the patriarch Jacob, now named Israel? The way Israel the nation is formed is a profound (Lasine, 2000: 658) development in the biblical narrative and in the flow of biblical history. How does a nation, Israel, emerge from a promise made by God to a patriarch named Abraham and then through God’s wrestling with Jacob to rename him Israel? This question is answered in the next part of the narrative flow and progression of biblical history, to which we now turn our attention.

4.4.1.2.2 *The Joseph Narrative (Genesis 30:22-50:26)*

The Joseph narrative (Hamilton, 2000: 606-607) is extensive and pivotal in the diachronic development of Israel as the missional people of God. This section is a summary of Hamilton’s (2000: 606-607) excellent article on the account of Joseph in the Genesis

narrative. Hamilton renders five headings concerning the life of Joseph and we follow his outline closely in this summary of his work as follows:

Introduction (Hamilton, 2000: 606). Here Hamilton points out that the account of Joseph's life apart from his birth (30:22-24) and first seventeen years (37:2) is set in Egypt. Hamilton proposes that this geographical setting performs three functions as follows:

1. It provides a parallel to the first section of Genesis (1-11) and also marks off the beginning and end of Genesis, which take place outside of Canaan. The middle section of Genesis (12-36) is set in the land of Canaan.
2. This setting outside of Canaan shows that the God of Israel is active beyond the borders of Israel.
3. The Egyptians of Joseph's time were different to those of Moses' time. The Egyptians in Joseph's time express no brutality or oppression. These favorable references towards the Egyptians should restrain those within the community of faith from demonizing or developing xenophobic attitudes towards those outside the community of faith.

Connections with Genesis 12-36 (Hamilton, 2000: 606).

Hamilton (2000: 606) posits that "Joseph's life is different in three ways from those of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as follows:"

1. Joseph experiences no theophanies since God speaks only once in the Joseph narrative and when He does speak it is to Jacob (Genesis 46:2-4).
2. Unlike his ancestors, the Joseph narrative does not give any detail of Joseph committing any egregious sin. Hamilton (2000: 606) points out that Joseph "is the one person in Genesis that flees from sin (ch. 39)." Hamilton feels that this is significant because in Genesis 12-36 the greatest threat to the promises of God lies in the behavior of the bearers of the promises, the patriarchs. In contrast, the greatest threat to the promises in Joseph's time is the devastating famine that has spread from Canaan to Egypt to could decimate God's people in such a way that will never become a great nation.
3. The third point that Hamilton (2000: 606-607) raises concerning the Joseph narrative and certainly the most significant for this thesis is his statement that: "more than his forefathers Joseph fulfills the divine promise that God's chosen people will be the means of blessing to the non-chosen. The only non-covenant

person to be blessed because of the presence and gifts of an individual from the faith community is Potiphar (39:5). Furthermore, when Joseph, upon identifying himself to his brothers, mentions that God sent him to Egypt to “save lives” (45:5), we know that these include Hebrew lives and Egyptians lives.”

This places the Joseph narrative at a very significant juncture (Wenham, 2002: 344) within the Pentateuchal material. The Joseph narrative stands as a model (Roop, 1987: 273-274) for the nation of Israel within the land of Egypt and later amongst their pagan neighbors.

Connections with Exodus (Hamilton, 2000: 607)

Joseph is connected with the Exodus narrative because he is mentioned in a significant way in the first chapter (Exodus 1:1-8). However, Hamilton (2000: 607) sees Joseph's connection to the Exodus material in a theological vein too when he states:

“The ominous threat to the well being of God's people in Joseph's day is a famine. The threat to the well being of God's people in Moses' early days is a Pharaoh who is intent on either eliminating the Hebrews or brutalizing them. In both cases the survival of the chosen family is in jeopardy. During the first crisis the instrument of God's salvation is Joseph; during the second, it is Moses.

Joseph and the Messianic Line (Hamilton, 2000: 607)

Hamilton points out that the messianic line misses Joseph and runs through Judah. It is for this reason that Joseph's name does not appear in the messianic genealogy of Matthew 1:1-17.

Joseph and Providence (Hamilton, 2000: 607)

The aspect of Providential oversight in the life of Joseph is significant in the narrative and is overtly referred to twice by Joseph himself in Genesis 45:6-8 and Genesis 50:19-20. Joseph is clear (Wenham, 2002: 432) in these passages that God used the evil actions of fallen human beings to accomplish His perfect will and plan. This theological driveshaft of God's sovereign oversight (Roop, 1987:273-276) of His chosen people will be a recurring theme throughout the biblical text of the Old Testament, but for now it is helpful to see it in relation to Joseph. The missional community of God can trust that a Sovereign God (Klooster, 2001: 1131-1132) is working all things out for His perfect will and plan.

4.4.1.3 Summary of Missional Community within the Genesis Material

Genesis is the foundational book (Strassner, 2009: 13) of the Pentateuch (Merril, 1991: 7) and all the progressive revelation (Merril, 1991: 7-10) that follows. As such it is pivotal to understanding the development and purpose of the missional community of God (Merrill, 1991: 30).

4.4.1.4 The Contribution of Genesis to the Diachronic Development of Missional Community

Genesis gives the origin of the missional community and God's Sovereign plan for the missional community, Israel (Merrill, 1991: 30). Genesis also helps the reader to understand the plan of God to bless all nations through Abraham and his descendents (Genesis 12:1-3) and that the trajectory of God's dealings with the patriarchs all centre around this missional aim of blessing to the nations through the descendents of Abraham (Merrill, 1991: 30).

4.4.2 Exodus: The Missional Community forged into a Holy Priesthood

In the book of Genesis we reviewed the emergence of the Missional community through the Abrahamic promise of Genesis 12:1-3, and the outworking of many of the key aspects of this promise in lives of Jacob and Joseph, as pivotal to the development of Israel as the missional community of God.

4.4.2.1 The Missional Community as a Holy Priesthood

The Exodus narrative is helpful in understanding the diachronic development of God's missional community as God's holy priesthood (Martens, 2007: 242). The Exodus narrative is strongly rooted (Osborn & Hatton, 1999: 12-14) in the preceding Genesis narrative. However, the Exodus narrative is also pivotal (Janzen, 2000: 15) in the diachronic progression of Israel as God's chosen people, His missional community. Merrill (1991: 30-31) summarizes the progression from Genesis to Exodus beautifully as well as highlighting the pivotal importance of Exodus by pointing out that it is the Exodus event, culminating in the covenant at Sinai, that formalized God's choice of Israel as His missional people, His holy nation. The pivotal role of Exodus in the diachronic development of the missional community motif is best evidenced in the section known as the "Eagles' Wings Speech" (Kaiser 1990: 414). In this section, "the most theologically significant in the book of Exodus" (Merril 1991: 30) the reader is alerted to the fact that

Israel, God's "treasured possession was destined to be a royal priesthood composed of the entire congregation. Israel, the firstborn of the nations, was given the status of sonship, delivered from Egypt, and made ministers on behalf of themselves and the nations." (Kaiser 2009: 93). At her inception as a nation, at the foot of Mt. Sinai, Israel was alerted to her purpose in an extremely significant way. Yahweh relates to Israel through His servant Moses on the top of Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19:3) the following key aspects of her nationhood:

1. Yahweh delivered the people of Israel in a miraculous way from the hands of the Egyptians (Exodus 19:4).
2. Yahweh carried the people of Israel with loving and Providential care, much like an Eagle carries its young when learning to fly, to bring the nation unto Himself (Exodus 19:4)
3. Yahweh calls upon Israel to obey Him and to keep His covenant (Exodus 19:5) and if they do this they will be His own special treasure from amongst all peoples of the earth, since all the earth belongs to Yahweh.
4. Israel will serve all the nations of the earth as Yahweh's special, holy, kingdom of priests.

So many elements of this speech provided information that was both vital and new to the identity of Israel as God's covenant people! Stuart (2007: 422-424) deftly highlights the missional character (Merril, 1991: 32-35) of the Israel community, whilst at the same time clearly illustrating the linkage this missional community has to the promise given to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3. The diachronic (through time and history) development of Israel as a missional people who are called to fulfill the missional promise inaugurated with Abraham, of blessing to all nations, now comes into full purview (Martens, 2007: 248-249). Israel was redeemed from Egypt but not only for her own ends. Indeed, she is first and foremost a special people of God. Secondly, Israel is a people for the world, to represent God to the world and to bring the world to God. Through Israel it is possible that all nations may find the blessing of a relationship with God, a relationship that Israel was now privileged to experience and that God desired would be mediated to all nations through His holy nation, Israel (Martens, 2007: 249-250). This missional partnership is also a blessing (Martens, 2007: 252-253) for Israel, as mere humanity they become partakers and partners in the Divine plan of redemption. In reflecting on this missional partnership between God and Israel, another aspect (Martens, 2007: 244) concerning Israel

as the missional people of God emerges in the Exodus narrative, namely the conception of Israel as Yahweh's "holy nation" (Exodus 19:6). This interweaving of holiness and mission present a great challenge in terms of a theology of engagement (cf. Theron & Lotter, 2008: 1-24) for God's missional community. How is holiness both defined and lived out within the missional community of God, this royal priesthood, this holy nation? Further, it seems as though holiness is intrinsically tied into the missional identity of God's people. Can the missional community truly be missional if they are not at once also truly holy? It is true that God gave the Law to Israel on Mount Sinai and that this Law was to forever define Israel as the people of God (Merril, 1991: 36). The Law, as given to Israel (Exodus 20:1-23:19) would define Israel as the people of God if they gave their best efforts to living out the precepts of this Law (cf. Janzen 2000: 14). The question of what it means to be a "holy nation" (Exodus 19:6) remains highly pertinent for the missional community of God, especially since it appears that the extent of mission is tied to the concept of holiness (Kaiser, 2009: 97). The covenant with Abraham so much earlier in Genesis 12:1-3 was unconditional (Alexander *et al.* 2000: 367-372) and as such meant that God would bring blessing to Abraham as an unconditional promise. Unlike Abraham, though, for Israel as God's Holy nation, the promise of blessing seemed to be conditional since in Exodus 19:5 God states that if Israel obeys Him they will be His own special treasure from amongst all the peoples of the earth? Yet, their position as God's chosen people is not conditional, rather their missional effectiveness to the nations may be (Kaiser, 2009: 97). The nation needed to live in holiness, yet exactly what this means is defined in Leviticus 19, where the call to be holy (19:2) is expounded (Hafemann & House, 2007: 244) in a series of statements about ethical behaviour." It is to Leviticus, the book that follows Exodus in the structure of the Pentateuch, that we now turn to further develop our understanding of the missional community of God as it is progressively (diachronically) revealed in the Bible.

4.4.2.2 The Contribution of Exodus to the Diachronic Development of Missional Community

Exodus assists the reader in understanding how the nation of Israel, through the Exodus and the giving of the Law, is forged into God's holy nation to serve in a mediatorial fashion to the whole world (Janzen, 2000: 14).

4.4.3 Leviticus: Living as a Holy People for the Sake of Mission

In Exodus we confronted (Exodus 19:5-6) the call of God to Israel to obey Him and to be His Holy nation. In our study of Exodus 19:1-6 we ascertained that in order to facilitate missional effectiveness, the nation of Israel would need to strive to be a holy people. Yet, exactly what it means to be a “holy people” was not yet fully defined and so it is hoped that Leviticus will aid in defining what it means to be a “holy people”. It appears that holiness is a major theme in the book of Leviticus (Kaiser, 2009: 97; Rooker, 2001: 46). The difficult question (Kaiser 2009: 527) that is raised, as one reads through the book of Leviticus is how the missional community of God might, in an ongoing and sustained fashion, actually be seen to exemplify the holiness of God? What form (LaSor *et al*, 1996: 82) does such holiness take? Does holiness imply total separation from the world and if so, how then does Israel become a blessing to all nations by reaching out to be a nation of priests to all nations, to represent God to humanity and in turn to represent (Berkhof, 1996: 373) sinful, fallen humanity to God? Rooker (2000: 46) affirms that holiness is the central theme of the book of Leviticus and that this holiness was to be demonstrated by Israel if they were to serve as a nation of priests, distinct from other nations and yet able to represent God to those nations through their holy living. Rooker (2000: 46) highlights the need for Israel, as the missional community of God, to demonstrate holiness. However, it seems safe to assume that members of the Israelite community will sin from time to time, and thereby diminish the demonstration of holiness within the missional community. This concept of sin within the community leads to a central component of the holiness of the missional community, namely, atonement (Kaiser, 2009: 103-106). When demonstrable holiness amongst the people of Israel failed atonement for sin (Erickson, 2007: 822; Berkhof, 1996: 374) was the prescribed recourse. Leviticus 19 (Martens, 2007: 243) gives a series of ethical behaviors that define demonstrable holiness. These ethical behaviors contribute to the demonstrable holiness of the missional community of God and thereby enable the nation of Israel to be a witness to all the nations of the earth (Martens, 2007: 244-245). The ethical behaviors mandated in Leviticus 19 are listed in the table below for the reader. One key aspect the reader will notice in Table 4:2, is how comprehensive and detailed these ethical requirements are and how they touch on every part of life (Contesse & Ellington, 1992: 283).

Table 4:2 The Commandments in Leviticus 19

Verse	Commandment
(19:3)	Honor your father and mother
(19:3)	Observe the Sabbath rest.
(19:4)	Do not make idols or put any trust in idols
(19:5-8)	Sacrifice a peace offering in the prescribed (proper) way
(19:9-10)	Leave the gleanings of your harvest for the poor and the immigrant
(19:11)	Do not steal, lie, or deceive one another
(19:12)	Do not swear falsely by the Lord's name
(19:13)	Do not defraud or rob your neighbor
(19:13)	Do not hold back the wages of a hired man overnight
(19:14)	Do not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block in front of the blind
(19:15)	Do not show partiality or favoritism; judge fairly
(19:16)	Do not spread slander and do not do anything to endanger your neighbor's life
(19:17)	Do not hate your brother in your heart
(19:17)	Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in his guilt
(19:18)	Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against any Israelite, love your neighbor as yourself
(19:19)	Keep Yahweh's decrees
(19:19)	Do not mate different kinds of animals

(19:19)	Do not plant your field with two kinds of seed
(19:19)	Do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material
(19:20-22)	Regulations concerning immorality
(19:23-25)	Regulations concerning horticulture and harvesting upon entry into the Promised Land
(19:26)	Do not eat any meat that still has the blood in it.
(19:26)	Do not practice divination or sorcery
(19:27)	Do not cut the hair at the sides of your head or clip off the edges of your beard.
(19:28)	Do not cut your bodies for the dead or tattoo your body
(19:29)	Do not make your daughter a prostitute or the whole land will turn to prostitution and so be filled with wickedness
(19:30)	Observe the Sabbath and revere the Lord's sanctuary
(19:31)	Do not consort with mediums or spiritists – they will defile you
(19:32)	Rise in the presence of the elderly and show them respect and thereby revere God
(19:33-34)	Treat immigrants well and love them as though they are native born Israelites
(19:35-36)	Do not use dishonest standards but use honest scales and honest weights
(19:37)	Keep all my decrees and all my laws and follow them

These ethical prescriptions were given to define (Keil & Delitzsch, 2002: 600) the people of Israel, and through that clear definition to enable the people of Israel to be a blessing to

all the nations of the earth (Dockery, 1998: 47). It is important to note that these ethical prescriptions are undergirded by the driveshaft of love (Cate, 1972: 90), love for God and love for one's neighbor. It is not too much of a stretch to state the Israel's witness to the nations and blessing of the nations subsisted not so much in her distinctive ethical mores' as in the love that was to undergird those mores' (Rooker, 2001: 250). The missional community of Israel is defined by her ethical lifestyle and can truly be a blessing to all nations when, in obedience to God and love for God and her neighbor she lives out that ethical peculiarity (Rooker, 2001: 250-251). The missional community is also distinctive in its access to the wonderful but costly gift of atonement (Keil & Delitzsch, 2002: 584). This expiation of sin through atonement serves as a further witness to the nature and character of a Holy but also merciful God (Merrill, 1991: 56-60). When the people of Israel live out their high and holy calling through a godly and ethical lifestyle, they truly represent God to the nations and thereby fulfill the priestly role to which they were called in Exodus 19:5-6 (Martens, 2007: 242-247). When the people of Israel either individually or corporately fail to live out a holy lifestyle there is the recourse of atonement, in which they make sacrifice for sin (Kiuchi, 2000: 156).

4.4.3.1 Leviticus Contribution to the Concept of Missional Community

Leviticus presents the next phase in the diachronic development of the missional community, namely: The missional community is to be a holy community, with a demonstrative holiness that alerts Israel's neighbors to her distinctiveness as Yahweh's people and calls Israel's neighbors to a holy and merciful God (Boyce, 2008: 72).

4.4.4 Numbers: The Missional Community Must Move Forward by Faith

Hebrews 11:8 informs the reader that it was by faith that Abraham left his own country and his own people to go to a land that God would show him. It seems that this faith motif, as a defining feature of the missional community of God, is now highlighted in the sequence of events that unfold in the book of Numbers (Archer, 1998: 265).

36:13

4.4.4.1 The Promises to Abraham and the Book of Numbers

Hart (2000: 156) picks up the diachronic development of the missional community in a wonderful way when he directly ties the book of Numbers to the promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3. He concludes his brief synopsis on the promises to Abraham and the theology of Numbers by stating:

So the book of Numbers continues the story of the outworking of God's promises to Abraham, analyzing both Israel's tendency to unbelief and, over against this, God's faithfulness to his promises.

The faithfulness of God to the promise of descendants in Genesis 12:1-3 is evident in the massive number (Numbers 1:46) of Israelites that are numbered in the census here at Sinai (Kaiser, 2008: 108)! However, the one aspect of the promise to Abraham that is yet to be fulfilled is the promise of land. It is in this two-fold promise of land and descendants that God anticipates the formation and function of His missional community – the nation of Israel, as Merrill (1991: 60) poignantly states:

Israel's occupation of Canaan, then, is to be seen as a stage in this process of claiming all creation for the Creator. Canaan is a microcosm of the earth, a *pars pro toto* that lay under the control of wicked, anti-god forces that must be overcome before Israel could enter into her rest. Thus the act of election and redemption by which Yahweh brought His people out of Egypt and the encounter at Sinai by which they became His priestly servants required, for their fulfillment, a geographical framework in which they could exhibit the meaning of their covenant status and from which they could engage the nations of the world in their ministry of reconciliation. Like the Tabernacle, Canaan would be the focal point of Yahweh's residence among men, the place where His sovereignty would find historical expression through His specially chosen people.

If Genesis sets the stage for the development of the missional community through the promise given to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3), and Exodus describes for the reader how Israel became a nation of priests called out to serve God (Exodus 19:3-6), and Leviticus (19:2-4) describes how this nation of priests is to be a holy people as a missional community, then Numbers describes (Merrill, 1991: 59) how this missional community is

to engage the world from within the geographical framework of the land of Canaan (Numbers 13:2). The threats to the success of the missional community arose both from within and without. From within (Merrill, 1991: 61) the threats to the missional community occurred in the form of the people's faithlessness and apostasy. Threats from without (Boyce, 2008: 201-231; Archer, 1998: 269-270) arose in the form of King Balak of Moab and Balaam of Pethor. These two incidences, the faithlessness at Kadesh Barnea (Numbers 13-14) and the Balak / Balaam attack (Numbers 22-25), are explored more in depth in the section following – since these two incidences yield (Keil & Delitzsch, 2002: 706-707; 758-793) important (Bellinger, 2001: 228) normative paradigms for the missional community of God.

4.4.4.2 Kadesh Barnea and the Internal Threat of Faithlessness to the Missional Community (Numbers 13-14)

By the time the reader encounters Numbers 13, Israel stands at the brink (Duguid and Hughes, 2006: 168) of entering the Promised Land. Keil and Delitzsch (2002: 706) render a helpful overview to the incident at Kadesh and point out that Israel's unbelief leads to a momentous judgment of God. The incident at Kadesh Barnea is significant because the people of Israel stood on the verge (Elwell, 1988: 1256) of receiving and fulfilling (Merrill, 1991: 59-61) the promise of land given to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3. The promise of descendants was already fulfilled in that the people of Israel were numerous (Archer, 1998: 265). The capacity for Israel to be a blessing to the nations lay in her ability (Merrill, 1991: 61) to operate as a holy nation within a specific and well-defined geographical region. To fail to enter Canaan and establish the cultic centre of the nation around the Tabernacle and the uniqueness of the nation around the cultus and the casuistry would be to greatly diminish the very missional nature of Israel as a holy nation of priests who were mandated to bring blessing to the whole earth (Merrill, 1991: 60-63). This incident is important for the missional community in that it signals the motivation of God's people to fulfill their God given mission, namely, faith in the promise, power and Sovereign plan of almighty God (Martens, 2007: 225-253). The failure to respond to the call to possess the land that Yahweh had already given meant that this faithless generation lost the blessing of entering the Promised Land. This blessing, instead, passed to their children who did take possession of the land (Schultz & Smith, 2001: 43).

4.4.4.3 Balak and Balaam: External Threats to the Missional Community

The defeat (Huey, 1998: 58) by Israel of the Amorites and Bashanites caused (Merrill, 1983: 241) Balak, the King of the Moabites great concern. In response Balak devised a plan through which he hoped to outwit (Smick, 1988: 252) the God of Israel, whom Balak understood to be responsible for the great success of the Israelite conquest thus far. Balak's plans was a simple one (Merrill, 1998: 57-58), hire a famous Mesopotamian Seer named Balaam, and have him curse Israel in the name of their own God so that He, Israel's mighty God, would defeat His own people in battle. The plan, however, backfired (Woods & Rogers, 2006: 319) because of God's faithfulness to His covenant people. Instead of cursing the people of Israel, Balaam could only proffer blessing (Numbers 22:36 – 24:25). Tragically, the story does not end at this juncture, as Woods & Rogers (2006: 319) point out:

Later, perhaps seeking to restore his shattered image among the Midianites, he precipitated his own ruin by counseling them to seduce Israel degenerate idolatry, thus imperiling their relationship with the Lord. Delivered from this nefarious plot also, the people were instructed to take vengeance on Midian (ch. 25). When this sentence was later executed, Balaam ignominiously perished (ch. 31), his wickedness providing warning for future generations.

Another important dimension (Hart, 2000: 156-159) that the reader confronts in the Numbers narrative is that even though the missional community may fail to fulfill its mandate because of faithlessness and apostasy, God remains faithful to His promise.

4.4.4.4 Numbers Contribution to the Concept of Missional Community

Numbers advances the diachronic development of the missional community of God by highlighting the truth that the missional community must move forward by faith (Merrill 1991: 61-62). When the missional community is faithless, God remains faithful to His missional purpose and thus the providential protection of His people.

4.4.5 Deuteronomy: The Missional Community Called to Loving Obedience, but Destined to Fail!

Deuteronomy consists (Kaiser, 2008: 115; Archer, 1998: 272) of Moses final sermons to the nation of Israel. Deuteronomy takes a sermon form because Moses is not simply restating (Myers, 1987: 281) the law given at Sinai; rather he is enjoining (Archer, 1998:

272) the application of this law in the hearts and consciences of the people of Israel as they enter the land of Canaan. God's missional community, Israel, is about to enter the Promised Land and so (Archer 1998: 270) Moses laid the responsibility for the preservation of the Israelite theocracy upon the conscience of each individual citizen. The Principles of Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy contains a number of key principles (Archer, 1998: 273), highlighted in Table 4:3, that remind Israel of her distinctive nature as she is about to enter the Promised Land. As Table 4:3 highlights, the core principle of Israel's missional life in the Promised Land is to live in a covenantal relationship of love with the One True God, through a life of demonstrative holiness.

Table 4:3 Principles of Deuteronomy

PRINCIPLES OF DEUTERONOMY	
Spirituality of God	4:12, 15, 16
Uniqueness & Unity of God	4:35, 39; 6:4; 7:9; 10:17
Relationship of love between God and His covenant people	4:37; 7:13; 33:3
Love for God the dynamic principle of the believer's life	6:5; 7:8; 10:12, 15; 11:1, 13, 22; 13:3; 19:9; 30:6, 16, 20
Idolatry to be totally shunned	6:14, 15; 7:4; 8:19, 20; 11:16, 17, 20; 13:2–12; 30:17–18
Live as a holy people	7:6; 26:19; 28:9
Faithfulness rewarded; violation punished	Chaps. 28–30
Retain and obey the revealed truth from God “Remember and forget not”	9:7

Deuteronomy continues (Merrill, 1991: 63-64) the diachronic development of the

missional community of God because it calls upon the nation of Israel to obey the commandments of God from the heart (Wright, 1996: 2). Table 4:3 above crystallizes the core principles of the relationship that should exist between the people of Israel and the God of Israel. This table highlights the distinctiveness of Yahweh and the distinctive love He has for the people of Israel and the distinctive love Israel was to have for Yahweh! The challenge of Moses to the nation of Israel is apparent in the outline (Archer, 1998: 271) of the book of Deuteronomy as rendered in the section following. Deuteronomy, by its name in the original Hebrew, links this book to the words of Yahweh (Rofé, 2002: 1). Deuteronomy also “begins with immediate references to the “land”, “fathers”, “promise” and “seed” to establish a rhetoric of continuity with historical narrative of the Pentateuch (O’Dowd, 2009: 20-21). Deuteronomy continues the diachronic development of the missional community because it is the rendition (Kaiser, 2009: 114) of Moses’ passionate challenge to the people of Israel on the verge of the Promised Land. Contextually, it comes after the other four books of the Pentateuch and “serves both as the completion of the Torah and as an introduction to most if not all of the former or earlier prophets: Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings – also called the historical books by some” (Kaiser, 2009: 114). Historically, it sits at an exciting and critical juncture on the trajectory of the promise/fulfillment scheme from Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 through to the anticipated partial fulfillment of that promise on the banks of the Jordan as anticipated here in Deuteronomy and actuated in Joshua – and, theologically (Kaiser, 2009: 114), perhaps even on to 2 Kings. It is also important, contextually, to see the covenantal (Kaiser, 2009: 114; Wright, 2006: 2) focus of Deuteronomy, which reflects the pattern of the second-Millennium treaties between the great king and his subjects (Kaiser, 2009: 114) and which involved the following parts that match the flow of Deuteronomy (Wright, 2006: 3)

- (a) *Preamble*, identifying the speaker and addressees (1:1-5)
- (b) *Historical prologue*, relating significant events in the relationship between the parties (1:6-4:49)
- (c) *General stipulations*, outlining the broad terms of the treaty (5-11)
- (d) *Detailed stipulations*, the specific requirements of the imperial state on its vassal (12-26)
- (e) *Blessings and curses*, as sanctions and motivation for observing the treaty (27-28)

(f) *Witnesses* (cf. 30:19; 31:19; 32)

In addition, the treaties usually contained some instructions for the storage and public reading of the treaty document, such as those found in Deuteronomy 31:9-13, 24-26.

This treaty structure of Deuteronomy, as outlined above by Wright, does not simply apply (Kaiser, 2009: 114; Wright, 2006: 3; von Rad, 2005: 219-231; Merrill, 1994: 27) the secular paradigm for a vassal treaty but expands this treaty structure into a rich theological (Wright, 2006: 3; Von Rad, 2005: 219;) tapestry.

4.4.5.1 Deuteronomy and the Predicted Failure of the Missional Community

The reader of Deuteronomy is struck by the that fact that Israel, as the missional community of God, will experience failure (Millar, 2000: 163) far more than they will succeed to be a blessing to all nations. As highlighted in an earlier section, Deuteronomy calls the missional community to loving obedience to the commands of God and yet, “Moses believes that the standards he preaches are ultimately beyond the reach of Israel; therefore he regards them as only interim measures” (Millar, 2000: 163). Deuteronomy, thus becomes pivotal (Kaiser, 2009: 114; Brown, 1993: 13) for the Old Testament rendition of God’s missional community, since the course of their “‘ethical journey’ is charted in the rest of the Bible” (Millar, 2000: 161) but at “several points in the book (e.g. chs. 4, 29-31), the outcome of the journey upon which Israel has embarked is anticipated.” (Millar, 2000: 161). Deuteronomy is so pivotal in the missional profile of the people of Israel that Kaiser (2009: 114) states: “Martin Noth regarded Deuteronomy to 2 Kings as an original work that attempted to write a history of Israel from Moses to the exile and interpret it from the vantage point of theology”. Whether or not Deuteronomy to 2 Kings is the work of one author is beyond the scope of this thesis although this author would strongly contend for the Mosaic authorship (Alexander, 2004: vii; Merrill, 1994: 21-22) of Deuteronomy as a prophetic / theological document). Deuteronomy anticipates (Schreiner, 2007: 73-76) the failure and consequent judgment of the people of Israel even as it stipulates and calls for heartfelt obedience. Perhaps this is the chief purpose of Deuteronomy, as Schreiner (2007: 76) points out: “God’s saving promises will, therefore, not be fulfilled through the Sinai covenant, but will be realized in the new covenant.” The rest (Schreiner, 2007: 76) of the Old Testament, in recording the subsequent history of

Israel, merely highlights the failure, with a few exceptions, of Israel to effectively fulfill their call as the missional people of God. It is to the rest of the Old Testament material that this thesis now turns in the following section.

4.4.5.2 The Contribution of Deuteronomy to the Diachronic Development of Missional Community

Deuteronomy, as the fifth book of the Pentateuch, is more than just a restating of the law. It is a series of sermons (Kaiser, 2008: 115; Archer, 1998: 272) given by Moses to the people of Israel with a view to their loving obedience of the commands of God within their new Promised Land. However, Deuteronomy serves to remind the reader that although Israel is called to serve as God's obedient and demonstratively holy, missional community, Israel will fail (Millar, 2000: 163) to fully accomplish this mandate. Deuteronomy alerts the reader to the need to look beyond Israel for the accomplishment of the mission of God (Schreiner, 2007: 76). This theological tapestry is designed (Von Rad, 2005: 223) to strengthen and challenge the missional community as they enter into the Promised Land, and from that geographical staging area, fulfill God's call that through Israel all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Hafemann, 2007: 45-49)!

4.4.6 Post-Pentateuch Diachronic Development of the Missional Community

The Pentateuch lays a strong foundation (Merrill, 1991: 8) for the concept of a missional community called by God to serve as a nation of priests within the Promised Land, with a view (Merrill, 1991: 60) to bringing blessing to all nations. The Pentateuch alerts the reader to the truth that there are threats to the missional community both from within (Numbers 13-14) and without (Numbers 22-25), but the greatest threat facing Israel's ability to serve as a blessing came from her own stubborn heart of unbelief (Merrill, 1991: 87). The degree to which the nation walked by faith, and through this faith obeyed Yahweh, is the degree to which (Merrill, 1991: 87) she was then able to fulfill her missional call to be a blessing to all nations. With this backdrop of the theology of the Pentateuch in mind, this thesis now turns to review Israel's function as a missional community throughout the rest of the Old Testament.

4.4.7 Israel's Effectiveness as Missional Community in the Old Testament

The Pentateuch establishes (Merrill, 1991: 15-16) the origin and purpose of the nation of Israel, namely to serve as a nation of priests to bring blessing to the world. However, the final book of the Pentateuch alerts the reader to God's expectation (Schreiner, 2007: 73-74) that Israel will falter in its fulfillment of this purpose and that God will again, at some point, need to supernaturally intervene to accomplish His mission to and for the world. The post-Pentateuch material serves to show that "the old covenant did not produce a circumcised heart in most of the people, just as Moses indicated would be the case in the book of Deuteronomy" (Schreiner, 2007: 76). In Joshua, Israel remains faithful (Schreiner, 2007: 76) to the Lord in the process of conquest of the Promised Land, however, by the time of the Judges the nation has slipped considerably (Wolf, 1991: 379-380). Within Judges there is the ongoing cycle of sin, God's covenantal judgment, the repentance of the people and God's gracious raising up of a deliverer (Schreiner, 2007: 76; Wolf, 1991: 380). The book of Judges closes with Israel in disarray (Satterthwaite, 2000: 183) and with the Philistines posing a significant threat to Israel's hold on the land promised to them by God. The great theme (Bergen, 2001: 34-41) of the books of 1 and 2 Samuel is the distinctive difference between the kingship of Saul and the kingship of David as Bergen (2001: 34) points out:

The subplot revolving around the person of Saul also supports and enhances the story of David. His primary function is that of a foil, providing a vivid contrast between his own life and that of David. Saul is first portrayed as a bad shepherd; David, as a faithful shepherd; Saul is a king such as the nations have; David is a king after Yahweh's heart; Saul disobeys the Lord repeatedly throughout his career; David, only once. When confronted, Saul confesses his sin only begrudgingly; David, without hesitation.

Saul, like Israel, starts with promise but because of his hard and rebellious heart misses the blessing of God and loses his kingship to a man after God's own heart (Schreiner, 2007: 76)! Saul had great potential to lead Israel to fulfill God's missional call to be a blessing to all nations, but like Israel, because of sin, he failed (Schreiner, 2007: 76). The great tragedy of Saul's failure lay not only in Saul's own disobedient heart, but also in the motive of Israel to place him as king in the first place, as Satterthwaite (2000: 179) highlights:

It appears rather that what is criticized in 1 Samuel 8 – 12 is a request for a king made for the wrong reasons. The people's motives are laid bare in 1 Samuel 8:19-20, where they repeat their request in expanded form: 'We want a king over us. Then we shall be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles'. Their main interest in the king is as military leader. This form of request retains some of the wording of Deuteronomy 17, but with a very different overall sense: Israel's king was meant to be different from other kings, not a point of similarity with other nations; and military prowess was not among the attributes required of him. It is understandable, then, that Samuel later accuses the people of failing to trust God (10:18-19; 12:6-12). Perhaps the people find such trust too demanding and see the king as a way of finding security without having to meet God's requirements.

After David, Solomon reigned over Israel and Israel reached her zenith (Schreiner, 2007: 76). Tragically, though, the seeds of her destruction were already growing and ready to bear poisonous fruit (Satterthwaite, 2000: 182). Solomon forsook (Schreiner, 2007: 76) the first commandment and turned aside to other gods and in this action he represented the inclination of the nation as a whole. After Solomon's death, the nation was divided into two kingdoms, Israel under Jeroboam and Judah under Rehoboam (Satterthwaite, 2000: 182). The kings in the Northern Kingdom (Israel) abandoned Yahweh (Schreiner, 2007: 76) and failed to obey Him. The kings of Judah were intermittently obedient or disobedient (Schreiner, 2007: 76) until finally Yahweh judged (Schreiner, 2007: 76) both the Northern and Southern kingdoms by sending Israel into exile in Assyria in 721 B.C. and Judah into exile in Babylon in 586 B.C. The rest of the history of Israel and the writings of the prophets' point to Israel's ongoing failure to obey the Torah, even when a remnant is returned to Judah at the end of the Babylonian exile (Schreiner, 2007: 76-77). The prophets also emphasize that there is a New Covenant that will supersede and also fulfill the Old Covenant of Israel (Schreiner, 2007: 78).

4.4.7.1 The Contribution of the post-Pentateuch Material to the Diachronic Development of Missional Community

The Old Testament record develops diachronically, through time and history, and seeks to enable the reader to grasp that Israel had rare moments in which she was able to fulfill the

call of God upon her to be a missional community. God's call to Israel (Exodus 19) to be a blessing to all nations required demonstrative holiness (Leviticus 19) together with obedient faith (Numbers) and genuine heartfelt commitment to the Torah (Deuteronomy). The rest of the Old Testament highlights (Schreiner, 2007: 73; Satterthwaite, 2000: 182) that throughout her history Israel was unable to fulfill most, if any of these requirements! In the section following we focus on the New Testament information concerning the Church as the missional community of God, redeemed through the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus at the cross of Calvary, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, sent by the risen Christ after His victorious ascension into the heavens! Having observed the failure of Israel to fulfill the call of God upon her to be a blessing to all nations, the focus now moves to the New Covenant and God's new missional community, as defined in the New Testament (Schreiner, 2007: 77-80).

4.5 The Missional Community of God in the New Testament: The Culmination of the Diachronic Biblical Theological Approach

The diachronic Biblical Theological approach to researching the Old Testament material related to God's missional community is extremely helpful because the Old Testament material covers (Bock, 1994: 11) at least a thousand years or more of history. Within the Old Testament, the revelation of God's plan developed progressively through time and history. The data that emerged from the Old Testament study in the previous section concerning missional community, was both profound and challenging and the results of that study are again summarized here in point form for the reader:

1. *Genesis*: God, in Genesis 12:1-3, called Abraham to be a blessing to all nations and promised blessing through Abrahams descendents. Genesis unfolds how Israel came into being to fulfill this promise of God to bless all nations.
2. *Exodus*: God, in Exodus 19, reminds Israel that He carried them as on eagles wings and that they are, because of God's call and special care for them, to serve as a nation of priests to bring blessing to all nations.
3. *Leviticus*: God, in Leviticus 19, called Israel to live a life of demonstrative holiness and thereby to show herself a distinctive people of God and thereby to call other nations to a similar life of holiness with its consequent blessing from God.

4. *Numbers*: God, in Numbers 13-14, deals with Israel's rebellion with judgement and reminds the people of Israel that, as a missional community, they are to live by faith.
5. *Deuteronomy*: God, through the final speeches of Moses, calls Israel to obey from the heart whilst at the same time recognizing that they will not obey and that they will turn away because of their hard and rebellious hearts.
6. *Joshua to Malachi*: The rest of the Old Testament recounts for the reader the ebb and flow of Israel's ongoing failure and their sin, God's judgment, their repentance, and their restoration, a cycle that is prevalent throughout so much of the Old Testament.

The reader emerges from the Old Testament with a realization (Motyer, 2000: 581-586) that there is a need for God to provide a Messiah, and through the Messiah to provide a New Covenant. The Old Testament prepares the reader for a Savior (Grenz, 2000: 326-353) who alone can fulfill the promise of blessing to the nations that was made to Abraham. The revelation of God in the Old Testament developed progressively over an extended (Bock, 1994:11) period of time. However, this is not true of the New Testament in which the entire corpus was developed over a relatively short period of time, approximately fifty years (Bock, 1994: 11). Thus, the New Testament material is surveyed as it is rendered in the canon, beginning with the Gospel of Matthew and culminating in the book of Revelation with a view to gleaning the missional data extant in the New Testament. The contention concerning the theology of the New Testament is that it is essentially a missionary theology (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 35). There is great continuity (Kaiser, 2009: 303; Ladd, 1993: 27-28) between the material of the Old Testament and the New Testament, especially since Jesus fulfills (Schreiner, 2007: 96-100) both the prophecies of the Old Testament and the Law of the Old Testament. However, God's plan to bless the nations is ongoing in the New Testament for "the NT continues the narrative begun in the OT. It picks up the story of salvation from the OT, where God promised to bless the whole world through Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 3:15; 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:4-5; 17:4-8, 19; 18:18-19; 22:17-18; 26:3-4; 28:14-15; 35:12-13)." (Schreiner, 2007: 41). Whilst there is great unity and continuity between the Testaments with respect to the missional community of God, it is also true (Martens, 2007: 250) "that methodologies of Israel and the church for implementing that mission apparently differed." How did the New Testament church differ as the missional community of God? How did the New Testament missional community differ from the Old Testament missional

community in the fulfillment of God's call upon them to bless the nations? These questions inform the research in the sections following.

4.5.1 The Missional Community in the Gospels

The Gospels serve as a continuation of the Old Testament as Schreiner (2008: 121) points out:

When we read the Gospels, and indeed the entire NT, we see that the view of God is grounded in the OT. The NT writers build upon the foundation laid in the OT Scriptures, where God's sovereignty, uniqueness, and mercy are explicated, and therefore he deserves and demands that all human beings give themselves unreservedly to him.

The mission of God is clearly (Schreiner, 2008: 129) seen in the Fatherhood of God as presented in each of the Gospels. In fact, Thompson (2000: 71-86) boldly states that Jesus emphasis on God as Father must not be severed from Jesus mission, and from the promise that an inheritance belongs to those who repent and obey God as their Father (cf. Schreiner, 2008: 129). The mission of the Lord Jesus Christ became (Martens, 2007: 251), in Matthew 28:19-20, the mission of the church, and then, how this mission unfolded through the church is further described (Martens, 2007: 251) in the book of Acts. The church, as missional community, faced (Marshall *et al*, 2004: 69-75) certain questions and challenges that threatened to undermine its effectiveness as a missional community. These questions and challenges are addressed (Lowery, 1994: 243-470) in the rest of the New Testament writings known as the epistles. Finally, the mission of God has a terminus, an end point and this end point is described and detailed (Achte-meier *et al*, 2001: 555-587) in the book of Revelation, the final book of the Christian canon in which God's ultimate victory over sin and Satan is accomplished and His blessing to humanity is forever secured. With this brief overview in mind, our attention turns to the missional community in the Gospels.

4.5.1.1 The Missional Community in Matthew

"If the Gospel of Matthew was designed as a manual of instruction, the inclusion of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) would suggest its use as a tool for mission. Catechetical instruction is to serve the church's missionary expansion." (Hedlund, 1991: 153). The Gospel of Matthew is placed first in the New Testament corpus and "according

to the citations found in early Christian writers, was used more than any of the other gospels.” (Guthrie, 1996: 28). Matthew is quoted extensively because it serves an important function as a hinge between the Old Testament and the New Testament (Achtemeier *et al*, 2001: 89). “Readers of the Gospel of Matthew find here a portrayal of Jesus with deep roots in the OT together with branches that clearly embrace the church that grew out of Jesus’ own ministry to restore Israel.” The Gospel of Matthew roots the life of Jesus in two of the grand and central figures of the missional community of the Old Testament, namely Abraham and David (Matthew 1:1). Matthew, however, is also esteemed as the Gospel of the church (Achtemeier *et al*, 2001: 89) since there is within this Gospel a definite focus (Achtemeier *et al*, 2001: 90) on church matters such as discipline (18), liturgical practices (6:9-13; 26:26-30) and mission (28:16-20). Within Matthew there is a movement (Achtemeier *et al*, 2001: 93; Guthrie, 1996: 28) from a very particular focus on Israel (Marshall, 2004: 96) to a universalist focus on the whole world, the same focus that God presents in Genesis 12:1-3 and the blessing to all nations through the descendents of Abraham. This movement from particular to universal is seen in the structure of the contents of Matthew as follows:

4.5.1.1.1 The Structure and Contents of Matthew

The Gospel of Matthew functions (Achtemeier *et al.*, 2001: 91) as a “Greco-Roman biography” and thus includes the following expectations (Achtemeier *et al.*, 2001: 91):

- a focus on Jesus public life, organized either chronologically or topically (or both),
- indications concerning how and why Jesus would have been regarded as one who deserved biographical treatment,
- a commitment on the part of author to hold in abeyance the temptation for wholesale creation of events,
- an overall interpretive aim, indicating the cause-and-effect relations among the events that make up the narrative, and
- a presentation of Jesus and his behavior as exemplary for the Gospel’s audience

This biographical structure is important (Achtemeier *et al.*, 2001: 93-94) to the theological driveshaft that undergirds the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus was indeed worthy of a biography because He, as the Son of God, was fulfilling (Guthrie, 1996: 28) the Messianic prophecies

of the Old Testament. More than this, though, Matthew shows how the Lord Jesus transitioned (Achte-meier *et al.*, 2001: 94) from the Old Testament missional community of Israel under the Sinai covenant, to the New Testament missional community of the Church constituted by the new covenant of His blood (Williamson, 2000: 426-429)! The contents of the book of Matthew (Guthrie, 1996: 57-60) are thus seen to move from the particular to the universal and thus from a focus on Israel as the missional community of God to the church as the missional community of God.

4.5.1.1.1 The Contribution of Matthew to the Diachronic Development of the Missional Community

Matthew is the “gateway” (Weber, 2000: 2) to the New Testament with the strongest of ties to the Old Testament. The New Testament missional community continues (Martens, 2007: 250-251) the task of the Old Testament missional community, to bring blessing to the nations. Matthew firmly (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 123-124) ties the reader into the Old Testament trajectory of the missional community of God, whilst also alerting the reader to the truth that in Christ there is something new. God has, in the Lord Jesus Christ, brought the new covenant and is making for Himself a new people (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 123-126) with a new commandment and a new commission that is far more centrifugal in focus than it is centripetal, unlike the Old Testament and the people of Israel (Martens, 2007: 250-251). Matthew is pivotal in hinging the development of the missional community from Old Testament Israel to New Testament church. Without Matthew the reader may be left wondering how it is that the promise of God to be fulfilled through Israel has somehow stalled and discontinued. Matthew enables the reader to move forwards in the New Testament with a clear understanding that the plan of God to bless the nations is forging ahead, though now in a different way and through a different group of people, namely the church, rather than Israel. In Matthew 28:19-20 the risen Savior commissions His disciples to make disciples of all nations. This is the shift from a centripetal to a centrifugal missional focus.

4.5.1.2 The Missional Community in the Gospel of Mark

Whilst Matthew appears first in the canonical ordering of the Gospels, Mark is posited (Lowery, 1994: 66) as the first (Achte-meier *et al.*, 2001: 124) Gospel written. Mark, like Matthew, enables the reader to detect links to antecedent theology in that he has his “beginning from John’s baptism” (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 58). Marshall *et al.* (2004: 58)

further highlights the fact that “this beginning itself is placed in a wider framework by seeing it as a fulfillment of the prophecy in Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3 . . .” This direct link to the Old Testament is both helpful and important (Achte-meier *et al.*, 2001: 123) because it again reminds the reader that the mission of the New Testament church is both rooted in, and a continuation of, the Old Testament promise (Achte-meier *et al.*, 2001: 124) that through Abraham all of the nations of the earth would be blessed. The purpose of Mark’s Gospel is primarily (Guthrie, 1990: 65) evangelistic, although Guthrie (1990: 66) is astute in cautioning that there are a number of other sub-purposes (*cf.* Gundry, 1984: 126) that probably prevail within this Gospel, such as a catechetical design, a liturgical design, an apologetic design, a mechanism to address conflict within the early church, a doctrinal purpose, an ecclesiastical purpose, a pastoral purpose and an editorial purpose. For the emerging New Testament missional community to which Mark belonged (Bock, 2005: 395-396), the Gospel of Mark highlights (Evans, 2000: 270-273) the theological themes of, “the Kingdom of God and conflict with Satan, faith and salvation, the Jewish law, and the Twelve and discipleship.” Each of these key themes from the Gospel of Mark is reviewed in the following sections with a view to how these themes relate to or impact the New Testament missional community – the church.

4.5.1.2.1 *The Kingdom of God and Conflict with Satan in the Gospel of Mark*

In Mark it is clear (Bock, 2005: 396; Evans, 2000: 270) that the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan are opposed to each other. It is probable (Edwards, 2002: 10) that Mark highlights this conflict because he wants the missional community, the church at Rome, to understand that, though they are under persecution from a Roman emperor and Roman government, there is a much greater drama unfolding, of which they are a key part. Mark purposed (Edwards, 2002: 10) that the Roman Christians see in the life and mission of Jesus, and most of all in His suffering, the far broader implication of His victorious battle with the kingdom of darkness, of which they were now also an integral part. As the Roman believers continued the mission of Jesus they would enter into conflict with the powers of darkness, and so also would enter into the same realm of suffering as Jesus (Lowery, 1994: 69). The missional community to whom Mark addressed his gospel would see in the life of Christ the paradox (Achte-meier *et al.*, 2001: 125-129) of intense suffering that would lead ultimately to immense glory (Ladd, 1993: 230-233). This paradox within the life of Christ alerted (Achte-meier *et al.*, 2001: 146; Ladd, 1993: 232) the missional community to the truth that in their role as a missional community following in the footsteps of Christ there

is both *theologia gloria* that must be balanced and grounded in *theologia crucis*. The blessed and wonderful glory of following the Lord Jesus Christ and the glories of heaven must be preceded by the suffering and humility of the cross. Of great concern for the modern North American Evangelical church in terms of the message of Mark, is “how effectively (Van Rheenen, 2004: 174-186) has the church as the missional community embraced *theologia crucis* as opposed to the pragmatism and success orientation of this age?” Has the modern North American (Roberts & Marshall, 2004: 17-180) church become imbalanced on the side of triumphalism (Carson, 2008: 205-228), and the modern secular conception of success (Fitch, 2005: 27-94), to such a degree that they have ameliorated their capacity for mission? This theme of *theologia crucis*, and the call to follow the Lord Jesus on the path of suffering, is addressed again in the review of the missional community in the book of Acts and in the Pauline Epistles, later in this thesis.

4.5.1.2.2 Faith and Salvation in the Gospel of Mark

The missional community can imitate the Lord Jesus in this area of calling people to faith and salvation, as much as in the call to suffering outlined in the previous section. As Evans (2000: 270-271) points out:

A distinctive feature in the Markan presentation of Jesus is his call for faith and his linking of healing, or salvation, to faith. At the outset of his ministry Jesus commanded Israel to ‘believe in the gospel’ (1:15). The need for faith becomes axiomatic.

The need for the missional community to live by faith is not new, as was uncovered in our earlier research into the book of Numbers. According to Mark (Evans 270-271), without faith it is impossible to either be saved or healed (*cf.* Mark 1:15, 2:5, 5:34, 5:36, 9:23-24, 11:22-24). Mark alerts the missional community to their need for faith in God (Evans, 2000: 270) in the face of ongoing persecution, and also for the need to emulate the life of Christ in calling others to saving faith.

4.5.1.2.3 The Jewish Law in the Gospel of Mark

As stated previously, Jesus was in ongoing conflict with the Kingdom of Satan. Mark also highlights Jesus ongoing conflict (Evans, 2000: 270-271) with the Pharisaical interpretation of the law and the hardheartedness of the Pharisees and scribes. Jesus highlights the two greatest commandments as love for God and love for one’s neighbour

(Mark 12:28-34) and that these commandments are more important than ‘all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices’ (Mark 12:33). Jesus handling of the Law in the Gospel of Mark set the tone for the missional community’s handling of disputable matters and probably relates to the ongoing struggle in the Roman church, for whom (Edwards, 2002: 10) Mark wrote this Gospel. This struggle is expressed in Romans 13:8-14:23, where believers are called upon to respond to one another in love. Hendricksen (2002: 452) highlights the tie in between Mark and Romans when he states:

In connection with his teaching that whatever enters a person from the outside is undefiling, Jesus had pronounced all foods clean (Mark 7:15–19). But if even Peter was slow in taking to heart the full implications of this dominical pronouncement, as Acts 10:9–16; 11:1–18; Gal. 2:11–21 indicate, it is understandable that for other Jewish converts to Christianity the situation became even more difficult.

It has been suggested that in the church of Rome the clash between meat-eaters and abstainers became more explosive when Jews who had been expelled from the capital by Claudius (see p. 18) returned. During their absence the Roman church experienced no difficulty, but with their return to Rome a somewhat strained relation began to develop between the two ethnic groups. Whether this theory is correct cannot now be determined, but it may well be. The view according to which “the strong” consisted of the Gentile portion of the congregation, the majority (see pp. 21–23), while “the weak” consisted of the Jewish portion, seems to be confirmed by 15:7 f. (See on that passage). However, this does not mean that only Gentiles belonged to the strong portion, and only Jews to the weak. A Hebrew of Hebrews was Paul; nevertheless, he included himself among the strong (15:1).

Mark’s Gospel deals with the pharisaical interpretation of the Old Testament law in such a way (Edwards, 2002: 204) that it enables the missional community of Rome to grasp that they are no longer bound by the casuistry of the Old Testament law, but they are always bound by the law of love (Romans 14:7-9), which unites them as a missional community and thus enhances their corporate witness to a lost world (Hendricksen, 2002: 451-480).

4.5.1.2.4 The Twelve and Discipleship

What is striking in Mark's Gospel is the way (Evans, 2000: 271) in which Jesus commandingly calls His disciples and they immediately obey. What is also striking (Evans, 2000: 272) is that Jesus, through the selection of twelve disciples, reconstitutes a mini missional community that replicates the community of Israel, previously on mission for God. Not unlike the Twelve tribes, this missional community of twelve disciples is portrayed (Lowery, 1994: 83-84) by Mark as having glaring failures and weaknesses. These glaring weaknesses and failures are inserted by Mark to remind the missional community, the church at Rome, "the authority given them was ultimately derivative. That is, it is God who accomplishes healing or deliverance, by means of the Holy Spirit. They were dependent on Him to carry it out successfully. Prayer is one expression of that dependence, an aspect of faith which the disciples either forgot or failed to learn." (Lowery, 1994: 83). The faithlessness and fear of the twelve stands in stark contrast to the faithfulness and commitment to God's will exhibited by the Lord Jesus (Lowery, 1994: 83). Mark's Gospel ministers to the church at Rome in a wonderful way (Lowery, 1994: 83-84) because it helps the Roman believers to have a right view of themselves (Romans 12:3) and not to think of themselves any more highly than their relationship to and salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ warrants!

4.5.1.2.4.1 The Contribution of Mark to the Diachronic Development of the Missional Community

The preceding research highlights that the Gospel of Mark contributes greatly to the diachronic development of the concept of a missional community. From the preceding research into the Gospel of Mark, the following areas are some of the key contributions Mark's Gospel makes to our understanding of the nature, purpose and power of the missional community of God:

1. The missional community will need to come to terms with the paradox of the great, triumphal glory of being a child of God and the *theologia crucis*, the path of suffering that they may be called to tread.
2. The missional community needs to live by faith.
3. The missional community needs to grasp that God uses weak and failing vessels to accomplish His great work and that no aspect of His work can be accomplished apart from dependence upon God to work powerfully and miraculously.

4.5.1.3 The Missional Community in Luke's Gospel

Luke's contribution (Bock, 2000: 273-274) to the diachronic development of the missional community is twofold, namely to show continuity with what has come before (Israel) and to give reassurance by showing that to walk in the ways of the Lord is not easy, given the opposition one faces. Luke provides re-assurance through a detailed discussion of God's plan. It is this aspect of reassurance within the Gospel of Luke that has the greatest contribution to the diachronic development of the concept of missional community. As Bock (1994: 15) incisively points out, the Luke-Acts account points to a Gentile who is struggling with his new-found faith and his position in the mixed community of the church which is facing ongoing persecution and suffering. Luke's contribution to the missional community, according to Bock (1994: 15) is one of assurance (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 141) to those who are a part of the missional community and dealing with doubt, or those who are thinking of becoming part of the missional community but also struggle with doubt. Another aspect of re-assurance to the missional community is the concept that God works (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 143) through agents such as Angels (Luke 1:11, 19, 26) and Spirit empowered human beings (Luke 1:35; 1:41) and this same Holy Spirit is promised to all who ask for this gift (Luke 11:13). This reassurance by Luke is a great blessing to the early Christians for whom Luke re-iterated the "thought of the coming of Jesus as the decisive action of God in fulfilling his promises of salvation, which then became effective in the witness of the church." (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 146). The church is the missional community of God, whose primary mission, according to Luke-Acts (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 146) is to present Jesus as the Savior (Luke 19:10), the Shepherd who has come to save (Hendricksen, 2002: 48) the lost sheep (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 148). As with the Gospel of Matthew, Luke portrays the Lord Jesus life as a life on mission (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 149). Significantly, in the Gospel of Luke, others (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 149) join Jesus in this mission and do so from his birth onwards. Simeon, Anna, John the Baptist, the twelve disciples and then the seventy-two (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 149) all embark on mission, either because of the arrival (birth) of Jesus or the commission of Jesus. For the New Testament church the message (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 155-159) of Luke-Acts is clarion: "To believe in the Lord Jesus is to be saved by the Great Shepherd, but it is also to embark on mission with the Lord Jesus to bring blessing to the nations through the proclamation of the Gospel of salvation."

4.5.1.4 The Missional Community in John's Gospel

The Gospel of John is written (Köstenberger, 2000: 281) with a universal readership in mind. It is to this universal audience that John immediately (Achtemeier *et al.*, 2001: 176) presents both the divinity (John 1:1) and the humanity (John 1:3) of the Lord Jesus Christ. These twin affirmations of Jesus divinity and humanity call (Achtemeier *et al.*, 2001: 176-177) the reader to the context of the cosmic drama of what God is doing through the Lord Jesus and in the Lord Jesus. This cosmic drama within the Gospel of John imbibes two (Achtemeier *et al.*, 2004: 179; Köstenberger, 2000: 280-281) phases. The first half (Köstenberger, 2000: 280-281) of John's narrative sets forth evidence for Jesus messiahship (Achtemeier *et al.*, 2004: 186-187) through the recording of seven specially selected signs (John 1:19 – 12:50) as well as Jesus seven "I am" sayings (John 6:25-59; 8:12 – 9:5; 10:7-9, 11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1) and the reports of numerous witnesses. The second half (Köstenberger, 2000: 281) of John's Gospel shows how the Christ ensures the continuation of His mission by preparing (Achtemeier *et al.*, 2004: 194-195) his new messianic community for its mission. The Gospel of John makes an important contribution to the understanding of the New Testament missional community because of the way in which Jesus prepared that community to function (Köstenberger, 2000: 281) after His departure as outlined in John 13-17. In chapter 13, the foot washing of the disciples and the departure of Judas cleanses the new messianic community. In chapters 14-16 the messianic community is prepared for their new role as the missional community through the instructions regarding the coming Paraclete and his ministry to the disciples. The farewell discourses (Achtemeier *et al.*, 2004: 195) of Jesus to His disciples, in these chapters focus on the quality and character of their life together, and for the witness they are to bear to Him in the world. In chapter 17 Jesus prays for his disciples and for their protection in their new role as His missional community, sent into the world to be a witness of the risen Christ to the world. Through Jesus' resurrection appearances and pronouncements, He is cast as the paradigmatic sent one who has now become the sender of his new messianic community (John 20:21-23). According to John's Gospel, the church is sent by Jesus into the world to continue His mission of proclaiming the Good News of salvation to all nations.

The Gospel of John re-affirms (Köstenberger, 2000: 281-283) to the New Testament church the central role of the Lord Jesus Christ in God's plan for the nations, and Jesus' desire to fulfill His mission through the New Testament church. A pivotal verse in this re-affirmation of the missional role of the New Testament church is John 20:21 in which the risen Lord Jesus states: "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." In this verse it is clear (Mounce, 2007: 648) that the mission of the church grows out of the mission of Christ. The mission of the church is a continuation (Borchert, 2002: 306) of God's purpose in sending His Son to accomplish redemption. Jesus' sending of His followers is patterned on the model of the Father who sent His Son, Jesus (Borchert, 2002: 306). The other aspect of the sending of the Son of God is the important theology of Incarnation (Oden, 2006b: 31-132; Achtemeier *et al.*, 2004: 192; Grenz, 2000: 305-325) that is presented in the first chapter (Mounce, 2007: 371) of the Gospel of John. The theology of the Incarnation, as presented in John 1:1-18, is a vital development for the missional community, so much so that Incarnational theology (Marshall, 2000: 576-581) may be deemed to be one of the signature hallmarks (Langmead, 2004: 20-21) of the New Testament missional community of God. John's concept (John 15: 1-17) of Jesus as the vine and His disciples as the branches also alludes to the Incarnational ministry of the church (Oden, 2006b: 287-294), who have their effectiveness only as they abide in Jesus (Ladd, 1993: 319) and bear fruit as a witness to Jesus. John's Gospel affirms that the church is on mission (Mounce, 2007:648-649). Just as the Father sent the Lord Jesus to bring redemption to the world through His incarnation, death, burial and resurrection, so too Jesus sends His disciples to witness to all nations, that Jesus is the risen Savior (John 20:21). This witness must occur as the disciples live their lives among the nations, incarnationally – not separate from the nations.

For John, the missional community must follow (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 522-527) the example of the Lord Jesus and live incarnationally (Oden, 2006b: 293) among a lost and dying world, showing forth the glory of God through lives of demonstrative holiness and faith in the living God.

4.5.2 The Missional Community in Acts

The book of Acts is the second volume (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 154) of Luke's two-volume work. It would seem (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 154) that the Gospel of Luke intends to

provide the readers with an historical / theological account of origins that serves to confirm the reliability of the Gospel that is being preached and taught. The goal (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 156) of Acts, as part two of the Gospel story, is to show how that aspect of God's plan which included the Gentiles was fulfilled so that God might have a people for His name that included both Jews and Gentiles. It is for this reason that the terminology of fulfillment is used extensively (Petersen, 2000: 287) in Luke-Acts to secure a transition from the Old Testament story of Israel to the New Testament story of Jesus. Both Luke and Acts are concerned to show that Jesus' rejection and suffering is no accident of history but, rather, a part (Kistemaker, 2002: 34) of the Sovereign plan of God as revealed in the Old Testament. The plan of God in Luke-Acts is that through what Jesus taught and obedience to what Jesus taught there is blessing for the nations (Borgman, 2006: 7). This, then, is the task of the missional community in the book of Acts, to bear witness to the Lord Jesus Christ through obedience to those things that Jesus taught and to offer God's good news of blessing through the finished work of the risen Lord Jesus (Borgman, 2006: 7).

Yet obedience to the Word of the Lord Jesus and witness to the work of the Lord Jesus is simply not possible (Schreiner, 2007: 445-448) without the empowering work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the believers. The work of the Spirit in directing the missional community of God to accomplish the mission of God, to bring blessing to the nations through the Gospel message, is paramount (Schreiner, 2007: 448) in the Luke Acts schema. For Luke-Acts, the missional community is a community of the Spirit and as Oden (2006b: 293) points out, "the Spirit is its enlivening principle of empowerment." So prominent is the Holy Spirit in the Luke-Acts volumes that Schreiner (2007: 440) calls Luke the "theologian of the Holy Spirit." In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit is pivotal (Oden, 2006b: 292-293) to the effectiveness of the missional community. In Acts 1:8 Luke highlights that power for witness will result (Bruce, 1990: 103) from the Spirit's presence within and among the missional community, and that Acts 1:8 really defines the focus and progress of the mission of God within the book of Acts. In Acts 2:11 we see that it is by the power of the Holy Spirit (Robinson & Wall, 2006: 46-69) that the disciples proclaim the mighty works of God. In Acts 4:8-9 Peter's courageous defense before the Sanhedrin was a result (Gangel, 1998: 59) of the filling of the Holy Spirit at that moment of intense need. After prayer together (Acts 4:31) the Holy Spirit refreshes the disciples with a new sense of boldness for ongoing witness (Longenecker, 2007: 781). It is clear (Acts 8:29;

8:39-40; 9:17; 10:19-11:12; 11:27-30; 13:9-11; 16:6-7; 20:22-23; 21:11) that the Holy Spirit is instrumental (Schreiner, 2007: 448) throughout the book of Acts to ensure that the missional community is equipped and emboldened to accomplish God's call upon them to bring blessing to the nations through the Gospel message and to direct their efforts appropriately. Yet, Luke-Acts also highlights (Schreiner, 2007: 448) the truth that to fulfill the mission of God it is also incumbent upon individual believers to walk or to live in the Spirit. Stephen, Barnabas and Paul are all given as examples of people who accomplished the mission of God because they walked / lived in the Spirit (Acts 6:3-8; 7:55; 11:24; 13:9-11). The Holy Spirit is a focal aspect of the missional community in the book of Acts and so we see that "large numbers of Gentiles had already become believers and received the gift of the Spirit" (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 163). With this widespread salvation of Gentiles and the expansion of the mission to the uttermost parts of the earth (Rome by the end of Acts) it becomes evident (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 162-171) that the missional community of God has shifted to embrace primarily the Gentiles as opposed to primarily the Jewish nation and that the sphere of God's mission is still to bring blessing to all nations through His missional community, the New Testament church.

The Book of Acts enables the reader to see the transition (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 164-165) of God's missional community from a primarily Jewish entity in the Old Testament to a primarily Gentile entity in which some Jewish people are included. The Book of Acts also highlights for the reader the central role of the Holy Spirit (Schreiner, 2007: 445-448) in empowering and directing the missional community to accomplish the mission of God. This shift from Jew to Gentile and the concept of life in the Spirit are huge themes that profoundly impact the identity and function of the missional community and it is for this reason that these two themes of identity and function are refined and developed in the epistolary material of the New Testament, the focus of the next section.

4.5.3 The Missional Community in the Pauline Epistles

The apostle Paul's monolithic influence (Freedman, Myers & Beck, 2000: 1016-1017) upon the theology and mission of the early church is evident in the Pauline corpus. Paul also connected himself (Ciampa, 2007: 299) diachronically with the long trajectory of

God's missional purpose, as initiated in the Abrahamic covenant, fulfilled in the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and now being mediated to all nations through the missional community of God – the New Testament church. Paul did not see any radical difference between the Old and New Testaments (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 453; Tidball, 2000: 408) in the mission of God to bless the nations. Paul, however, articulated the radical fulfillment of God's redemptive purpose in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ (Tidball, 2000: 408) and a radical new way (Hafemann *et al.*, 2007: 56-62; Tidball, 2000: 408-409) of mediating that redemptive purpose through the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul was well equipped to hammer out this new way of God's mission through the church since Paul's theology was constituted and decisively shaped (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 421) by Judaism and the Old Testament (Ladd, 1993: 432-434).

The church, as the missional community, is the place (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 455) where God is present. However, the church is not (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 455) limited to a specific building in a specific place, as was the temple in the Old Testament. Rather, the church is comprised of the company (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 455) of God's people in a specific geographic location (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:21). A radical new shift as a result of the New Covenant (Schreiner, 2007: 476) is that God's presence is also understood to be with individual believers who's bodies are said to be the inner temple (Fee, 1994: 135-136) of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). The implications of God's presence in the life of the church and in the life of the believer are manifold (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 456-458) as follows:

1. If the church is the place of God's presence then God is active in the church as evidenced in the spiritual gifts that are manifested (1 Corinthians 12:4-6) in the congregation through the various activities of the Holy Spirit in and through various believers within the church body.
2. Since the church is the place where God is present and active, the congregation acts as a witness to the world of the Divine presence and power of God (1 Corinthians 14:22-25).
3. The church is the place where prayer and praise are made to God (Romans 1:8; 2 Corinthians 1:3; Ephesians 1:3, 17; 3:14) through the Lord Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 14:16; Ephesians 6:18).

4. The meal was to entail the breaking of bread and the sharing of the cup to symbolize Christ's body and blood as the initiation of the New Covenant (1 Corinthians 11: 17-34).

All four of these elements, described above, are designed (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 458) to bear witness to the presence and power of God amongst and within His people. Thus, for Paul, the New Covenant community, whilst fulfilling and mediating the promise made to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3, is supremely the community of the Holy Spirit under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and witnessing to the power of God through transformed lives (Schreiner, 2007: 476-491; Fee, 1994: 870-894).

Paul strengthens our understanding of the New Testament missional community because his Old Testament theological moorings tie the church to the promise to Abraham and much of the Old Testament material whilst also highlighting the radical change imbibed in the New Covenant with its consequent new life in the Holy Spirit (Schreiner, 2008: 476-491). It is both interesting and important to note that Paul sees the witness to God's glory and saving power as both an individual and a corporate responsibility, just as the Spirit indwells both the church body (1 Corinthians 3) and the believer's body (1 Corinthians 6), to transform and empower for witness! Paul also advocates faith (Schreiner, 2008: 578-585) as paramount to both becoming a part of the missional community of God and to living out the responsibility to bear witness as the missional community of God. The primacy of faith in the effectiveness missional community was well established in the material on the Old Testament (cf, section 4:4:4 "Numbers: The Missional Community Must Move Forward by Faith").

4.5.4 The Missional Community in Hebrews

The Old Testament is the most important source (Ellingworth, 2000: 338) for the book of Hebrews, which contains thirty-five direct quotations from the Old Testament. The book of Hebrews is addressed to a Christian community (Ellingworth, 2000: 341) and the church is presented as the family of the new covenant (Hafemann & House, 2007: 59). The author of Hebrews is profoundly concerned with ecclesiology (Ellingworth, 1994: 68-69) and with God's desire to bring blessing ("rest" in Hebrews) to the nations through the finished work

of His Son and through the instrumentality of His people (Ellingworth, 1993: 68). The book of Hebrews, like the Gospels and the Pauline epistles, deals (Ellingworth, 2000: 337) with the change from old to new in God's working with humanity. Hebrews alerts the reader to a fact that was highlighted in a previous section (4:4:6 Post-Pentateuch Diachronic Development of the Missional Community), namely that what was provisional and ineffective in the Old Testament has been superseded by the finished work of the Son in the New Testament (Fanning, 1994: 398). In terms of the missional community, the book of Hebrews develops the concept (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 616) that in this new and superior covenant, the church is a body of Christians who should be moving forward and not backward (Hebrews 2:1). This concept of a missional community that is moving forward develops diachronically the thought expounded earlier in the book of Numbers that the missional people of God need to live by faith. In Hebrews, the community being addressed was in some danger (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 618) of drawing back from its faith and ignoring the salvation that it had received (cf. Hebrews 2:1-4; 3:7-4:13; 5:11-6:20; 10:19-39; 12:12-13:19). If the missional community draws back and does not live by faith, their witness to the world is diminished (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 625) and their capacity to exhibit the glory of God within their midst would be greatly hampered.

The book of Hebrews develops the diachronic progression of the missional community in that it highlights the change (Ladd, 1993: 628-630) from Old Covenant to New Covenant, whilst at the same time assisting the reader to see strong continuity (Ellingworth, 2000: 341) with the purpose of God to bring blessing to all nations through the mediation of His people. To be most effective as a missional people of God, the believers in Hebrews are exhorted to go on to maturity, and not to fall back into their old way of thinking and living, to see the Christian life as a journey of onward movement, by faith (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 613-615, 626).

4.5.5 The Missional Community in James

The book of James is helpful in the diachronic development of the missional community because it calls the missional community to live by faith (James 1:1-18), but more than this, to express that faith (Kistemaker, 2002: 60-61) in good works (James 1:22-27). For James, the missional community is to be a community that is defined (Achtemeier *et al.*, 2001: 496) by love (James 2:8). This love is expressed as love for God and love for one's

neighbor and is visibly manifested through good works (Achte-meier *et al*, 2001: 503-511). The missional community is a community that is to be marked by faith and love (James 2:8), a faith and love that are visible (Achte-meier *et al*, 2001: 510) in good works!

4.5.6 The Missional Community in the Catholic Epistles

The catholic letters (Achte-meier *et al*, 2001: 513) comprise three smaller letters (1 & 2 Peter, Jude) and lack the specificity of address. For this reason they are termed “catholic” (general, universal).

1 Peter has a great deal in common (Achte-meier, *et al*, 2001: 521-523) with the other writings of the New Testament. Perhaps 1 Peter’s greatest contribution to the diachronic development of the missional community of God is the affirmation that the plan of God, centered in Jesus Christ, was generated before creation (1 Peter 1:20) and includes God’s sovereign choice of His elect before the world began (Green, 2000: 347). Green (2000: 346) suggests that Peter’s audience in 1 Peter comprised new Gentile converts spread throughout the Roman provinces of Asia Minor. The occasion of the letter is the intense persecution (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 642; Achte-meier *et al.*, 2001: 522) that these new converts were facing because of their changed lifestyles (cf. 1 Peter 4:12) arising from their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. For the missional community the book of 1 Peter is helpful because it alerts the reader to the fact that the church is the initiative of God (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 644) who brought the church into being. It is also helpful because it alerts the reader to the truth that as God’s chosen people, the Holy Spirit is molding (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 644) their character to be appropriate for God’s people. Peter also reminds the reader that to be a part of the missional community of God is to live by faith and to rest one’s hope in the heaven that is coming rather than the suffering of the present (1 Peter 1:3-12). However, Peter’s focus is not only eschatological, it is also strongly grounded in the present (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 644) in which they currently experience many of the wonderful fruits of their salvation (1 Peter 1:8-9; 2:3). Peter’s greatest contribution to the missional community, though, is his emphasis on the basic characteristics (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 644) of Christian living (1 Peter 1:13-2:10). This is helpful to the missional community because, like Leviticus in the Old Testament, it calls the missional community to demonstrative holiness for the sake of witness (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 647) in a hostile world in which they now live as resident aliens (Marshall *et al.*,

2004: 645-648). Peter's understanding of the church as a peculiar people and a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:4-9) is a profound development since it shows that a thoroughly Jewish apostle (Acts 10) committed to the Messianic Kingdom (Acts 1:6-7) has, through the revelation of God's Spirit and the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ, come to grasp that the church is God's missional community in the age of the New Covenant (Jobes 2005: 1-5).

2 Peter is so different in style (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 670) from 1 Peter that it is thought (Kistemaker, 2002: 213) that it cannot be the same author who penned both letters. The first verse of this epistle (2 Peter 1:1) names (Kistemaker, 2002: 213) Simon Peter as the author of 2 Peter. There is a great deal of debate concerning Peter's authorship of this epistle (Achtemeier *et al.*, 2004: 529; Davids, 2006: 123-143) and the outcome of this debate is inconclusive. Authorship does not affect authority and 2 Peter is a part (Achtemeier, 2001: 230) of the inspired canon and for that reason alone we can trust the contents of the epistle as infallible and trustworthy for God's church through the ages. For ease of use and to authentically reflect the debate concerning Petrine authorship we shall employ the term "the author" rather than "Peter" when writing on the missional community within this valuable and God breathed (2 Timothy 3:16) and infinitely valuable piece of Biblical literature.

2 Peter makes use of a large part (Davids, 2000: 350) of the epistle of Jude and seeks to combat (Achtemeier *et al.*, 2001: 531) the unethical behavior creeping into the church together with seeking to combat the denial (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 672) of the return of the Lord Jesus and the reality (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 673-674) of a final judgment. The author of 2 Peter is seeking to immunize (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 673) the missional community against the dangers of false teaching which will both undermine (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 674) the effectiveness of their witness and will harm the body because false doctrine will lead (Achtemeier *et al.*, 20001: 531; Davids, 2000: 350) to false living. The missional community needs to hold fast (Kistemaker, 2002: 226) to the faith once for all delivered to the saints to ensure that they remain healthy and vibrant (2 Peter 1:5-7) for effective witness in a world of spiritual (2 Peter 2:1-10) and moral (2 Peter 2:13-19) darkness. 2 Peter is helpful to the missional community because it reminds the reader that there is a

need (Kistemaker, 2002: 226) to exert personal effort (2 Peter 1:5-7), in the face of false doctrine and moral declension. 2 Peter calls the reader to remain spiritually healthy and thus effective in witness to a world that is in need of God's truth and the redemptive message of the Gospel. The path to spiritual health (2 Peter 3:1-2) is right doctrine (Kistemaker, 2002: 226-227) – especially, in this case, as it relates to the person (2 Peter 2:1) and *parousia* (2 Peter 3:4) of the Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Peter alerts the reader to the important truth that the missional community will have effective witness when that community is healthy and holding fast the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

Jude does not address (Kistemaker, 2002: 355) his letter to any particular church. Jude is identified as the author of this epistle and it seems likely (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 660) that it is the work of the implied author. The author wrote (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 660) in order to deal with the problem caused by the intrusion of godless people into the church. This letter contains a lengthy (Achteimeier *et al.*, 2001: 532) polemical section against false teachers. For the Missional community the call (v3) to contend for the faith (Achteimeier *et al.*, 2001: 532) is important even though, as Marshall *et al.* (2004: 661) points out the missionary concern of the New Testament is not at the forefront of this letter. The importance of this call (Achteimeier *et al.*, 2001: 533) to the missional community to contend for the faith is that it actually does affect the missionary concern of the New Testament because the “faith” is (Fanning, 1994: 459) the Gospel message in its entire full-orbed splendor. Without the message of the Gospel the church has no mission! For Jude, God's blessing to the nations is mediated through His church in the form of the Gospel message both lived (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 662) and preached (Kistemaker, 2002: 370) in the power (Kistemaker, 2002: 405) of the Holy Spirit (Jude 20).

Jude is helpful in the diachronic development of the missional community because it exhorts the church of the Lord Jesus to contend (Jude v3) for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. They are to contend for the faith (Jude v3) by living holy lives (Jude v4-7, v23) and by refuting false doctrine (Jude v8-22). They are also to build themselves up God's love (Jude v21) and they are to build themselves up in the faith (Jude v20). Such strengthening of their own walk with God is truly missional in focus, as evidenced by the exhortations Jude gives to the church to minister to those who doubt

(Jude v22) and to deliver those who are wandering from the faith (Jude v23). Jude reminds the missional community that it is important to care of internal health as well as external witness, since, in the Gospel, the two are inextricably linked!

4.5.7 The Missional Community in the Johanne Epistles

The letters of John deal directly (Achteimer *et al*, 2001: 535) with conflict that was occurring within the missional community. This conflict had arisen because (Carson, 2000: 351) the missional community, the church, was facing the threat of an incipient Gnosticism. John wrote these letters to address (Harris, 1994: 171) the controversy brewing around the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and out of pastoral concern for his readers. It would appear (Harris, 1994: 171) that the controversy had progressed to stage where major schism (Ladd, 1993: 657) had occurred and a large number of professing Christians had departed (Carson, 2000: 352) from the affected churches. In the face of such schism it is important to note John's assertion, in 1 John 2:19, that the reason (Harris, 1994: 172) these people moved out of the church is because they were never really a part of the fellowship of believers. John desires (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 534) for his readers to understand that there is a stark contrast (1 John 2:15-17) between those people who live in a state of darkness and the way of life that leads to everlasting fellowship with God.

What is helpful in the diachronic development of the missional community of God is the contribution the Johanne epistles make to the following areas:

1. Division and conflict within the missional community will sometimes (Achteimer *et al*, 2001: 536-538) occur over important doctrinal issues.
2. When division occurs there are tests (Carson, 2000: 353) that can be applied to reassure those who are truly part of the fellowship of believers, namely, truth and love. Truth is measured (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 533-534, 537) by those things, which were from the beginning, as delivered by the apostles of the Lord Jesus. Love (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 531, 539-540) is simply measured by the degree to which believers have demonstrable love for one another through their attitudes and actions toward one another.
3. The fellowship of believing Christians can have assurance (1 John 5:13) in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ (Ladd, 1993: 658) and need to exercise

discernment (Carson, 2000: 352) concerning those who deny the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. The path of discipleship for those who are true believers is a path of effort (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 534) and demonstrable holiness (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 535). To follow the Lord Jesus as a missional community and as a true believer is to walk (Marshall *et al.*, 2004: 533) in the light (1 John 1:5-10).

4.5.8 The Missional Community in the Book of Revelation

The book of Revelation is the capstone of the canon. As such, it is God's last word on the missional community and in it we find the terminus and fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham that through him, Abraham, all the nations of the earth would be blessed. We see this promise in complete fullness in Revelation 5:9-14 (*cf.* Revelation 7:9, 14:6) in which the Lamb (the Lord Jesus) is worshipped because (Johnson, 1981: 469) He has purchased and purified people from every nation for God. This is the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3.

4.5.9 Concluding Remarks on the Diachronic Biblical Theology of Missional Community

At the outset of this chapter the goal was to trace the development of the theology of missional community from the book of Genesis through to the book of Revelation. What has emerged is a cohesive picture of God's desire and purpose to bless the nations, first through Abraham and then through the descendants of Abraham as constituted in the nation of Israel and in the New Testament church. It has been helpful to see the continuity between the Testaments in the following areas with regards to the missional community:

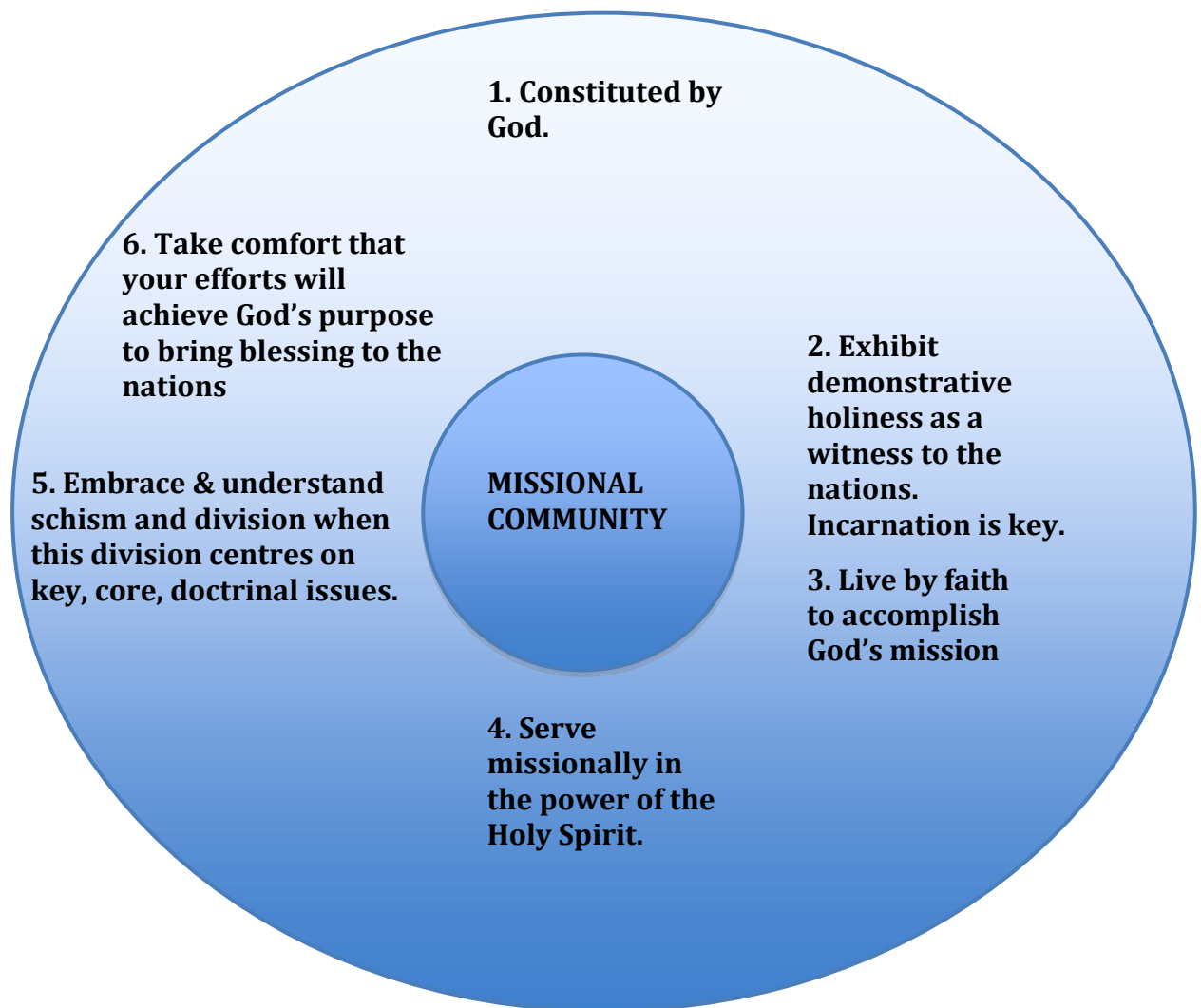
1. The missional community is constituted by God to bring blessing to the nations - (Genesis and Exodus, Gospels).
2. The missional community needs to exhibit demonstrative holiness as a witness to the nations (Leviticus, New Testament Epistles).
3. The missional community is called to live by faith to accomplish the mission of God. (Numbers, Matthew, Pauline Epistles.)
4. The missional community cannot accomplish mission without the empowerment of the Holy Spirit (1st and 2nd Samuel, Luke-Acts, Pauline Epistles, Catholic Epistles).
5. The missional community may face schism and division through disagreement over key doctrinal areas, such as the incarnation, but there are tests that re-assure the

believing community concerning the verity of their faith. These tests may be summarized under two headings, namely “Truth” and “Love” (Johanne Epistles).

6. The missional community can take comfort that their efforts to bring blessing to the nations through the proclamation of the Gospel and the faithful contending for the faith once for all delivered to the saints, will accomplish God’s purpose, since people from every tribe, and nation and tongue gather to worship the Lamb who was slain for their sins. This is true blessing, to have eternal life in fellowship with God and to have one’s sins forgiven! (Revelation and Jude).

As this diachronic survey of the biblical material has surfaced, there is no one aspect to functioning as a missional community. Rather, to fulfill God’s mandate to serve as a missional community, all of the elements listed in 1-6 above, must be present in balanced and increasing measure as represented in diagram 4.2 below. The church needs to revisit the truth of Jesus’ sending of the church just as the Father sent Jesus (Gospel of John). What does it mean to the church that we are sent (John 20:21) on mission by Jesus in the same way as the Father sent Jesus to this world to serve as both Savior and example, God incarnate (John 1:1-4, Hebrews 1:1-3)? It seems that with the weight of the biblical evidence that to emulate the mission of Jesus we, the New Testament missional community of God, must keep all six of the elements represented in the list above and in diagram 4.3 below, in constant and balanced tension. The degree to which we are able to maintain these six elements in balanced tension, seems to be the degree to which we will effectively fulfill our mission as “sent ones” of the risen and ascended Lord Jesus Christ!

Diagram 4:3 The Missional Community is Effective When Six Key Elements are effectively balanced in Tension



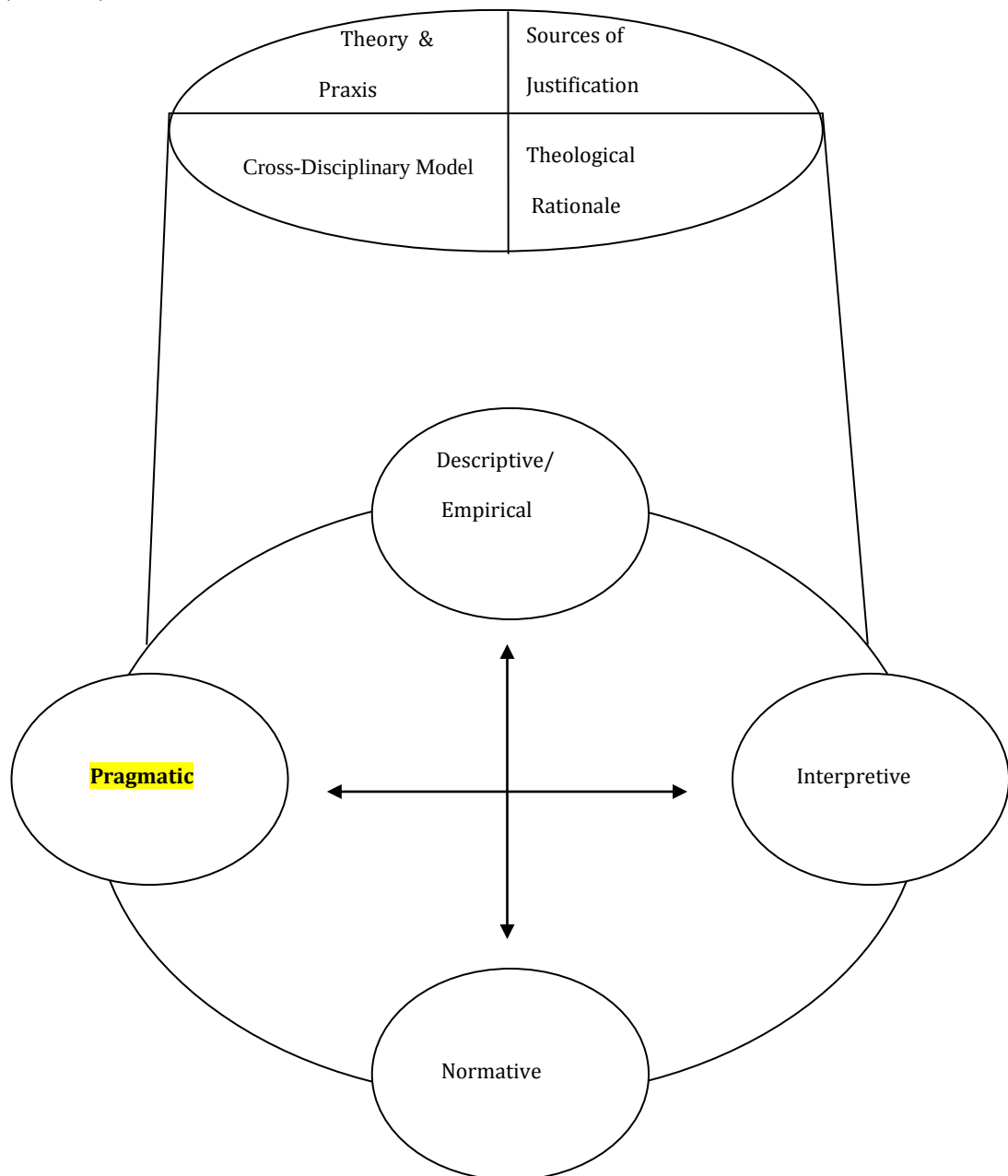
Each of the six aspects of missional community represented in the diagram warrant further research and application, since each component is a vast reservoir of meaning and implication that would be extremely beneficial for the missional community in the 21st century. For instance, how does a local church conceptualize itself as “Constituted by God”? Or, how do believers exhibit demonstrative holiness in the milieu of the 21st century? What does it mean to live by faith in Canada in the 21st century in light of the war in Afghanistan, the global economic recession, the increasing planetary pollution and the plight of the poor and marginalized in many countries around the world? How do individual believers, and indeed how does a missional community, live by and serve within the power of the Holy Spirit? What are the core doctrinal issues that believers must take a stand on – even if those issues bring about division and departure? These

questions, all requiring further research, will be described and expanded upon together with other issues requiring further research, in chapter six of this thesis.

For now, it is helpful to have the normative material of a diachronic biblical theology of missional community to align and inform the model for missional church that is presented in the next chapter of this thesis, chapter five.

Chapter 5: Towards a Model for the Growth of the Evangelical Church in Canada

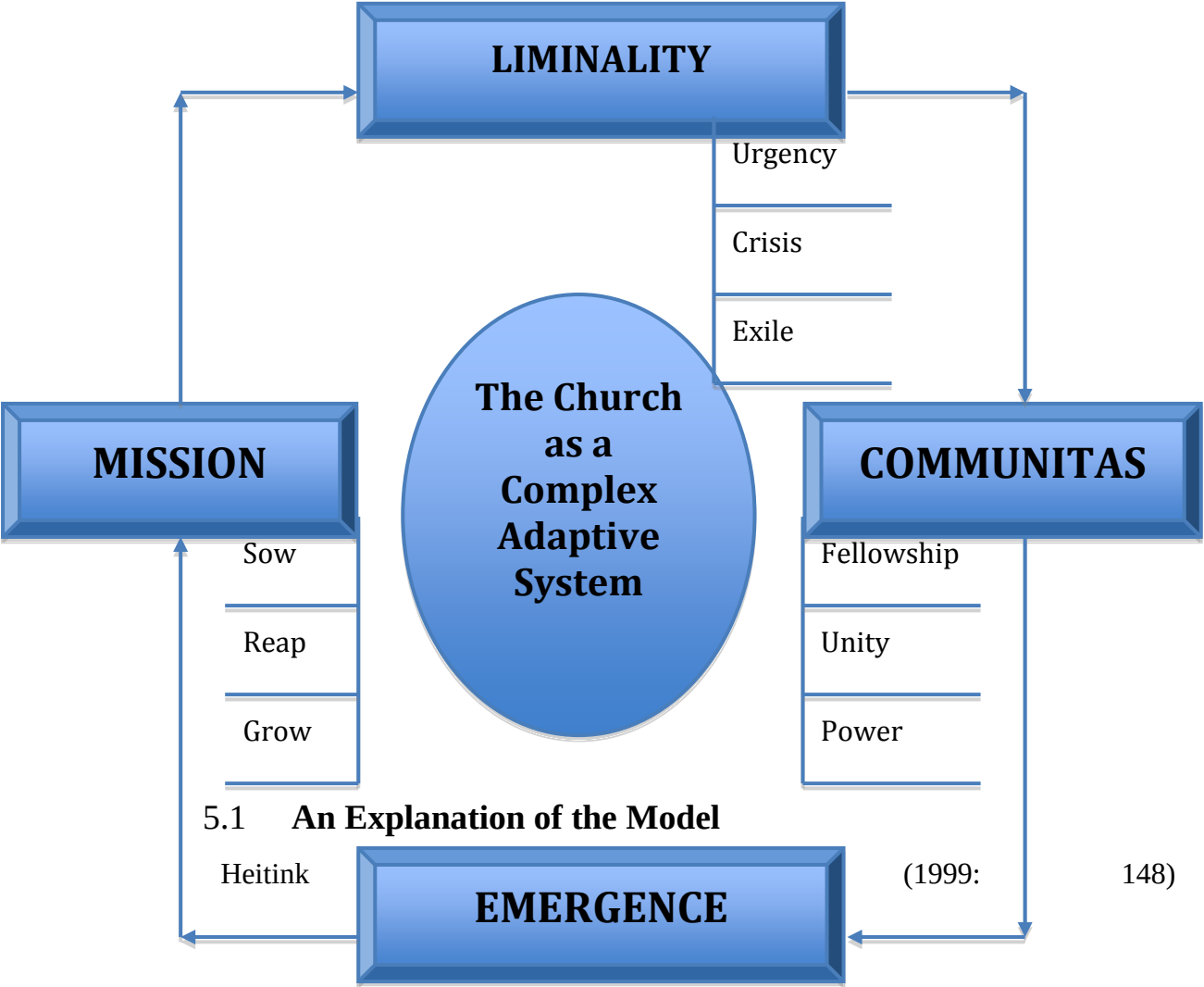
The research method utilized for this thesis closely approximates the model developed by Osmer (2010: 7).



In closely following Osmer's hermeneutic throughout this thesis as the guiding framework for the research (Osmer, 2010: 3; 2008: 4) the thesis now arrives at the final stage of the research process, the "Pragmatic". Please refer to Osmer's diagram, inserted above, to ascertain where the "pragmatic" phase fits within the research process undertaken to this point. This "Pragmatic" phase of the research simply asks, "In light of the other three aspects of the research namely: Descriptive-empirical, Interpretive and Normative, "How might we respond?" In this Pragmatic phase of the research process we form an action plan and undertake specific responses that seek to shape the episode, situation, or context in desirable directions. Perhaps the one great drawback in this process is that the model, at this stage, is somewhat theoretical since its implementation, testing, review and course correction will take a number of years to fulfill. It is because the model is so theoretical that a great deal of preliminary explanation with referencing occurs in sections 5.1 to 5.1.1.4.2. It is from 5.2 onwards that the functionality of the model is presented and developed, especially as this author sees it within the Canadian context. From 5.2 onwards there is no referencing, other than to all of the previous research in this paper, and so it is that from 5.2 onwards, the thesis refers only the previous sections that support the postulates within the model presented. This is done purposefully to ensure that the reader has a synthesis of all of the research from Chapter 1 through to Chapter 5 and section 5.1.1.4.2.

This model for the growth of the Evangelical church takes into account all of the elements presented in the literature review of chapter 3 as well as the concerns raised by the Delphi survey of chapter 2. The strongest driveshaft for this model, though, is the material that emerged in Chapter 4, the normative or Basis Theory chapter. It was in this chapter that a diachronic Biblical Theology of missional community surfaced God's desire to bring blessing to all nations through His missional community. How does the Evangelical Church in Canada shift from a "Christendom" mode of function to a "missional" mode of function? The following model is circular in orientation to ensure that it is self-perpetuating and, as a complex adaptive system, reflexive and self-regenerating. We present the model, and then seek to explain its component parts, as these parts have surfaced in the preceding chapters of this thesis.

Figure 5.1 A Missional Model for the Canadian Context



5.1 An Explanation of the Model

Heitink

suggests that all theory and praxis
continuously. Osmer (2008: 29) further
notion of the interaction of theory and
states:

- Each Part does its work
- Holy Spirit directs mission
- Leadership Equips and deploys

interact
expands this
praxis when he

The pragmatic task is a form of transforming leadership, grounded in a spirituality of servant leadership: taking risks on behalf of the congregation to help it better embody its mission as a sign and witness of God’s self-giving love. In short, the leaders of congregations carry out the tasks of practical theological

interpretation to guide their community in participating in the priestly, royal, and prophetic office of Christ.

Figure 5.1 “A Missional Model for the Canadian Context” graphically represents the model that has emerged from the preceding four chapters in this thesis. In chapter 1 the Descriptive-empirical process attempted to answer the question (Osmer, 2010: 3) “What is going on?” The answer that chapter 1 rendered is succinct and yet inordinately complex, namely: The Evangelical Church in Canada is in decline! Once the current context of Evangelical Church decline was established the thesis moved on in chapter 2 and chapter 3 to answer the Interpretive question (Osmer, 2010: 3) “Why is this going on?” In a bid to answer this question effectively a Delphi survey was conducted, the results of which are rendered in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 also attempted to answer the interpretive question of “why the Evangelical Church in Canada is in decline” through the employment of a literature review across some of the key, intersecting topics impacting the Evangelical Church in Canada.

Once the Descriptive-empirical and Interpretive questions were addressed, the thesis moved in chapter 4 to answer (Osmer, 2008: 3) the Normative question: “What ought to be going on?” Chapter 4 utilized a diachronic Biblical Theological approach to surface the motif of missional community. It is both interesting and helpful to note that the model in Figure 5.1 emerges from and closely mirrors the progress and interrelationship of the first four chapters as outlined above. Simply put, in the model the first chapter outlines the current reality of the Evangelical church as a reality of rapid decline in a secularized and pluralistic society. The first aspect of the missional model presented in the diagram is: “Liminality” (Hirsch, 2006: 220-229). Liminality is the sense of crisis that descends upon an individual or community when entering a new context in which there is perceived risk or real risk. Figure 5.1 defines this “Liminality” with the sub-topics of “Urgency,” “Crisis,” and “Exile.”

The next part of the model moves from “Liminality” to “Communitas” (Hirsch, 2006: 220-229). Communitas is the sense of shared mission and collaboration that arises when each of the parties involved realizes that they are not alone in the process of liminality

and that there is more to be gained from working together than there is from isolation. Problem solving becomes more group oriented and this certainly fits chapter 2 and chapter 3 of the thesis in which both the Delphi survey and the Literature review drew the current problem or challenge of decline into the broader arena for reflection and interaction. A common solution that emerged from these two chapters was the realization that the church needs to become missional in focus and function, if it is to survive the current reality of liminality.

With the concept of “Liminality” from chapter 1 and “Communitas” from chapters 2 & 3 of this thesis, chapter 4 sought to uncover what might emerge from the Scriptures concerning the concept of missional community. This closely follows Figure 5.1 in that “Emergence” is the next component of the model. Liminality and Communitas should give rise to an Emergent solution. In following Osmer’s model (2010: 7) the research into the “Normative” or Biblical material focused on a missional community because the missional community concept had come to the fore through the research process of the first three chapters. Missional community emerged as the best model to address the current liminality of the Canadian Evangelical context. This “Emergence” of the missional community concept in chapter 4 naturally leads into this chapter, chapter 5, and the need to develop a sustainable, transitional model of missional community that will move the Evangelical churches back into a position of relative health and strength, whilst seeking to avoid a return to the Christendom model of the former years.

At the centre of the model is the conception of the church as a Complex Adaptive System. The concept of the church as a Complex Adaptive system, briefly discussed in chapter 2, is discussed more fully here with a view to explaining how each of the components of the model mutually affect every other part of the model for growth.

5.1.1 The Church as Complex Adaptive System

One of the helpful insights gained through the research undertaken in this thesis is the notion of the church as a complex adaptive system (Ebright, 2010). Within

semantic domains each of the terms rendered above might mistakenly imbibe a meaning that readily springs to mind, and thus throw the reader off track in terms of the actual implication of what is meant by “Complex Adaptive System.” So, for instance, by “complex” is not meant complicated. By “adaptive” is not meant shapeless or undefined. By “system” is not meant a rigid and unchanging framework. To what then does the term “Complex Adaptive System” actually refer?

Complex Adaptive Systems are (VanderKaay, 2010): “diverse living elements made up of multiple interconnected agents that have the capacity to change and learn from experience.” From this definition it is evident that complexity refers not to the notion of complicated, but rather to the sense of many diverse yet interconnected living elements. It is true of the church that it is made up of many diverse (1 Corinthians 12:12-31) yet interconnected living elements, and can thus be deemed to be “complex”. Oden (2006b: 280) highlights the complexity of the church, and helps the reader to understand the nature of the church’s complexity when he states:

Christianity has never been merely a matter of isolated individuals being converted and voluntarily joining together to constitute autonomous, voluntary organizations of believers. Rather the body of Christ is called out by Divine address, from the world from the outset as a corporate, social reality. There can be no absolute individualism in the body of Christ. The church is from the outset defined as a single living organism, an interdependent body with every member depending on the community of faith made alive by the Son through the Spirit (1 John 1:1-7).

The church, though many, forms one Body (1 Corinthians 10:17), this is complexity epitomized. Every local church (Grudem, 2000: 951-961) is comprised of a community of believers who have come together around a common commitment to the Lordship of Christ and His saving work in their own personal lives. Each local church (Erickson, 2007: 1042) comes together for purposes of (Erickson, 2007: 1060-1078; Oden, 2006b: 287-365) fellowship, prayer, worship, encouragement, evangelism, discipline, service, baptism, Holy Communion or the Lord’s Table, and teaching. Every person who is a part of a local church has a role (Ephesians 4:11-13; 1 Peter 2:9) or function (Grenz, 2000: 486-510)

within that local church, as people exercise the Spiritual gift, or gifts, that have been given to them by the Holy Spirit. It is because of the church's organismic (Oden, 2006b: 281) nature, and the vast array of diversity within the unity of the Spirit under the Lordship of Christ, that the church can be said to be a "complex system".

Having described the nature of the complexity of the church, it is helpful to also discuss the concept of the church as an "adaptive" system. The notion of the church as an adaptive system implies that both within the church, and outside of the church, there are many different agents acting (Nikolic, 2010) and reacting (Senge, 2006: 73-91). This notion of agency as an aspect of the adaptive nature of systems is extremely helpful when developing a model for the growth of the Evangelical churches in Canada because it alerts us to the reality that the churches in Canada are not static, inanimate entities. The churches in Canada, and all over the world, are complex living organisms that are affected by the actions of agents both within and outside of the church. The linear (Kaiser, 2006: 46-47; Kauffman, 2008), mechanistic (Malphurs, 2004; Borden, 2003), success model (Rima, 2002) of Church growth methodology may not always acknowledge the powerful impact of internal and external agents. Understanding the church as an adaptive system alerts us to the need for a keen awareness of, and research into, the multiplicity of internal (Brunson & Caner, 2005; Richardson, 1996) and external (Carson, 2008; Wells, 2005) realities that impact the systemic health and vitality of our own local churches. The church is adaptive and continually changing, moving (Revelation 2-3) either towards health and vitality or disease and stagnation (Phillips, 2001: 31-77).

We have identified that the church is both a "complex" system and it is an "adaptive" system. Is it plausible to define the church as a system? Capra (1996: 36) defines living systems in a way that is reminiscent of the church as a living body or organism when he states:

Living systems are integrated wholes whose properties cannot be reduced to those of smaller parts. Their essential or 'systemic', properties are properties of the whole, which none of the parts have. They arise from the organizing relations of the parts, i.e. from a configuration of ordered relationships that is characteristic

of that particular class of organisms, or systems. Systemic properties are destroyed when a system is dissected into isolated elements.

The church is a system because it is comprised of many interdependent parts, or members (1 Corinthians 10-12) as the Bible refers to them. These members influence each other for health (Ephesians 4:29-32; Philippians 4:1-3; Colossians 3-4;) or unhealth (Titus 1:10-11; James 4; 2 Peter 2; 3 John 9-11; Jude 3-16), dependent upon the nature and purpose of their mutual interactions. As Lars Skyttner (2005: 57) points out:

“A system is a set of interacting units or elements that form an integrated whole intended to perform some function. Reduced to everyday language we can express it as any structure that exhibits *order*, *pattern* and *purpose*. This in turn implies some constancy over time. A system’s purpose is the reason for its existence and the starting point for measuring its success. “The purpose of a system is what it does.”

The function of the church is multi-faceted, but all synthesizing into the one key purpose of mission. The church is a living organism on mission for God. This point has been discussed extensively in chapter 4, in which a diachronic biblical theology of the missional community was developed. All that the church does should accomplish the missional purpose of “bringing many sons to glory” (Hebrews 2:5-10). If the goal of the church is to serve as God’s light in the world, sent by the Risen Saviour, then perhaps it is essential to change the measurement of success, and hence redefine the purpose of the church?

If the church is a complex adaptive system, a living Body created by the Lord for His Glory and the fulfillment of His purpose then, as the statement in the quote above: “The purpose of a system is what it does” is extremely germane. In the Christendom model of church life and ministry success has been measured based upon consumer values. How many people attend, how much do they give to support the programs of the church, how often do they attend to support the ministries of the church? Perhaps, in a post-Christendom milieu, the measure of success should no longer be ecclesio-centric or church centered, but perhaps now should be discipleship centered

or missio-centric, according to the call of Matthew 28:19-20. If the Evangelical churches in Canada can shift the foci of their membership away from size and success to missional, and by implication discipleship, there may yet be hope for the continuance of the Gospel ministry in this country.

It is this missional, post-Christendom, organic view of the church that informs and gives rise to the model for growth, a model we will now explain in detail with reference to how the Evangelical churches in Canada can utilize this model as a framework for sustainable, impacting, missional ministry.

5.1.1.1 Liminality and the Missional Church as a Complex Adaptive System

The model presented in figure 5:1 begins the cycle with the concept of “liminality.” Liminality is a concept that was popularized by Victor Turner (1967: 93-111) in his seminal work detailing his study of the rites of passage of the Ndembu tribe of Africa. The term “liminality has been co-opted (Swanson & Rusaw, 2010: Frost, 2007: 109; Roxburgh, 1997) by missional writers, since it helps to describe the state of the post-Christendom evangelical churches in North America. Basing his definition on the work of Victor Turner (1967: 93-111), Roxburgh (1997: 24) states:

Therefore, liminality is the conscious awareness that as a group (or individual) one’s status-, role-, and sequence-sets in a society have been radically changed to the point where the group has now become largely invisible to the larger society in terms of these previously held sets.

This is the crisis for the North American Evangelical church! It has become largely invisible to the larger society. As set forth in chapter 1 of this thesis, the decline in regular church attendance from the 1960’s in Canada until the present day is radical, (60% - 11%). But more than the decline in attendance, which is alarming, is the decline in influence upon legal and governmental structures of the Christian ethos. Canada, as discussed elsewhere in this thesis, has become a secular and multi-cultural nation in which spirituality is highly privatized. This has, indeed, pushed Evangelical Christianity to the margins of society as exiles (Frost, 2007) who now need to live

missionally in a post-Christian culture. As the model portrays, the Evangelical churches in North America are in a state of liminality, with the three sub-set areas in the model under “Liminality” of:

1. Urgency. As Christians awaken to the weakening of the Evangelical church in both attendance and influence, there needs to be a sense of urgency to awaken again to the task of making disciples to obey the call of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20. This urgency (Kotter, 1996: 35-49) should enable the church leadership to enact change within the local churches, away (Hirsch, 2006: 151) from a Christendom model of success and consumerism church, to a missional model of outreach and discipling.
2. Crisis. The church is in crisis because her original maps (Roxburgh, 2010) no longer make sense, the terrain has changed externally, and as a complex adaptive system, those external changes have brought cataclysmic changes to the church. It is a crisis of being as much as it is a crisis of doing. The church must answer the ontological question: “What must we be, what is our purpose?” and then the praxis question: “What must we do in order to fulfill our purpose?” This crisis can be an extremely helpful change agent (Rendle, 1998: 77-131) since it awakens within the church membership a sense that they are already in the wilderness (Bridges, 2003: 23-76) and are thus free to be the church and do church in ways that adapt (Stetzer & Putman, 2006) to this new reality. It is not for us as leaders to create the crisis, but when God’s Sovereign Hand leads the Evangelical churches into a place of liminality, the resulting crisis may be extremely liberating!
3. Exile. The Evangelical churches in Canada no longer (Frost, 2007) hold a privileged position; they are now pilgrims and strangers in what has become a foreign land. Their comfort and strength (Frost, 2007: 3-130) no longer lies in their privileged position, but now their comfort and strength arise from the richness of fellowship. Fellowship with the Risen Savior, and fellowship with one another in a strange land. The richness of this fellowship, arising from the position of liminality the church now finds herself facing within the North American context, leads to the next aspect of the model, “Communitas.”

5.1.1.2 Communitas and the Missional Church as a Complex Adaptive System

The concept of Communitas, like liminality, was developed by Victor Turner (1967) as an outflow of his studies of the rites of passage of the Ndembu tribe in Zambia. Communitas, not community, is another sociology term that has been co-opted (Frost, 2007: 107-129) by missional thinkers and missional writers. Frost (2007: 110) defines Communitas in this way:

In short, Turners concept of communitas denotes an intense feeling of social togetherness and belonging, often in connection with religious rituals, in which people stand together “outside” society, and society is strengthened by this. Communitas is the opposite, in many ways, of normal society, but with each one feeding and enriching the other. Societies need the liminal experience of communitas because it pushes society forward, nurturing it with freshness and vitality that come from the deeper communion that is experienced there.

Communitas, then (Frost, 2007: 111), within the North American context is:

“ . . . a group of people undergoing a shared ordeal. In other words, you can’t have the marvelous experience of communitas without being in a liminal state. Many churches want the exquisite experience of rich, deep relationships, but they aren’t prepared to embrace the challenge of coming out of mainstream society. When in a liminal state, coping with the difficulties and ordeal of being outside the structure of normal society, people find themselves thrown together in a richer, deeper, more powerful sense of togetherness. Not community, communitas!”

Perhaps, one of the helpful products of the liminality of the Canadian Evangelical church will be this sense of communitas, in which Christians deepen their fellowship with, and support of, one another because they share a common ordeal, namely that their Christian faith is seen to be on the margins of society and that they, themselves, are in a sense invisible in terms of impact and privilege. The Canadian Evangelical churches will need to embrace and foster communitas through the development of the three sub-elements expressed in the model, namely:

1. Fellowship. It should not surprise the Evangelical churches in Canada that they are marginalized and invisible. This is no different from the promise (Matthew 10:22; Mark 13:13; Luke 6:22; 21:17; John 15:18-19) of the Lord Jesus and the experience (Acts 4:1-31; Acts 6:8-7:60; 8:1-3; 12:1-19; 14:19-23; 16:16-24; 17:1-9; 18:9-11; 19:21-41; 21-28) of the early church. Yet, as much as the early Christians experienced the intensity of the hatred of the world as predicted by the Risen Savior, so too they experienced the incredible *communitas* / fellowship (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37; 9:31; 20:17-38) that this liminality afforded to those who proclaimed and lived the Lordship of Christ. The decline of the Evangelical churches in Canada and the marginalization of the Christian faith in Canada may actually be a blessing for the churches of God, since it may produce the fruit of faith, and the blessing of close and authentic fellowship, in the proclamation and living of the Gospel message! The liminality of the Evangelical churches marginalization and decline leads to *communitas*, and within that close fellowship around the common cause the believers of God will find a new kind of unity.
2. Unity. The Evangelical churches in Canada have struggled (Tangelder, 2010; Bibby, 2004) with the “circulation of the saints.” Often members or affiliates will leave one specific church in a certain area to attend another church in that area. Sometimes addition to the membership occurs through geographical transfers when people move into a new area and choose to attend a church within the same denomination as the church they were attending in their previous location. The Bible urges Christians (Ephesians 4:3) to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. *Communitas* arising from liminality should assist the local churches in keeping unity as their focus moves from a consumer driven model of a Christendom church to a missional driven model of a disciple-making church. This certainly seems to be the experience of the disciples in Acts 4:31-33. Their liminality (being arrested and censured by the religious leaders) led to a strong sense of *communitas* (the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul). It would be interesting to assess how many churches, coming out of a position of privilege and social acceptance in Canada over the last sixty years, have a membership that are of one heart and soul?

The unity that will arise from liminality, as Evangelical churches choose to let go of the Christendom model and view themselves as sent on mission by the Lord

Jesus Christ, will in turn (John 13:34-35) be a powerful witness to the Canadian society at large

3. Power. A by-product of *communitas* is power. An example of the power that ensues from the *communitas* that emerges from liminality is the recent experience (Petrou, 2010: 42-44) of 33 Chilean miners trapped underground:

But Claudio Ibanez, co-leader of a psychological team at the mine and the first to make contact with the trapped miners, says their mental health, overall, is strong. He says the presumption that men and women will usually break down emotionally if subjected to severe hardship is flawed. "Most people have deep resilience and the ability to persevere in extreme situation," he notes. Those miners reached for the best in themselves. Maybe if it were one man trapped down there, he would have died. But as a team, they survived.

The liminality for these 33 miners arose when the walls around them began to collapse and they realized that they were trapped. The *comunitas* arose when they realized that they needed to work together if they were to have any hope of survival. As one reads further in this article by Petrou it is interesting to note that leadership emerged from within the group to equip the group for the rough days ahead, including food and water rationing and other survival techniques.

The Evangelical churches in Canada may not be aware that they are entering a state of liminality, that *communitas* will be vital in the days ahead, and that hopefully the Holy Spirit, working through the Evangelical churches will raise up and empower new leadership to again focus on the mission of the church to make disciples in the midst of an increasingly secular, and perhaps somewhat anti-Christian, environment.

Whereas liminality arises from a sense of crisis, urgency and exile (powerlessness) the system may move to restore homeostasis through *communitas*, which in turn gives a new type of power, as Frost (2007: 110) states:

In short, Turner's concept of *communitas* denotes an intense feeling of social togetherness and belonging, often in connection with religious

rituals, in which people stand together “outside” society, and society is strengthened by this.

This power that arises from *communitas* is different to the power of community as exemplified in Table 5.1: “Community vs. *Communitas*.” (Frost, 2007: 111). As with the 33 trapped Chilean miners, the power that emerges from within the group emerges because of the combined efforts of the group, now functioning together as a complex adaptive system.

Table 5.1 The Differences between “Community” and “*Communitas*”

<i>Community</i>	<i>Communitas</i>
Inward focus	Social togetherness outside society
Focus on encouraging each other	Focus on the task at hand
Safe place	Pushes society forward
Something to be built	Experienced through liminality

The Evangelical churches in Canada will experience this wonderful *communitas* and the renewed power and strength it brings as these churches move from an inward focus to a sense of being on mission for God, which truly is the task at hand, according to Matthew 28:19-20. Frost’s (2007) major thesis is that we are not safe, we are exiles in a post-Christendom North America and as such we need to live out the values of the Kingdom, our post-Christendom reality places the churches in a state of liminality which in turn should lead them to *communitas* and a sense of renewed power and perspective as together we focus on God’s call to be salt and light in a dark world. This experience of liminality also assures (Fee, 1994: 40-48) the believer, and the believing community, of the Holy Spirit’s power in abundant measure through times of suffering and struggle. The Thessalonian believers (1 Thessalonians 1:4-8) experienced the Spirit’s power as a community of believers, and in *communitas*, focused on the task of discipleship to such a

degree that the Word of the Lord sounded forth (1 Thessalonians 1:8) from this church throughout the whole region.

Within the New Testament, we see great renewal and power when the early church experienced liminality, and in turn moved to *communitas*, as for instance in passages such as:

1. Acts 4:31, the disciples are filled with the Spirit and they speak the Word with great boldness, this following the severe chastening handed down to Peter and John by the same religious rulers who had crucified Jesus!
2. Acts 8, the persecution and diaspora following the death of Stephen leads to great and powerful witness by the community of disciples.
3. Acts 9:31, a great sense of *communitas*, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, the church multiplied. The persecution of the church created a sense of liminality, but the Holy Spirit empowered the people of God with a sense of comfort and the result was the further growth of the church. The benefit and forward movement of the wider society here is that many become believers and also there is a sense of widespread peace.
4. Acts 11:19-25, The hand of the Lord was with the believers and as a result a great number turned to the Lord. It is important to note that the liminality of dispersion led some men into *communitas* expressed in working together in Antioch to proclaim the good news of the Lord Jesus.

Liminality for the Canadian Evangelical churches should lead to a stronger *communitas*, and that *communitas* will produce greater unity, fellowship and spiritual power, from which mission should emerge, a concept that is discussed in the section following.

5.1.1.3 Emergence and the Canadian Evangelical Church as a Complex Adaptive System

The third aspect of the missional model for the Canadian context, is that of Emergence. When all the parts of the system are working properly, something will emerge (Gell-Mann, 1994: 97-100) that is both unexpected and something that no one part of the system could singularly (Innes & Booher, 1999: 9-18) produce. This

view of the church as a living organism, a complex adaptive system, means that the church is a living entity, but more than this, that the church is the sum of its parts and that when all of the parts are working well (Ephesians 4:15-16), the system is healthy and thrives. As Diagram 7.1, in Appendix 1 below, shows, the church grows when it passes through suffering. It seems hard to understand why suffering is a necessary ingredient for the growth of the church until it is understood that the church is a living organism, a complex adaptive system, and that to thrive the church needs liminality, which leads to *communitas*, which in turn leads to emergence. This pattern of liminality, *communitas*, and then emergence is clearly outlined in Appendix 1, section 7.3.1 and diagram 7.1.

For the Evangelical churches in Canada, then, the marginalization of the church, the passing of the Christendom era, the rapid decline in attendance and the financial struggles of churches, may all be a great blessing, even though perceived as a great threat, because this liminality will lead to greater *communitas* as people within churches band together to revive the life of the church, as the churches band together to do a greater work for the Kingdom, and most of all, as the Holy Spirit impels the church, under the Lordship of Christ, to shine in an increasingly dark world. The question that the notion of emergence brings is, of course, what exactly will emerge once the church has entered into liminality, and then *communitas*? In the model presented at the beginning of this chapter, and in the New Testament (cf. Diagram 7.1 in Appendix 1), the pattern of liminality, *communitas*, emergence is simply that from the suffering, closer fellowship within the body and with the risen Savior occurs which in turn leads to greater missional outreach and impact. There are three key factors in the process of emergence and these are discussed briefly as follows:

1. Each Part Does its Work: Ephesians 4:7-16.

This notion of each part of the body, or system, doing its work is vital to the health and growth of the church. Each local church is a representation and part of the larger Body of Christ. However, each local church is comprised of a group of believers who come together in a specific geographic location around a common set of shared doctrines. Local churches are only healthy when each part of that local church does its work. Further to this, the global church of the Lord Jesus thrives and flourishes when each local church is functioning well and doing its

part within the global body of Christ. Commenting on Ephesians 4:7-16, MacArthur (1996) states:

The growth of the church is not a result of clever methods but of every member of the Body fully using his spiritual gift in close contact with other believers. Christ is the source of the life and power and growth of the church, which He facilitates through each believer's gifts and mutual ministry in **joints** touching other believers. The power in the church flows from the Lord through individual believers and relationships between believers. Where His people have close relationships of genuine spiritual ministry, God works; and where they are not intimate with each other and faithful with their gifts, He cannot work. He does not look for creativity, ingenuity, or cleverness but for willing and loving obedience. The physical body functions properly only as each member in union with every other member responds to the direction of the head to do exactly what it was designed to do.

2. The Holy Spirit Directs Mission: Acts 13:1-3.

The church of the Lord Jesus Christ is (Lang'at, 2009: 161-181) nourished and nurtured by the Tri-une God, and participates (Van Dyk, 2009: 225-236) in the mission of the Tri-une God. It was the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts and chapter 13 that instructed the leaders of the church in Antioch to both set aside and send Paul and Barnabas on their mission work of church planting amongst the Gentiles. The church at Antioch was birthed from the liminality or suffering of the diaspora, a diaspora spawned by the martyrdom of Stephen. The diaspora lead to *communitas* on a number of levels, firstly as the disciples banded together and shared the gospel wherever they went. Secondly as the church in Antioch grew out of the gospel preaching and Jerusalem sent Barnabas to observe and to minister. Barnabas in turn sequestered the services of Paul the apostle to assist him in the ministry at Antioch and for two years Paul and Barnabas taught the people at Antioch. This is the fellowship, unity and power that comes from the *communitas* that was the church at Antioch. It is because the church at Antioch was healthy, growing and, as Acts 13 shows us by the diversity and extent of leadership in Acts 13:1, each part was doing its work, that the Holy Spirit directs the church into further mission as seen in Acts 13:1-3. As MacArthur (1994) states:

Effective, strong churches inevitably have godly leaders, and the church **at Antioch** was no exception. God has always put a premium on spiritual leadership (Acts 6:3; 1 Tim. 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–9; cf. Hos. 4:9; Matt. 9:36). These five men were the heart of the ministry at Antioch.

Luke describes them as **prophets and teachers**, two important New Testament terms. **Prophets** played a significant role in the apostolic church (cf. 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 2:20; 3:5; 4:11). Like the apostles, they were preachers of God's Word and were responsible in the early years of the church to instruct the local congregations.

3. Leadership Equips and Deploys

The third aspect of emergence in the missional model for the Evangelical churches in Canada, is that, as the Spirit directs, obedient leadership functions to equip growing believers for ministry and service and then assists those growing believers to be deployed for works of service. In Acts 13:1-3 the next phase of the ministry of Paul and Barnabas emerged at a certain phase of that church's life. In Acts 11, the church was birthed and Barnabas is sent to teach and minister and in the process of doing this then calls Paul to assist him in doing this. By the time the reader comes upon Acts 13, two years later, there is a multiplicity of leadership within the Antioch church, leadership that has grown through the spiritual ministry of Paul and Barnabas. Ephesians 4:7-16 highlights the equipping role of the teaching and shepherding leadership within a local church. Acts 13:1-3 exemplifies the principles laid out in Ephesians 4:7-16. It is also interesting to note that (Acts 13:4-14:23) Paul and Barnabas not only led people to a saving faith in the Lord Jesus, but through that process local churches were started and Paul and Barnabas equipped and deployed leaders in those churches too. It is through the gifting (1 Corinthians 12) and enablement (Romans 12:4-8) of the Holy Spirit that leaders emerge, and who in turn are responsible to equip and deploy new leaders who, through the work of the Holy Spirit, continue to emerge within the local church. But, when every part of the Body is doing its work, according to Ephesians 4:7-16, it is not just leaders that emerge. Ephesians 4:7-16 also informs us that the whole body becomes healthier and stronger as each part does its work. The leadership exists to train God's people for works of service, in *communitas* the

focus of the Body is upon the task of God – the mission as defined in Matthew 28:19-20. When the Body is healthy, though complex and diverse, the mission emerges, because the church is missional in nature, as highlighted in chapter four of this thesis. As Skyttner (2005: 57) pointed out, “The purpose of a system is what it does.” The church is a missional community that exists for the glory of God by accomplishing the mission of making disciples from among every nationality (Matthew 28:19-20). If the purpose of the system is mission, then mission is what should emerge when the local church is healthy and functioning well. This mission is outward focused and, like all communities, exists because of liminality. It is to this mission, as the fourth and final component of the model, that we now turn our attention.

5.1.1.4 Mission and the Canadian Evangelical Church as a Complex Adaptive System

At this juncture we present the final component of the model for the growth of the Evangelical churches in Canada. This model has grown out of the preceding research, which has uncovered the following contextual realities:

1. The Evangelical churches in Canada are in decline. (Chapter 1 of this thesis).
2. The Delphi “experts” concur with the notion that the Evangelical churches in Canada are in decline, however, these experts express a range of proposed solutions to this decline. (Chapter 2 of this thesis).
3. The literature review acknowledges the decline of the Evangelical churches in North America and presents some of the current models to address this decline, models such as emergent, attractional and missional. (Chapter 3 of this thesis).
4. With these models in mind, chapter 4, through a diachronic biblical theology, sought to understand the Biblical notion of a missional community, since it seemed that the missional model was the best suited for the North American context according to the literature review. (Chapter 4 of this thesis).
5. Two key concepts have emerged through the process of this research, namely, that the church is a complex adaptive system, and that (Skyttner, 2005: 57) “the purpose of a system is what it does.” If the purpose of a system is what it does, then the church, as a complex adaptive system, has the purpose of mission, sent by God into this world to shine as a light in the darkness, both chapter 4 and Appendix

1 of this thesis attest to this missional nature of the church. (Chapter 5 of this thesis). This notion of mission as the purpose of the organism known as the church, is vital to the survival of the Evangelical churches in North America. The leadership of the church will need to courageously embrace the missional model of church life. The paradigm shift will need to move from a consumerist mentality to a discipleship and missional mentality. People will need to see the community through different eyes, no longer as a community that exists to inwardly care for itself, but a *communitas* that focuses on the task of mission as the urgent task of the Evangelical movement in the North American context. Within the missional model, the whole system, the whole body must work together in *communitas* to enable mission to emerge. The church cannot be an attractional force centered on a superstar leader and orator. Now, the church will need to be a missional force, grounded in the richness of the Tri-une God, functioning as a *communitas* sent by God into a hostile world, but a world that has great need, functioning together in unity, fellowship and power, equipped and deployed by the leadership of the churches, empowered and impelled by the Holy Spirit. All of the elements of missional community, described in chapter 4 of this thesis, will need to come into play if the Evangelical churches have any hope of fulfilling God's mandate for them. It is to this notion of mission, as the capstone and final element of the model for the growth of the Evangelical churches in Canada, that we now turn, understanding that this component of the model is immense, and that a great deal of in-situ research and observation needs to still be undertaken to refine and develop the missional model of church life within the North American context. There are many components that will remain unaddressed in this paper, but these components are mentioned in Chapter 6, "Areas for Further Research."

5.1.1.4.1 The Evangelical Churches as Missional Nodes

Evangelical churches need to adopt a missional ontology, to understand themselves as missionaries to the community of which they are a part. Stetzer & Putman, (2006: 7) illuminate this missional ontology when they state:

We are sent as God's missionary. The only question is where. Just as God is a missionary God, so the church is to be a missionary church. Jesus taught

that 'as the Father has sent me, so I am sending you' (John 20:21). Our purpose, therefore, is to go to this expression of life, culture and values and to face a fundamental challenge. That challenge is to learn to think about [our] culture in missional terms.

For a church to transition (Bridges, 2003: 23-98; Rendle, 2002; Herrington *et al.*, 2000) from a Christendom model to a missional model it will need to embrace three key methodologies together with a missional ontology. The methodologies are simply, "sow," "reap," and "grow".

5.1.1.4.1.1 Sow the Seeds

It seems foolish to assert that without sowing seeds there can be no crop. Yet, it may be necessary to assert this truth for the North American church. The Bible is replete with verses (Matthew 13:3, 24-27; 13:24-39; 4:3-14; John 4:34-38; 1 Corinthians 3:6-8) that allude to the sharing of the Gospel as sowing seed. It is really important for missional congregations to grasp that their role is to sow seed, but also that there are no guarantees that the sowing of seed simply leads to conversions! There are many factors (Stetzer & Putman, 2006: 44-48) that may inhibit the conversion of people to the gospel. Christians on mission will "recognize that there are cultural barriers (in addition to spiritual ones) that blind people from understanding the gospel. Our task is to find the right way to break through those cultural barriers while addressing the spiritual and theological ones as well." (Stetzer & Putman, 2006: 4).

Missional churches and missional Christians will need to study their communities, understand (Stetzer and Putman, 2006: 5-15) the culture and potential diversity of the people who form part of the surrounding community, and then seek to build redemptive relationships with those people. A Christendom church can (Stetzer & Putman, 2006: 44-71) become a missional church if it shifts its focus from attractional programs to missional pilgrims who are sowing seeds in their communities through vibrant, redemptive relationships that enable them to share the Gospel in contextually relevant ways. Stetzer & Putman, (2006: 44-236) render a helpful expose of how to transition a church into a missional modality, but it all begins with the concept that we are pilgrims on mission with a missionary God, and that God calls

us to sow seed in the same way that the Lord Jesus did, incarnationally and with contextual relevance (John 3: 4).

5.1.1.4.1.2 Reap the Harvest

In John 4:34-38, Jesus urged His disciples to see the spiritual harvest that lay before them. In 1 Corinthians 3:6 Paul sought to help his readers understand that within the Body of Christ, every member has a role to play in fulfilling the mission of God, and that no one aspect of fulfilling that mission is more important. Paul suggested that his role was to plant the seed amongst the Corinthians, and that Apollos, through his oratory, watered (gave further life giving nourishment to) the seed, but that ultimately it was God who caused the seed to take root and bear fruit in the salvation of the Corinthian believers. (Kistemaker, 2002: 104-109). As missional churches, it is not merely enough to sow the seed, it is also helpful to grasp that God has been working long before us and that there are times where God will grant a harvest predicated on the work of others who have gone before us. Missional Christians and missional churches realize that they need to sow the seed, but they also need to spend equal effort on reaping the harvest.

Stetzer, (2003: 187-202) assists North American churches in understanding the reaping process with his “evangelism journey” concept. Stetzer is helpful in this regard because he highlights the truth that evangelism is a process and that strong, incarnational relationships are central to the ability to move people through the personal phases of evangelism towards reaping the harvest. The Engel scale (Stetzer, 2006: 189) can assist Christians in understanding the process:

- 8: Awareness of a supreme being but no effective knowledge of the gospel
- 7: Initial awareness of the gospel
- 6: Awareness of the fundamentals of the gospel
- 5: Grasp of implications of the gospel
- 4: Positive attitude toward the gospel

- 3: Counting the cost
- 2: Decision to act
- 1: Repentance and faith in Christ

REGENERATION

- +1: Post-decision evaluation
- +2: Incorporation into the body
- +3: A lifetime of growth in Christ – discipleship and service

Sowing the seed will often engender steps -7 to -3, but it seems that steps -2 to +3 often need a human intermediary who can lead the new convert through these vital steps. This may be construed as the process of “reaping” the harvest that the seed planting has brought forth. Reaping a true harvest is dependant (Mark, 2009b: 1-93) upon sowing “good” seed and ensuring that the believer has walked through each of the seven steps, from -8 to -2, before repentance and faith in Christ. It is at steps +2 and +3 that missional believers need to provide intense support to the new believer. It is also at steps +2 and +3 that the church needs to redesign itself to be both welcoming (Stetzer & Putman, 2006: 52) and disciple-making (Hull, 2003) if missional churches hope to have fruit that remains. This leads us to the third aspect of the mission aspect of the model for growth, namely “grow” or disciple.

5.1.1.4.2 Grow in the Knowledge and Grace of Jesus

New disciples are nurtured (Hull, 2004: 79-96) to become mature disciples, and the measure of maturity is the integration of an obedient life to all that the Risen Christ has commanded (Matthew 28:19-20). The mature disciple is also a missional disciple (Stetzer & Putman, 2006: 119-152) who sees his or her calling as a missional calling. In this missional model of discipleship, ratiocinative knowledge is only part of the mature believer’s reality. Ratiocinative knowledge must also be translated (Frost, 2007: 125-129) into obedient living, which in turn is expressed as missional living.

5.2 An Application of the Model

All of the preceding research in chapters one through four has converged to produce the model presented in this chapter. This model is circular, not linear, precisely because church growth is not a cause and effect process, but rather a systemic interaction of a multiplicity of factors, beginning with liminality, moving from liminality to *communitas*, and then from *communitas* through the process of emergence so that mission will emerge. The system model is closed to show that it is self-replenishing, since the Evangelical churches that embark on mission will, through the process of mission, move to a state of liminality once more and so the cycle begins all over again.

Appendix 1, in the next chapter, shows this cycle, liminality-*communitas*-emergence-mission, working its way through the book of Acts and into the identity of the new entity called “church.” The Christendom model of church life seems to engender stagnation and death, whilst the missional model reveals the church to be a living organism, able to renew and replenish and grow in the face of great adversity. The Holy Spirit works within the missional community to ensure that the leadership and mission that emerges fits His, the Holy Spirit’s, agenda, such as we see in Acts 13:1-3, 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4:7-16.

5.2.1 The Model Applied in the Canadian Context

5.2.1.1 Liminality: Urgency, Crisis, Exile

In Chapter 1 of this thesis the reader encounters the liminality that now confronts the Canadian Evangelical churches. At the outset of this thesis the realization that the Evangelical churches are in marked decline initially caused great consternation for this author. Over the period of the research, and especially in looking at the book of Acts, it emerged that a state of liminality can actually prove to be a blessing, since the urgency, the sense of crisis, and the sense of exile, may lead believers to lean more on God’s strength than on human methodologies as a valid response to the emerging decline. It is not that we create a state of liminality through poor choices or scare

tactics. Rather, it would seem, we need to have an awareness that we are in a state of liminality, that things within the Canadian context are no longer as they used to be, that we are now living in a post-Christendom era and that this may actually be a blessing rather than a bane. The model places liminality as the first phase of moving to a state of health and potential growth. The leaders of Evangelical churches in Canada might change how they lead, and their measurements of success, if it is understood that we are now in a state of liminality as Evangelical churches. This model suggests that success is measured by how well the church moves to *Communitas* and then, through emergence, to missional lifestyles.

5.2.1.2 *Communitas*: Fellowship, Unity, Power

Once the reality of liminality is grasped, and understood, this should lead the Evangelical churches to a sense of *communitas*. *Communitas*, in turn, should produce fellowship, unity and power. At this juncture it is important to note that this proposition may be glaringly counter-intuitive to the previous methodologies of the attractional church model in which the tempo needs to be positive, upbeat and tending to “felt needs”. The Delphi survey in Chapter 2 of this thesis (in point 6 of Question 1 of the first iteration of Delphi) of the first round of the Delphi highlights the sense by the respondents that the church has withdrawn and is looking back with longing to the former days of Christendom. This model proposes that we acknowledge the state of liminality, that we embrace our current milieu, and that, much as the church in the book of Acts (see Appendix 1, Diagram 7.1), the liminality should actually lead to greater health and growth because it needs to live and act by faith (point 6 of Question 1 of the first Iteration of the Delphi survey) in the power of God rather than the preservation of Christendom! Further, the sense of liminality, when acknowledged, explained and embraced, will, according to this model, lead to a greater level of commitment from amongst the members, rather than diminishing it. (point 8 of Question 1 of the first iteration of Delphi, in chapter 2 of this thesis.) In fact, when the members and adherents grasp that their church is in a state of liminality, or urgency – crisis and exile, their commitment to one another and to the strengthening of the body increases, because they move from a consumer mindset in which church is about their needs to a *communitas* mindset in which they are joint

participants with the Lord Jesus in a state of exile. This sense of *communitas* will lead the believers within an Evangelical church to greater fellowship, unity and power as they together lean on God by faith and seek to work together to strengthen their local church. This sense of liminality should also lead to greater corporate prayer (as we see in the book of Acts when the disciples undergo persecution – cf. Appendix 1). This unity in prayer arising from *communitas* will address the concerns of pastors as expressed in the first iteration of the Delphi survey (point 7 of Question 1, in Chapter 2).

5.2.1.3 Emergence: Each Part Works, Holy Spirit Directs, Leadership Equips and Deploys

The next aspect of the model is that of emergence. When every part of the system is working, as it should, the result should be the health and the strength of the whole system. When the Evangelical churches in Canada acknowledge and embrace their liminality, the members who form a part of each church will come together in *Communitas* which will produce fellowship, unity and power (Appendix 1, and the church in Acts; cf. section 3.2.2 in chapter 3 of this thesis.) The church, as a complex adaptive system, functions best when every part of the system – the Spirit empowered and Spirit gifted membership – are working together in fellowship, unity and power. When such a condition of fellowship, unity and power exists, the Evangelical churches in Canada will see amazing things emerge, such as each part of the Body doing its work, enabling the leaders within the local churches to train, equip and deploy the membership within those churches. This training, equipping and deploying will have great impact as the Holy Spirit in turn directs the mission of the Evangelical churches in Canada through the leaders and members of these churches. This conception of ‘Emergence’ is developed in the section 4.5.2 of the literature review in chapter 4 of this thesis.

When the Evangelical churches in Canada embrace the current reality of liminality, and this leads to *Communitas* and then Emergence, the result should be a missional mode of function, which is the final component of the model, and to which we now turn in the next section.

5.2.1.4 Mission: Sow, Reap, Grow

Within a post-Christendom era, the attractional model of church, a model where the maxim: “if you build it they will come” no longer holds true (as the statistics of chapter 1 show), the church needs to embrace its liminality and as an exiled people in crisis, work together in *communitas*, equipped by leadership and empowered by the Holy Spirit. The church needs to regain its identity as a community sent by God into the world to bring blessing to the nations. This theme emerged powerfully in chapter 4 of this thesis, as a powerful motif that exists in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. The church needs to see itself as on mission with God within the North American context (this is in line with the large body of literature in section 3.2.2 and Diagram 3.2 earlier in this thesis.)

The research (Chapter 1 – the statistics; Chapter 2 – the Delphi Survey, and chapter 3 - the Literature Review) shows that Christianity in general, and Evangelical churches in particular, will increasingly find themselves relegated to the sidelines and thus marginalized within the emerging secular society that Canada is becoming. Church attendance is in decline and new ways of being the church and doing church ministry will need to be embraced. Churches will need to view themselves as communities on a mission with God and instead of thinking how it is that they might attract more people into the church building, they will need to creatively think of ways to go out into the community to act as servants to the community, to live incarnationally amongst the people of their community, to back their message with the authenticity of their lives.

The literature review of chapter 3 also pointed out that Canadian Evangelical churches will need to embrace a new scorecard to measure their success at doing the work of God. Church size should no longer be the measure of success, rather the church’s missional footprint should be the measurement of true success. The measurement of success is centered on how effectively the missional community is

interacting with the world around it. The believers within our churches need to see church as a place to fellowship, to be renewed and refreshed and fed, but all with the ultimate purpose of enabling each believer to move out into the community to build redemptive relationships. This leads us to the threefold missional footprint of “sow, reap, grow.”

5.2.1.4.1 Sow

The Christian who plays soccer can now see that pursuit as a place to build meaningful relationships and live out his or her faith in a way that sows seed in the hearts and lives of those who are teammates. The Christian who lives within a certain neighbourhood will pray for, and look for, and engage in, those opportunities that present themselves to serve a neighbour, to build a bridge of relationship that over time will open doors for conversation and for witness.

The leaders of the churches will need to find ways to equip believers to build good relationships with those who are unbelievers. The leaders of churches will need to continually work on a robust theology of engagement that enables the believers to be in the world and yet not of the world, to be so much a part of the lives of the lost whilst not themselves losing their way!

The church leadership will need to equip and train believers not just to have great marriages or healthy families or good work relationships as a part of their witness to the transforming power of Christ in their lives. The leaders will also need to equip believers to be sowers of the Gospel seed through prayer, and faith, and courage, and timing that is incisive!

5.2.1.4.2 Reap

In terms of reaping, Small groups and Care groups become paramount as a vehicle for reaping the harvest that has been cultivated through sowing. Small Groups and Care groups become catchment areas for the un-churched who have been awakened to the call of Christ upon their lives through the faithful witness of those who have been

“sowing” seed in their lives, as described in the previous paragraph. Small groups are designed to instruct new believers and not-yet believers concerning the Christian faith. Relational ties are paramount in these groups and the un-churched will far more readily attend a Small group with a Christian friend than they would attend a church filled with seemingly strange people doing seemingly strange things. Care groups are often developed as affinity groups in which people who have need can find common expression and move towards healing through the group dynamic and Christian witness and care that is a part of that dynamic.

5.2.1.4.3 *Grow.*

The Delphi survey also revealed (section 2:11:1) that there is amongst the people of God within Canada a growing biblical illiteracy! This does not augur well for a people who need to witness to the transforming power of the risen Christ! If mission is to be undertaken with effectiveness and fruit bearing, then the people of God will need to know the Word of God that they wish to share with those they are seeking to lead to a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This leads to the third component of the Mission aspect of the model, namely “Grow,” or “Disciple.” Evangelical churches that disciple believers will be stronger internally, and they will also have an increased capacity for witness, as the disciples grow in faith and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. To grow in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus is to grow into the likeness of the Lord Jesus and thus to become more incarnational in lifestyle each day. The believers within the Evangelical churches in Canada need to grow in their knowledge of the Bible and in their maturity as Christians. If the churches are spiritually and theologically weak, so too will be their witness!

5.2.2 The Summum Bonum: Why I am Encouraged

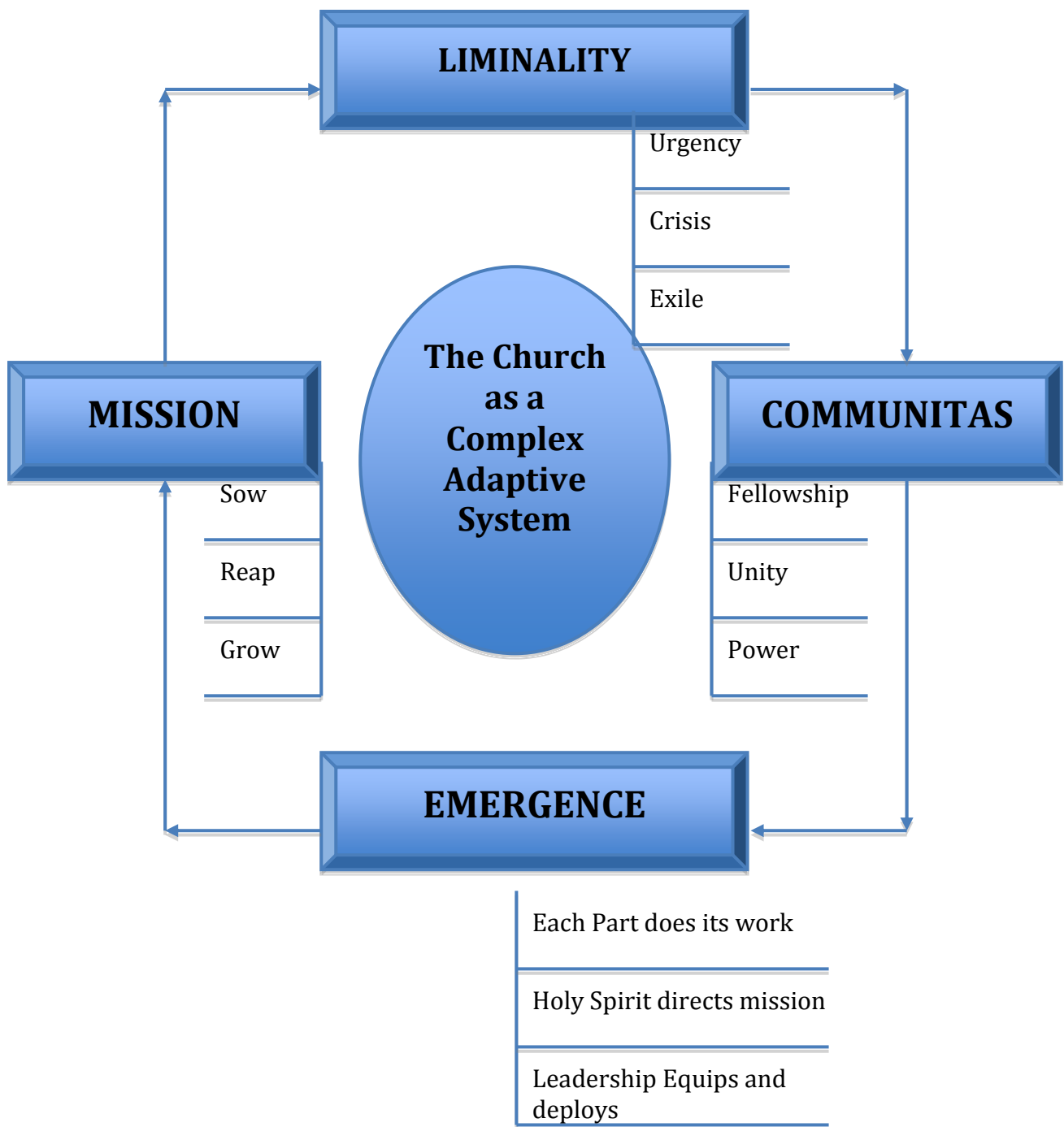
This model represents years of research, reflection, interaction and refinement. When I began this process of researching the decline of the Evangelical church in Canada few were talking about the decline or even acknowledging that we are in fact in decline. Now, five years later, I am astonished at the sense of fear and apprehension that permeates the statements of some concerning the current state of the

Evangelical churches in Canada! This apprehension is quite understandable, though, perhaps not altogether in synchronization with the Biblical material on the early church. There can be little doubt that the Canadian Evangelical church is on the periphery of Canadian society, and that there is, indeed a growing atheism amongst Canadians or, if not atheism, a growing number of those who practice an individualized spirituality.

Yet, I find it strangely refreshing that the church is not in a privileged position any longer, and that those who identify themselves with Christ may have to “go outside of the camp” to do so. This is encouraging because it means that we have an opportunity to return to the Bible, to renew our understanding of the ontology of the church and to allow the ontological realities of the church to impact the praxiological functions of the church. In short, the current state of liminality is a blessed place to be because it causes the churches of God in Canada to come back to God for strength, for power and for effective witness. Within Canada, to follow the Lord Jesus Christ is to make some hard choices, and to often have to make those hard choices again each day. To follow the Lord Jesus Christ in Canada in the 21st century means that believers will need to work together, pray together and enter the battle for the souls of men! It is no longer fashionable or easy to be a Christian! This is a good thing! It is no longer easy to pastor a church, this is a good thing. A humility and graciousness is descending upon many churches and many leaders of churches as together we realize that we are exiles in a foreign land, that there is urgency and crisis confronting us and that together, in *communitas*, we can do what before we foolishly believed we could do on our own.

We are a pilgrim people of God in a secular society. This means we must learn to trust God more, and humbly fellowship together in the mission of God to which we are called. Our success is no longer measured by the sizes of our churches but rather by our commitment to the mission. As the Father sent the Lord Jesus, so now He has sent us, there is no more blessed realization than this: “We, God’s people, are on mission with God!”

Figure 5.1 A Missional Model for the Canadian Context



Chapter 6: Areas for Further Research

The field of study chosen for this thesis is vast, namely, the Evangelical churches across all of Canada, with a view to understanding the current state of widespread decline within those churches, and the proposal of a possible model to arrest this decline and engender health and missional vitality. There are a number of areas that intersect with this theme of missional vitality and thus warrant much greater research. Further research in the area of church life and Christianity will be of great benefit to the Canadian sociologist and practitioner of religion, because this research will assist in understanding what Canada is becoming, as her religious and demographic landscape undergoes tectonic shifts. Areas to research further would be:

6.1 The Spiritual Landscape of Canada

Is Canada actually becoming a secular nation (Thiessen, 2006), or are people imbibing a more individualized (Coates *et al.*, 2007; Beaman, 2006) spirituality? If Canadians are pursuing an individualized spirituality, why do they prefer this type of religious profile to more organized and communal expressions of faith?

6.2 Effective Evangelistic Methods and Effective Evangelistic Churches

Evangelical churches across Canada need insights into effective evangelistic methods that fit their own particular context. Research into effective evangelistic churches and the principles (Wilkinson, 2010) (not necessarily the practices) that lead to effectiveness need to be replicated with contextual sensitivity. It would prove immensely helpful to research, catalogue and publish the various effective methods that are utilized across the Canadian church landscape. Within this research attention to the following key areas would be helpful:

- How is “effective” evangelism defined? Does effective apply to the number of conversions, or to the number of evangelistic opportunities, or to the number of committed disciples over an extensive period of time?
- How involved is the entire congregation in the evangelism process? Within effective evangelistic churches, is the impetus a charismatic leader or a missionally minded church congregation?
- What correlation is there between effective evangelism and effective discipleship?

6.3 Worship Philosophy and Worship Styles

The Evangelical churches in North America in general, and in Canada in particular, would benefit greatly from research (Engle & Basden, 2004; Carson, Hughes & Ashton, 2002) into the range of worship styles across the North American context with special reference to:

- Reflexivity with regards to worship styles
- Inclusivity with regard to worship styles
- The correlation between church outreach and worship styles
- The impact and effect of worship wars upon the health and vitality of particular Evangelical churches that have experienced these struggles over worship styles.
- The ways in which some churches have successfully avoided the worship controversy and the impact of this avoidance of conflict upon the health and missional vitality of those churches? Is there a correlation between missional focus and diminution of conflict over worship?

6.4 The Place of Small Groups

Small Group ministry has become widespread within Canadian Evangelical church life. Research into the way in which Small groups are developed within Canadian Evangelical churches with special reference to:

- Curriculum design and use for Small groups in Canadian Evangelical churches
- Leadership selection and development within Small groups in Canadian Evangelical churches
- Small group ministry within the local church. As an example, how do the Small group members serve within their local church as a group? Is the Small group involved in intentional outreach within the community? Is the Small group an effective tool for care of the members?
- What is the lifecycle of Small groups within the Canadian Evangelical churches?

6.5 The Effectiveness of Preaching and the Need for Preaching

Is preaching occurring within the Canadian Evangelical churches and if so, which of the following elements (Kysar & Webb, 2006) impact the Canadian Evangelical churches:

- Length of sermon
- Style of sermon
- Use of media within sermons
- Interactivity within the sermons, for example, Question and Answer periods following the sermon, texting questions during the sermon, tweeting concerning the sermon content and issues
- Digital reproduction of the sermon and the level of usage or listenership to sermons that are available on-line and on compact disc
- The place of the sermon in the overall leadership and change process within the local church
- The pedagogical effectiveness of preaching in the context of a perceived diminution (Mohler, 2001: 53-74) of Scriptural authority

6.6 Peacemaking and Peace within the Local Churches

Canadian Evangelical churches are not immune to conflict, and research (Poirier, 2006; VanYperen, 2002) into conflict within Canadian Evangelical churches would prove helpful, especially with special reference to:

- The causes of conflict within local churches
- The capacity to retain both members and leadership through the process of conflict within Canadian Evangelical churches
- The capacity to stem the flow of the “circulation of the saints” (Bibby, 2003) due to conflict within Canadian Evangelical churches. Which churches are effective at working through conflict in a way that brings peace and healing to the Body to ensure that churches become peacemakers rather than seeking to be peacekeepers?

6.7 Governance Models within Canadian Evangelical Churches

It would be helpful to research the various governance models (Kaiser, 2006; Carver & Carver, 2006; Cordeiro, 2004; Stahlke & Loughlin, 2003; Andringa & Engstrom, 2002; employed within Canadian Evangelical churches with special reference to:

- Effective, missionally focused, church boards
- Effective church structures that do not use a board model
- Effective strategic planning, and strategic plan implementation
- The role of the pastor and staff
- The role, and level of commitment, of lay-leadership
- Which governance models ameliorate conflict
- Which governance models lead to greater volunteer involvement

6.8 Time Usage and Time Strain within the Modern Canadian Landscape

The average Canadian has less (StatsCan, 2007) discretionary time for leisure and volunteerism. It would prove helpful to Canadian Evangelical churches to research how Canadians use their time and how to design ministry for time challenged parishioners. Areas for research could be:

- The impact of time stress on family life
- The impact of time stress on the spiritual life of Canadians
- The impact of time stress on church attendance
- The impact of time stress on church volunteer ministry
- The correlation, if any, between time stress and conflict within the local church
- The best times to offer church services for time stressed Canadians
- Support ministries such as child and youth drop in and childcare for time stressed Canadians

6.9 Strategic Disciple-making within the Evangelical churches in Canada

If the missional model proposed in chapter 5 is to be effective the Canadian Evangelical churches may need to think through the process of strategic (Malphurs,

2009) disciple making. Intrinsic to effective disciple making within the local churches may be aspects such as:

- Pre-Discipleship (Mark, 2009a) for seekers and those who want to know how to become a Christian
- The disciple making pastor (Hull, 2003)
- The disciple making church (Hull, 2003)
- The model of Jesus Christ as disciple maker (Hull, 2004)
- The power of small worlds (Buchanan, 2002) and the groundbreaking theory of networks that impact the growth and health of the disciple in the disciple making process
- The impact (Stetzer, 2003) of post-modernism upon effective disciple making
- How to ensure that a missional heartbeat permeates the disciple making process (John 20:21)
- How to ignite life-long (Thiessen, 2006: 115-117) spiritual passion and spiritual commitment (Hull, 1997) within disciples in such a way that church attendance and church ministry are seen as a vital component of modern Christian living

6.10 Developing Systems Sensitive Leadership

If we view the church as a complex adaptive system (Richardson, 1996), as suggested in the previous chapters of this thesis, then a commitment to systems sensitive (Armour & Browning, 2000) leadership may prove extremely helpful. Pastors and church leaders may benefit greatly from training in systems theory (Senge, 2006).

A helpful example of systems theory, and systems thinking, in everyday life is presented (Stella, 2010) in a number of systems models developed by i-See systems. Another helpful example of systems thinking, especially in terms of church life and church growth, is that presented by John Hayward (2010). It seems that further research and writing on this aspect of systems and systems thinking will yield much rich fruit for the Evangelical churches and the leadership of Evangelical churches in Canada.

6.11 Planting Missional Churches within Canada

If the Evangelical churches in Canada hope to survive and even thrive, missional church planting (Stetzer, 2006) may need to become a focus of Evangelical churches across Canada.

Chapter 7: APPENDIX 1: A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE WORD “CHURCH”

7.1 The Word “Church”

There are varying conceptions of the meaning of the word “church” or “ἐκκλησία” (from the Koine Greek). One author (Farrow 1999: ix) feels that “not since the time of Paul has the question of ecclesial identity been a more pressing one than it is today”.

Carson’s quote (2002: 27) of Nathan Soderblom's incisive comment is on the target concerning the power of bible words, he states: “Philology is the eye of the needle through which every theological camel must enter the heaven of theology.” Boyer (1962: 25) also gives sound warning with reference to the challenges of semantics in biblical interpretation and the pitfalls of etymology apart from context. The meaning one attaches to the word “church” affects one's ecclesiology (O’ Donovan 1996: 151), especially one's view of the nature and the purpose of the church, whether “ Missional” (Hirsch 2006: 16), “Functional” (van Gelder 1998: 88), “ Edificational” (Olson 2002: 44), or “Emergent” (Anderson 2006: 8). As this brief overview of the perceptions of the word “church” reveals, it is important to attempt to understand its meaning as closely approximated to its Biblical intent and first century *sitz im leben*” as possible. The pre-cursor to our review of the word “church” is the astute warning given by Carson (2002: 29) that: “One of the most enduring of errors, the root fallacy presupposes that every word actually has a meaning bound up with its shape or its components. In this view, meaning is determined by etymology; that is by the root or roots of a word.” With this clear warning from Carson the thesis moves to the question: What does the word “church” mean in its original, first century context?

The word for church in the *Koine* (New Testament) Greek language is “ἐκκλησία”, transliterated – *ekklesia* (Balz & Schneider 1990) and has various meanings such as national assembly, congregation, congregational assembly, church and (the) Church. Arndt & Gingrich (1979: 240), give a number of meanings for this word as follows:

1. The classical (pre-New Testament) meaning of the word is “assembly, as a regularly summoned political body”.
2. The Septuagint refers to the “congregation of the Israelites, esp. when gathered for religious purposes”.
3. The word is also used in the New Testament to refer to “the Christian church or congregation”.

In *contrast* to this rendering of “ἐκκλησία”, is a more traditional view as articulated by Vine (1997: 76), which suggests that the meaning of the word is derived from two root words meaning to “call out” or to “be called out from”. Boyer (1962: 25) amongst many others uses this concept of “called out” to support the thesis that the church is unique and called-out of the world as a separate entity. When the etymology of the word is segregated from its broader historical and philological context a case might be made for presenting the church as a group of people who are, by virtue of their inclusion in the “church” separated and disconnected from the world. This view of the church, as called out from and distinctive to the world could impinge upon any meaningful theology of engagement (Anthony 2007) by the church with the world. The broader range of evidence presents a different perspective on the word “church” and the resulting relationship of the church to the world. William Barclay (1974: 70) offers helpful insight concerning the nature of the word “church” he states: “F.J.A. Hort rightly points out that originally the word does not mean, as is so often stated, a body of people who have been picked out from the world. It has not in it that exclusive sense. It means a body of people who have been ‘summoned out’ of their homes to come and meet with God; and both in its original Greek and Hebrew usages, that sense was not exclusive but inclusive.” The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Kittel *et al.*, 1985: 487-536) enhances this “non-exclusive” conception of the church assembly when it states: “It must also be asked why the NT community avoids a cultic term for itself and selects a more secular one. ‘Assembly,’ then, is perhaps the best single term, particularly as it has both a concrete and an abstract sense i.e. for the assembling as well as the assembly”. Rogers (1993: 458-479) enhances our understanding of “ἐκκλησία” even further when he points out that the church is an assembly called together by God for a *specific purpose*.

In reviewing the etymology of the word “church”, it can be concluded that the church is a called out assembly, called out by God for a special purpose. This assembly is not called

out of the world, to be segregated from the world, but rather called into assembly by God from among the world, but assembled now for a specific purpose. This concept of “ἐκκλησία” as a called out assembly for a specific purpose within the world should not surprise us. The Lord Jesus Christ set the theological foundation (Brown 1997: 354) of the nature of the church in the Gospel of John chapters 15 to 17. In these chapters, 15 to 17, the Lord Jesus predicts His death, burial, resurrection and ascension into heaven. He affirms to the disciples that the world will hate them because the world has hated Him (John 15:18-27). Christ also affirms that He has chosen them out of the world (John 15:19) and yet He wants them to remain *in* the world (John 17:15-16). Carson (1991: 565) brings great clarity to the intent and scope of these verses (John 17:15-16) when he comments:

“The Christians task, then, is not to be withdrawn from the world, nor to be confused with the world (hence the reminder of v. 16, repeating the thought of v. 14b.), but to remain in the world maintaining witness to the Truth by the help of the Paraclete (15:26-27), and absorbing all the malice the world can muster, finally protected by the Father Himself, in response to the prayer of Jesus”.

Carson (2008) grapples with a theology of engagement for the church in his newer work on the topic entitled: “Christ and Culture Revisited”. In this work Carson attempts to define culture and then utilizes Niebuhrs’ fivefold framework (2008:13-29) of “Christ against Culture”, “The Christ of Culture”, “Christ above Culture”, “Christ and Culture in Paradox”, “Christ the Transformer of Culture”. Throughout this erudite treatment of the topic, Carson grapples with the difficult question of how culture impacts the Christian and by extension the church and how, in turn the Christian and church should engage and critique aspects of culture that do not reflect a Kingdom ethic and thus undermine the believers witness.

The preceding research highlights that church is a called together assembly, called together from the world, yet with the purpose of remaining in the world. This enmeshes a theology of engagement with a theology of holiness, a tension that is germane to being a part of the kingdom people of God (Stott 1986: 252-337; Bonhoeffer 1996: 21-22; Piper 1998: 11-228). The Christian is called out of the world system by the Father to new life in the Son but must still live within the world as a witness by the power of the Holy Spirit. An understanding of this tension between the holiness of the believer and the need for her to

imbibe a robust theology of engagement is vital within the Canadian context, as articulated by Bibby (2004: 85-119). In Canada, the words “Christian” and “church” carry a great deal of semantic weight and are even seen (negatively) as a powerful but unseen hegemony (Beaman 2008). Our modern conceptions of the word must yield to the definition that accords with the Bible, namely, a group of people called together from amongst the world as a new community of people who exist within the world to engage the world as a transformed holy witness to the living Christ. The Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament (Balz & Schneider 1990: 410-415) renders an extensive treatment on the word “ἡ ἐκκλησία”. The key thoughts of that treatment as summarized in point form below:

1. There are 114 occurrences of ἡ ἐκκλησία in the NT and they are unevenly distributed. There are only 3 occurrences in the Gospels, all in Matthew (16:18; 18:17). The word appears most frequently in Paul’s letters and in Acts (23 occurrences). It appears twice in Hebrews. Among the Catholic Epistles, it is found only in 3 John (3 occurrences) and James (once). Of the 20 occurrences in Revelation, 19 are in formalized phrases in the letters to the seven churches in Revelation chapters 1-3.
2. In a series of passages which reflect the earliest Christian usage, we see the phrase ἡ ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ, “church of God” (1 Corinthians 1:2; 10:32; 11:22; 15:9; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Gal 1:13; in 1 Corinthians 11:16, 22; 1 Thessalonians 2:14; 2 Thessalonians 1:4). Here the possessive genitive, “of God”, is vitally important and helps to define the notion of “church” as the holy people of God, a concept which has strong antecedent theology in the Old Testament revelation.
3. This term (ἡ ἐκκλησία) was used because it corresponded with the eschatological self-understanding of the Church, which understood itself to be the company elect by God and determined by him to be the center and crystallization-point of the eschatological Israel now being called into existence by him.

Such a notion of the nature of the church accords well with the New Testament evidence in the Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles. It is to this wealth of material that we now turn our attention.

7.2 The Church in the Gospels

The Gospels form a bridge between the Old Testament and the New Testament in which Jesus is the “climax of the Scriptures” (Snodgrass 2001: 217). As a bridge, the Gospels link us to the Old Testament but also align the reader to the fact that “there is both continuity and discontinuity between the Old Testament and the New Testament”. (Snodgrass 2001: 209). The continuity between the two Testaments lies in the fact that both Israel and the church are presented as the people of God, as seen in Exodus 6:7 and 1 Peter 2:10. The distinction between the Old Testament and New Testament is seen in that: “the New Testament authors view themselves as interpreting the texts of the Old Testament, and doing so in light of the conviction that what God has done through Jesus Christ for the salvation of all the world was anticipated by the work of God in and through the people of Israel, the primary witness to which can be read in the pages of the OT”. (Achte-meier *et al.* 2001: 11-12). What do the Gospels reveal about the nature of the church? How did the climax of history, Jesus Christ as the risen Son of God according to 1 Corinthians 15:1-3 and as Head of the Church according to 1 Corinthians 12:27, present the nature and purpose of the church during His earthly ministry? Tidball (2000: 409) is helpful:

“Matthew twice refers to ‘the church’ (16:18; 18:15), but these are the only instances of the word “ekklesia” in the Gospels. Evidently, some form of ongoing and organized congregation of believers is in mind. According to Matthew 16:18 Jesus Christ commits the privilege of interpreting his teaching authoritatively to his disciples and assures them that the church will never be defeated by any natural or supernatural earthly or cosmic, opposition. According to Matthew 18:15 the theme is the life of the local congregation. It is to be a community in which broken relationships are restored, and only after several attempts at reconciliation have failed is it to become a community which enforces discipline and draws clear boundaries.”

The Gospels do not contain much material on the church as “ekklesia”. On the other hand, as the next sections clearly show, the book of Acts and the epistles do contain a large amount of material on “ekklesia” – the church. The Gospels are important because they reveal the mind of Christ on this new entity called the church. It is new because it no longer focuses on one nation, Israel, as the chosen people – but now broadens that focus to

every tribe, tongue, and nation as set forth by the risen Christ in Matthew 28:19-20. To summarize, the two direct references to “ekklhsia” or “church”, and the parting commission of the Lord Jesus to His disciples in the Gospels unveils three core elements concerning the church as follows:

1. *The church is an organized, ongoing, and growing entity that will not be defeated by any natural or supernatural force or enemy.* A later section discusses how this principle works itself out *de jure*. It seems most helpful to understand this promise of the triumph of the church of Jesus Christ as applicable to the Universal Church over the ages in different locations at different times (Grudem, 2000: 857). This means that the church in Africa in the 21st century might fulfill this promise more effectively than the church in North America, whilst in the 19th century the opposite might have been true. Revelation 2 and 3 (Kistemaker 2002: 105-177; Phillips 2001: 31-77; Morris 2000: 57-84; Gaebelin e.d., 1981: 430-460) indicate that different churches in different geographic locations face different contextual challenges that enhance or impede growth at any given time. This truth alone should caution us to look with greater acuity and depth at the promise of Matthew 16:18. The fact that the Lord Jesus promises to build His church and that the gates of Hell will not prevail against the church, does not necessarily guarantee that in every location of the world the church will always thrive. The existence of cultures inherently resistant to the Gospel means that at certain times the making of disciples will be an immense challenge requiring slow, careful, hard work, often with very small pockets of fruit. The evidence cited in chapter 1 of this thesis indicates that Canada in the 21st century has become a culture resistant to the Gospel. The call and promise of Matthew 28:19, 20 is no less compelling, but, for church ministry practitioners in Canada, must be tempered with the knowledge that the culture has changed, dramatically (Bibby 2004:14-15).
2. *The church is a community in which broken relationships are to be restored.* If there is anything a watching world finds incongruous with what they feel the church should be, it is that the Evangelical church lacks organizational credibility, love and integrity (Bibby 2004: 115; Theron & Lotter 2008: 7). It is not that we all agree on every doctrinal minutia, since that utopia is impossible in modern pluralistic Canada. The world longs to see an authentic group of

Christ followers modeling the principles of Matthew 18:15 (Theron & Lotter 2008: 8). In this scenario, differences are authentically engaged and the objective Truth of the Scriptures is brought to bear on the discourse in a loving and humble fashion to ensure that community is unbroken, whilst ideologies and faulty perspectives are lovingly challenged (Theron & Lotter 2008:10).

3. *The church has a responsibility to discipline those who refuse to embrace mutual forgiveness and relational restoration.* The church, as a community, must act in community when the strength and health of that community is threatened by discord through misunderstanding and sin (Lewis & Booth 1996: 437, 438). The church has the responsibility (Adams 1974: 27) to undertake progressive steps of discipline as outlined in Matthew 18:15-20.

The Gospels lay the foundation concerning the nature of the church. The two occurrences of the word “church” in the Gospels point us to a group of people called into assembly. This assembly is a community in which the risen Lord is present, in which broken relationships must be restored, and which will grow and prosper at different times in different parts of the world. This foundation is helpful, even if the aspects of the nature of the church in the Gospel are somewhat rudimentary. The material concerning the nature of the church is developed and refined in the Acts and the Epistles. It is to these infallible and authoritative sources that we now turn our attention.

7.3 The Church in the Acts of the Apostles

“If you have a new world, you need a new church. You have a new world.” (McLaren, 2006: 15). Perhaps the need is not a “new” church but a revitalized church that has returned to the principles of what it means to *be* church as expounded in the New Testament (Theron & Lotter 2008: 4). The Book of Acts provides a wealth of information concerning the formation and development of the church and for this reason, an extensive review of the passages that relate to church health and church growth is presented in Appendix 1. The genre of Acts and the relationship of the Acts material to the modern church stand in critical tension. Is the Acts material descriptive or prescriptive? Is it historical narrative that describes how the early church was birthed and developed or is it prescriptive material that dictates how the church should function today? McLaren (2006: 27) describes the prescriptive approach to Acts in this way: “Unfortunately what tends to

happen next is that we latch onto some peripheral matter of early church life and prescribe it as the missing feature. It's what my friend Peter Morris calls the Last Detail, or the Lost Detail-the thing that will make all the difference once it is restored". The Book of Acts was not written as a prescriptive manual for the church throughout the ages, as Jensen (1981: 202) points out: "Acts was not written to furnish a system of doctrine for the church, or even to do much interpreting of the tremendous truths of the gospel. That truth was assigned by the Spirit of God to those who were later inspired to write the epistles. Acts reports the gospel in action, and it is the Christian student's opportunity to seek out the universal, timeless, historically backed principles, by which he and the church may live and serve God." The book of Acts renders a historical account (Achteimeier *et al.*, 2001: 247) of the birth and growth of the New Testament church. This history is written with a specific edification purpose in view, as Arnold (2002: 5) points out:

"In his introductions both to the Gospel and to the book of Acts, Luke addresses himself to a man named Theophilus. This individual is already a follower of Christ and Luke writes to him so that he may "know the certainty" of the things he has been taught (Luke 1:4). Acts is thus not an evangelistic tract, a defense brief for Paul's trial, or a piece of literature for its own sake. Acts is written by a believer to help another believer and probably a great many more".

Marguerat (2002: 27) argues that Acts is threefold apology, forged to counter Judaism, Paganism and Roman political fears. Whilst Acts has apologetic interlocutions (Marguerat, 2002: 29), the goal of this historical narrative is to "provide Lucan Christianity with an identity". (Marguerat, 2002: 31) This historical account yields many rich principles concerning the nature and function of the church, as Toussaint points out: "The Book of Acts gives today's Christians basic information and insights into the early church." (Walvoord & Zuck, 1985). The book of Acts does not prescribe that the church of today function in exactly the same way as the church of the first century. In fact, even in the book of Acts itself, we find that there is change and development in the ministry procedures of the church. Longenecker (Gaebelein & Douglas, *eds.* 1981: 331) highlights this change and development within Acts through special reference to the appointment of seven spiritual men to serve table, he states:

"Second, the early church seems to have been prepared to adjust its procedures, alter its organizational structure, and develop new posts of responsibility in

response to existing needs for the sake of the ongoing proclamation of the Word of God Luke’s narrative here suggests that to be fully biblical is to be constantly engaged in adapting traditional methods and structures to meet existing situations, both for the sake of the welfare of the whole church and for the outreach of the gospel.”

This principle of adaptation of traditional methods and the creation of new methods for ministry effectiveness, is readily observed in the New Testament epistles. In the epistles we discover that the fledgling New Testament churches do not follow exactly the pattern laid down in Acts and often expand on the principles given in Acts. Often, the churches in the epistles also initiate new ways of doing and being the church. The following chart outlines a few examples of the “church” principle in Acts and the variation on the application of this “church” principle in the epistles. The reader will quickly observe that the “church” principle in Acts carries through to the epistles, but the way in which the principle is applied between Acts and the Epistles differs, sometimes markedly and sometimes subtly.

When the nature and purpose of the church are distorted or imbalanced, pathology and unhealth ensues (Grudem, 2000: 873-876). If those who are practitioners and leaders within church life lose sight of the very nature of the church and its central purpose, to bring glory to God, they may develop an organization that does many things – and even does those many things with excellence, yet does not do those things that God has mandated and designed for His church. In the process of doing many things that we think are “church” we may undermine the very strength, health and witness of the church. It is thus imperative to return to a clear understanding of God’s design of the church and His purpose for the church.

7.3.1 The Three Dimensional Purpose of the Church – The Glory of God through Exaltation (worship), Evangelism (outreach) & Edification (discipleship and biblical teaching)

There exists a great deal of debate about whether or not church praxis should focus on church health or church growth and whether these two elements are, in fact, mutually

exclusive. Take for instance the statement by Samuel Rima concerning the tension of church growth and church health: “Other casualties have been in the area of congregational and spiritual formation. For many churches that have attained the status of a mega church the concern I most often hear from pastors is, “We’ve become a mile wide and an inch deep.” Such rapid growth does not easily lend itself to the establishment and fostering of the intimate sense of community so essential to the healthy and holistic spiritual formation of believers. . . . What I am trying to say is that when our sole focus is on growth and reaching a certain numerical goal, to the exclusion of other equally vital signs of ministry, mega church mania becomes more destructive than productive.” (2002: 16). There are some who would go even further than Rima to actually denounce the church growth movement and the concept of church growth as unhealthy. MacNair and Meek are gentle protagonists of church health as opposed to church growth, they state: “When a church is primarily committed to numerical growth, it easily accepts the lowest possible standards of commitment and lifestyle that conforms to the world’s practices. The pursuit of maturity falls to the wayside.” (MacNair & Meek 1999: 2). Many other works discourse this tension between church health and church growth (Batson 1999; Engle & McIntosh eds. 2004; Olson 2002; Moody 2006). Perhaps the best way to resolve this tension is review the purpose of the church. It is the premise of this paper that the church exists to bring glory to God. Further, God is glorified in His church when three dynamic elements are held in tension, namely, exaltation – through loving, worshipful service, evangelism – through word, deed and life, and edification through effective discipleship and biblical teaching. These elements are discussed more thoroughly below.

7.3.1.1 The Purpose of Evangelism (outreach)

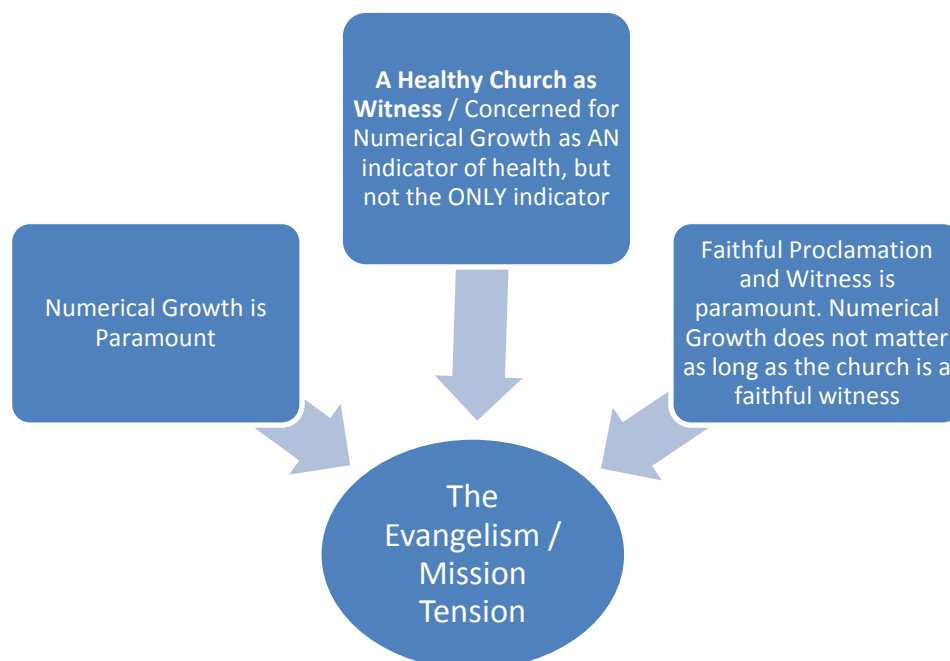
This is, perhaps, the most contentious aspect of the Basis Theoretical material. Did the early church, as described in the Acts and the Epistles, concern itself with evangelism and a focus on numerical growth? Alternatively, did the early church concern itself with mission (faithful witness to the finished work of Christ through proclamation and deed) without too much concern for numerical growth? Some might argue that evangelism is a part of the mission of the church. Wagner and McGavran well understand this tension between effective evangelism (numerical growth) and mission (faithful proclamation not measured by numerical growth) and state, “Is *God* concerned that countable persons are won to Christ? . . . Some fear numbers because they see one soul as of infinite value. Christ died for each one, hence every soul is worth the entire effort of all mission from the

day of Pentecost on. They argue that a church or a mission that over a fifty year period leads fifty souls to the feet of Christ is as pleasing to God as one that in the same period wins fifty thousand and plants the church firmly in an entire countryside.” (1990: 27).

What does the New Testament say about effectiveness as opposed to faithfulness? Is the church called to be an *effective* witness or is the church called to be a *faithful* witness? Is evangelism and the conversion of souls the main task of the New Testament church? Alternatively, is evangelism part of the multi-faceted life of the church? There truly is no simple answer to this tension, which can often pendulum to the right, or left of the continuum –of which either extreme is unhealthy for the church, as shown in figure 7.1 below. Perhaps there is a third way in which church health is paramount for effective witness and, one of the indicators of a healthy church is numerical growth through conversions because of evangelism.

There is no shortage of material contending that the church is only effective when it is making numerical headway in the realm of conversions. In this camp of “numerical growth is paramount” (on the left of the diagram).

Figure 7.1 The Faithfulness vss. Growth Tension



In the “numerical growth is paramount” category, one could easily cite such works as Borden (2003), Kaiser (2006), McGavran & Wagner (1990). There are an equal number of protagonists for the other position (faithful proclamation vs. numerical growth) as seen in Dever (2004), MacNair (1999), Olson (2002). This “either-or” tension has a profound effect upon the unity of the church. Sadly, a great deal of vilification occurs from either the faithfulness camp or the effectiveness camp. The leaders of Willow Creek Church exemplify a recent example of this kind of effectiveness vs. faithfulness tension in their much-publicized “confession” (2007). In this confession, the leaders of the church candidly admit that many components of their seeker sensitive methodology is not producing committed followers of Christ. Both Hybels (2007) the senior pastor and Hawkins (2007) the executive pastor of Willow Creek are very candid concerning their admission that, in spite of spending millions of dollars on specific programs to strengthen believers spiritually, the matching spiritual return on investment seems glaringly absent. Perhaps the problem with Willow Creek is not their desire to win the lost as much as it is their mechanisms for spiritual growth and development. One can argue the stylistic differences and debate whether pragmatism has overwhelmed principle in the case of Willow Creek. It is sufficient to note that there is a great chasm between proponents of effective vs. faithful witness of the church. Within the “faithful witness” camp there are many who contend that the church does not exist to win the lost but to edify the saved, and because of this core belief they are strongly critical of those who seek to reach the lost through a “seeker sensitive” model. A very strong opponent of the “seeker sensitive” or effectiveness vs. faithfulness model is Gary Gilley. He quotes Os Guinness and states: “Os Guinness recognizes this when he writes, ‘[Take for example] the megachurches subordination of worship and discipleship to evangelism and all three to entertainment, a problem that is already the Achilles heel of evangelicalism.’” (2005: 79). Perhaps the real problem lies not in the reality of the task of evangelism, the Scriptures are replete (Mark 13:10; 16:15; Acts 8:25, 40; 10:42; 16:10; 20:24; Romans 1:1, 9, 15; 15:20) with the call to witness to the lost (Acts 1:8) and to make disciples from amongst all kinds of people (Matthew 28:19-20). The tension between effective witness vs. faithful witness seems to lie in emphasis and praxis. It seems that those in the faithful witness camp do not want evangelism to supersede worship and edification but to complement it. Further, those in the faithful witness camp are deeply concerned that the methods of the effective witness camp may actually undermine the effectiveness of the Gospel message because in the process of effective engagement there is a fear that they become so intertwined with the philosophies

and values of this present cosmos (Roberts & Marshall 2004: 101). It seems that the third way, the middle way, as espoused in the earlier diagram may be the needed counterbalance to this critique. Certainly, it is far more theocentric according to the model of church growth developed in the book of Acts, to espouse that the church needs to strive for inherent spiritual health and that God will use such a church to be an effective witness of His grace, mercy and love in a fallen world

In an attempt to move towards a clearer understanding of the nature and purpose of the church, this chapter surveys the New Testament material as well as modern (1990-2008) Evangelical Ecclesiology's and Systematic Theology's. This Basis Theory or Biblical material is surveyed in a bid to clarify the nature and purpose of the church as a pre-cursor to engaging the material of chapter 3 of this thesis, namely, the Delphi survey results. The goal of this thesis is to develop a viable and biblically contextual model for the Growth of the Evangelical church in Canada. What form should the modern Evangelical church take to best fulfill the purpose of bringing Glory to God in Canada in the 21st century? If, through the study of the Bible we are able to uncover some of the aspects of the original form and function of the 1st Century church we may have a framework to construct a similar, but contextualized model, for the modern Canadian church. In essence what the church is, her ontology, should never change because God designed the church and He has not given us any further revelation to indicate a change in that design in the 21st century. How the church functions within 21st century Canada may change to fit the changed context in which the church now finds itself. Form never changes, but function may change to remain true to the original form within a new and different context. This tension of form and function acutely defines the nature of the Practical theological endeavor as

Theron and Lotter (2008: 3) point out when they state that practical theological research "describes how the basis theory could function in the praxis of every day". This Basis theory concerning how the church can effectively function in a way that is true to its nature and identity is vital to the survival of the Evangelical church in Canada. The church is most healthy when it is true to its nature, as defined by Scripture and particularly the New Testament, as a living organism that is designed by God, planted by God, and sustained by God as 1 Corinthians 3:7-9 (Bible 1984) points out.

The first chapter detailed the nature and extent of the recondite problem facing the Evangelical church in Canada. The statistical data and the extant literature (Bibby 2004: 47) show that the church in Canada has experienced a drastic decline in attendance figures and membership. Religious interest in Canada is still very strong, but church attendance is not viewed as an integral part of a person's faith experience (Bricker & Wright 2005:80). It is evident that at different times in history and in different parts of the world the strength of the church has waxed and waned (Latourette 2003: 5). Indeed this paradox of the promise of the risen Christ concerning the strength and growth of His church and the decline of the Evangelical church in Canada in the 21st century is the core of this thesis. Jesus promised that His church would prevail against all the forces that might come against it (Matthew 16:18). Does that promise apply to every geographic area of the earth for all history? The decline of the Evangelical church in Canada renders a resounding "no" to that question. The goal of this portion of the research is to determine from the New Testament if there are any current practices within, or philosophical perspectives (Jones 2008: XVI) about the church that need to be removed, altered or strengthened. This section of the research will also review any components or New Testament principles that may need to be integrated into the praxis of the Evangelical church in 21st century Canada to support and facilitate the promise of Jesus in Matthew 16:18 (Bible 1984).

As the decline of the Evangelical Church in Canada emerges, one cannot help but notice the contrastive position of the Church Growth Movement. The contrast arises from the fact that there is an unbounded triumphalism attached to the Church Growth Movement (McGavran & Wagner ed. 1990: 6, 7). This triumphalism sees church growth as an assured outcome of effective methods (Borden 2003: 69), or effective structure (Kaiser 2006: 71) and undergirded by the promise of Jesus in Matthew 16:18. As a critique and discourse on this unbounded triumphalism, this chapter reviews the etymology of the word "church" and its uses in the New Testament. It seems that an understanding of the *nature* of the church predisposes an understanding of church growth and church health (Engle et al 2004: 24). This Basis theoretical material first reviews the word "church" and then the occurrences of that word in the New Testament material. There are four research goals of this Basis Theoretical material as follows:

1. To establish the nature of the church as per God's design revealed in the New Testament.
2. To establish the purpose of the church as per God's design of the church revealed in the New Testament.
3. To move towards an understanding of the mechanisms of the health of the church and the growth of the church and the synergy, if any, between these two elements of church health and church growth.
4. To move towards a biblical framework of the church as a grid to engage the Meta-theoretical material of the Delphi survey undertaken in chapter 3.

The word "church" is researched at the outset to provide a clear definition of the biblical notion of church. This attempt to uncover the biblical definition of the word "church" is necessitated because, as is pointed out in the section below, even the word "church" contains semantic domains that lend themselves to obfuscation and misunderstanding. If one does not have a clear notion of what the word church means, how can one clearly understand what it is that the "church" does or is supposed to do to fulfill the range of meaning associated with the title "church"? A clear understanding of the meaning of the word "church" thus warrants much careful work and attention – and to this end the next lengthy section is devoted.

It is to this important question that we now turn, namely: "What is the purpose of the church?"

7.3.1.2 The Purpose of Exaltation (worship)

It seems almost trite and somewhat superfluous to declare that the purpose of the church is to bring Glory to God. Yet, the New Testament is clear that it is in the church that God is glorified. In Ephesians 3:21 it is Paul's prayer that God will be glorified in the church and as Kistemaker (2002: 115) states:

"Therefore to the One who does not need to over-exert Himself in order to fulfil our desires, but can do it with ease, "be *the glory* in the church and in Christ Jesus." In other words, may homage and adoration be rendered to God because of the splendor of His amazing attributes – power (1:19, 2:20), wisdom (3:10), mercy (2:4), love (2:4), grace (2:5-8); etc. – manifested in the *the church*, which is the body, and in *Christ Jesus*, its exalted head."

The church exists to bring Glory to God. It is in the church that this glory to God is manifest: “Nothing so shows the power and glory of God as the Christian Church.” (Lloyd-Jones 2000: 313). The context of this passage highlights that this grand doxology of Paul rests on the back of a prayer for the Ephesian believers in verses 14-20 of chapter 3 (Bible 1984), what some have called, “Paul’s enraptured supplication”. (Gaebelein *ed.* 1978: 50). This contextual framework is important to discerning how it is that God is glorified in the church. The doxology is “plainly the climax of the first half of Ephesians; it may be regarded as the climax of the whole letter, which rises to a spiritual peak at this point and then concentrates on practical out workings.” (Gaebelein *ed.* 1978: 53).

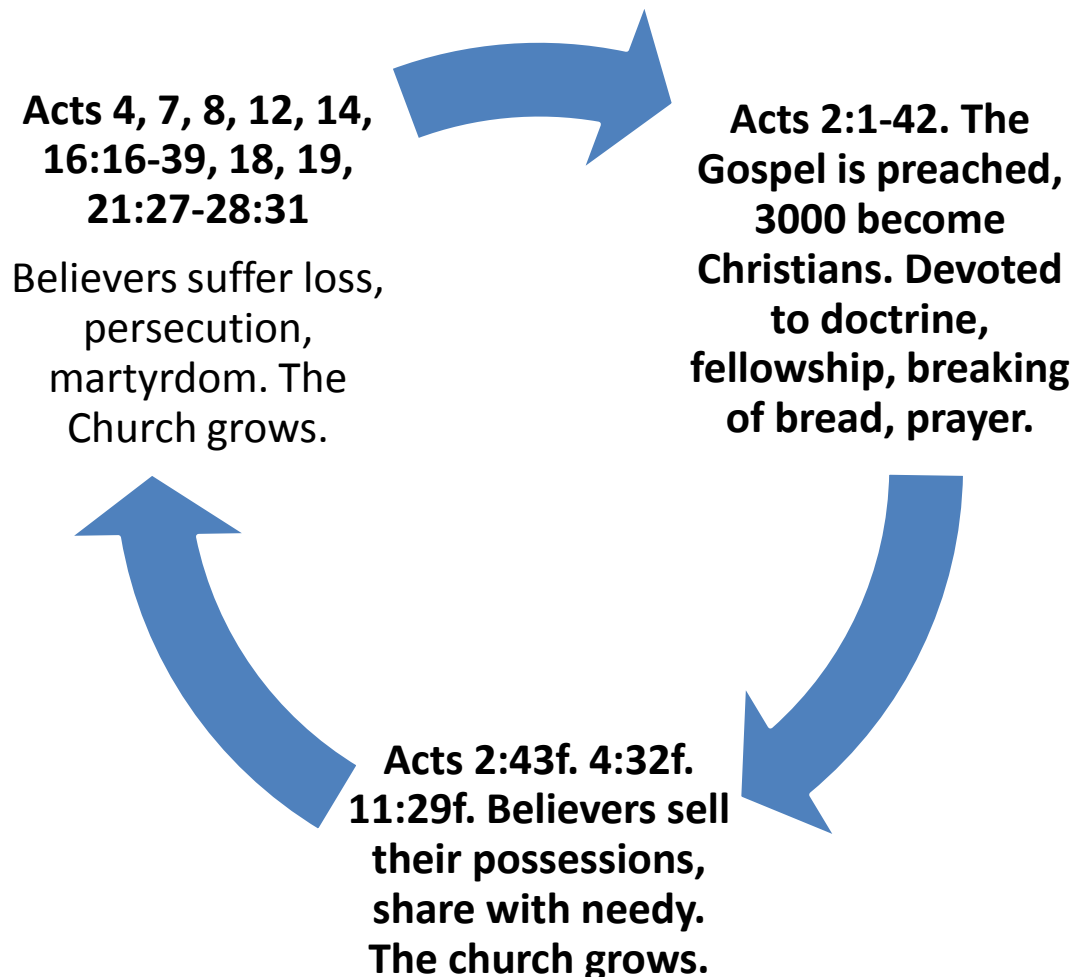
The purpose of the church, in fact the end of redemption, is the glory of God and, “The close juxtaposition of the church and Christ is arresting. For Paul, body and members form a single entity. . . . As Thompson puts it, the ‘honor of Jesus is in the hands of the Church’.” (Gaebelein *ed.* 1978: 53). The first and primary stakeholder of all that happens in the church is God. The church exists from Him and for Him. This theocentric focus for the church is helpful in determining the priorities and function of the body of Christ. All that is done must be done for the Glory of God according to the will of God and in the grace of God. To accomplish this grand purpose of the Glory of God in the church, the church needs to hold three aspects of ministry in balance as follows: “Ministry to God: Worship; Ministry to Believers: Nurture; Ministry to the World: Evangelism and Mercy.” (Grudem, 2000: 867-8). These three key aspects of accomplishing the Glory of God within and through the church are highlighted by many church growth and church health practitioners such as Dever (2004: 97), Malphurs (2004: 293-395), Warren (1995: 207-393), Getz (2000: 57-119), Batson (1999), MacNair & Meek (1999) to name just a few. The New Testament epistles clearly present these three aspects of a balanced ministry of the church that brings glory to God, as follows:

Ministry to God in worship: “In relationship to God the church’s purpose is to worship him.” (Grudem, 2000:867). Romans 12:1-2 is, perhaps the most poignant passage of Scripture that addresses the church body and their worship of God. In these first two verses of chapter 12, Paul calls upon the believers to offer their bodies as living sacrifices, to undergo a process of transformation in which they become radically different from the world system that is seeking to squeeze them into its mould (Bible 1984). This yielding of

the body and process of transformation Paul terms a “reasonable” act of worship. The church is to bring glory to God through the ministry to God in worship. Romans 12 renders one of the most comprehensive ways in which this task can be undertaken by the individual believer and by the church as a whole. The word used in the original Greek text for “worship” is, “λατρείαν” (Aland 1981). This noun is translated alternatively as, “service or worship (of God)” (Arndt & Gingrich, 1979: 467). In reviewing these two verses and the concept of “spiritual worship”, Denney states: “**λατρεία** (ix. 4, Heb. ix. 1, 6, John xvi. 2) is *cultus*, ritual service, worship; and such a presentation of the body, as the organ of all moral action, to God, is the only thing that can be characterised as **λογικὴν λατρείαν**, a spiritual worship.” (Robertson-Nicoll *ed.* 1983: 687). The implications of this passage are important in thinking through the nature and purpose of the church. The church exists to bring glory to God and this occurs, in part, as members of the church offer their bodies as living sacrifices, which is an act of worshipful service. In the process of developing the life of the church one of the key aspects of church life is the ongoing need for the members of the church to offer their bodies in worshipful service to God. In their moral lives, in their work lives, in their family and friendship relationships, in their reading and in their recreation, in every aspect of their day to day living they must constantly and consciously offer their actions, thoughts and foci to God. The Christian, as a member of the church, must do all that they do for Him and with a sense of the goal of glorifying His name, a concept supported by 1 Corinthians 10:31 . The church, called into assembly from amongst the world for a specific purpose – the purpose of bringing glory to the name of God. This purpose, accomplished through a balanced ministry one aspect of which is worshipful service in which the believer seeks to offer his body as a living sacrifice with a view to bringing every aspect of life into a co-ordinated effort of worshipful service to God. Jesus called his followers to “deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Bible 1984). In the earlier section concerning the nature of the church in the book of Acts, it was noted (2:45-47) that the believers sold all that they had and shared with all who had need. In the same section there are two other factors of note that emerge, seemingly in tandem with this sacrificial act, namely: they were praising God . . . And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”(Bible 1984). The spiritual health of the new believers led to sacrificial living, which in turn led to further numerical growth. The following diagram illustrates the progression of the Christian life from conversion, to the offering one’s self and possessions, to the suffering that arises from being a Christian, all of which contribute to the growth of the church. This seems counter-intuitive, since logic

would seem to dictate that suffering and hardship would cause a movement to become extinct. Yet the church seems to thrive when the call to discipleship is clear and marked with the way of suffering. This suffering for the sake of the Gospel brings glory to God and growth to His church. The diagram below outlines the place of suffering in the growth of the church.

Diagram 7.1 – The Trajectory of Conversion, Suffering and Growth



The evidence in the historical narrative of Acts is clear. The suffering of the believers through the selling of material possessions, through persecution and even martyrdom, leads inexorably to the growth of the church.

Romans chapter 12 alerts us to the concept that worshipful service through sacrificial living brings Glory to God. The passage highlights this fact, but so too does Philippians 3:3. In this verse, Paul highlights the radical truth that the worship of the believers is not a perfunctory worship centered in human strength, but indeed, is empowered and permeated by the Holy Spirit, as seen in Philippians 3:3. Of note here is the word that is translated “worship”. It is the word transliterated “*latreuontes*” or in the original Greek text of the New Testament is rendered “λατρεύοντες” (Aland 1981). This verb is rendered as a present active participle, from the root verb “λατρεύω” (Arndt & Gingrich 1979: 467) here in Philippians 3:3 and could be translated as “who worshipfully serve by the Spirit of God” (Fee 1994: 753). This translation best reflects both the participial nature of the verb in this instance as well as the meaning of the word “λατρεύω” (Vine 1997: 1021) and as Vincent incisively points out: “Paul uses the Jews word which denoted their own service of Jehovah as His peculiar people. Compare Acts 26:7. A Jew would be scandalized by the application of this term to Christian worship.” (1888: 885). The life of the Christian is rooted in the local church and his service to God both in the church and as an extension of the church, is an act of worship to God. The purpose of the church is to bring Glory to God, as Philippians 3:3 here indicates, through the worshipful service of the individual believers who comprise the church. However, there is a second dimension in which the church brings Glory to God and that is through the process of Evangelism. This is where a large number of difficulties arise concerning the tension between church growth and church health.

The church exists with a three dimensional purpose of bringing glory to God through exaltation, evangelism and edification. The balanced tension of these three dynamic parts creates a healthy church. A healthy church is empowered as a vibrant and valid witness in a lost and fallen world. For this reason, that church health results in strong church witness, edification through biblical teaching and discipleship is not the *only* reason the church exists, but it is *a very important* reason! Edification through biblical teaching is important because it is the food, which strengthens the body and norms the body to be both faithful and effective in its witness to the world. Effective biblical teaching is a core element of the discipleship process outlined in Matthew 28:19-20. This third dimension of the three-fold purpose of the church (evangelism, exaltation, edification) is the focus of the next section

of this paper. This overview of edification is rendered in the context of the other two purposes of the church, namely, evangelism and exaltation.

7.3.1.3 The Purpose of Edification (strengthening believers in their faith)

There are many verses (Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 4:17; Colossians 3:16; 1 Timothy 1:3; 3:2; 4:11; 2 Timothy 2:2, 24; Titus 2:1-3, 15; Hebrews 13:7-9) in the New Testament that affirm that one of the great foci of the local church is sound, solid, biblical teaching! There are also many verses (Acts 15:1-35; 20:22-32; 1 Corinthians 3:1-23; 15:12-19; 2 Corinthians 11:1-15; Galatians 1:6-10; 2:11-21; 3:1-6:18;) that speak of the terrible and destructively cancerous effect false teaching can have on the body of Christ! For the Risen Christ, the greatest expression of love his disciples could show to Him is to care for His sheep and to feed His lambs (John 21:15-17). Peter the Apostle took this mandate seriously and reiterated the primacy of caring for God's people

Table 7.1 – “Church” Principles in Acts that are modified in the Epistles”

Reference in Acts	Principle in Acts	Reference in Epistle	Principle in Epistle
Acts 2:44	<i>Believers sell all of their possessions and share with any who have need.</i>	1 Corinthians 16:1-4	<i>Believers are to set aside a sum of money, in accordance with their income to assist the saints in need.</i>
Acts 5:1-11	<i>Annianias and Saphira are disciplined with death for the sin of hypocrisy.</i>	1 Corinthians 5:1-5	<i>The immoral, hypocritical brother is not disciplined with death, but is disciplined with expulsion. Death may be in view if the brother does not repent.</i>
Acts 6:1-7	<i>Seven Spirit filled men chosen to serve tables to bring unity and harmony to the church in</i>	Romans 16:1; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8-12	<i>The office and role of deacon is codified and formalized in the epistles. They are mentioned as part of the leadership in</i>

Jerusalem. These men are not called deacons but serve as deacons and are seen by some as the first deacons

Philippians and the qualifications for serving as a deacon are given in 1 Timothy 3:8f.

The book of Acts is helpful to our development of an understanding of the nature of the church because as a historical narrative it gives the reader guiding principles and insights as follows:

1. The church began on the day of Pentecost when the disciples were baptized with the Holy Spirit and through the power of the Spirit proclaimed the Gospel of salvation in Christ alone. This was the first aspect of fulfilling the promise of Acts 1:8 given by the risen Lord Jesus. By the end of the book of Acts the promise of Acts 1:8 was more fully realized in that the Gospel had reached the then centre of the known world, namely Rome (Kistemaker 2002: 53).
2. The early church had a commitment to at least four (Kistemaker 2002: 110-11; Calvin 2003:125-128) and perhaps five (Cantrell 2004) key areas of ministry as outlined in Acts 2:42f:
 - a. The teachings of Christ through the ministry of the apostles.
 - b. The celebration of the Lord's Table in the breaking of bread to remember the crucifixion of the now risen Christ.
 - c. Mutual edification and care through a commitment to fellowship.
 - d. Sustained corporate prayer.
 - e. Worshipful evangelism
3. The early church grew rapidly and continually modified its structure and its traditions to facilitate growth and ministry (Gaebelein *et al.*, 1981: 331).
4. The early church was focused on mission (Achtemeier *et al.*, Green & Thompson 2001: 249-262). It viewed itself as a vehicle to proclaim and live the Gospel in a fallen world for the salvation of both Jews and Gentiles. The four key hinges of the book of Acts are found in the statement: "And the word of God/the Lord spread" (Acts 6:7, 12:24, 13:49, 19:20). This "missional" focus of the early church will be taken up more fully in the latter part of this chapter in a bid to expand and develop

the hypothesis of chapter 1, namely: The Evangelical church in Canada is in decline because it has lost sight of the missional, pilgrim nature of the church and instead of calling people to discipleship (followership) of the resurrected Christ it may have inadvertently become a chaplain to a society at odds with the claims of the risen Christ. In replacing the missional nature of the church with a chaplaincy role the church may have inadvertently sacrificed the missional focus given by the Risen Christ for a focus driven by a Western Canadian society that does not grasp that their greatest need is for a redemptive relationship with the Risen Christ through His Word, His People and His Spirit. This theme will be explored intensively through an exegetical scrutiny of the New Testament texts that highlight the missional nature of the church.

5. The early church faced some difficult doctrinal challenges as it emerged as an entity in its own right, quite distinctive from the mores and traditions of first century Judaism as seen in Acts 15.
6. The early church had a clear sense of identity around their common faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This common sense of identity transcended ethnic and national peculiarities, as seen in the church at Antioch in Acts 11:19-26.
7. Entrance into the early church occurred through conversion by faith in the finished work of Christ on the cross of Calvary and his bodily resurrection on the third day as seen in Acts 2:14-41; 5:14; 8:4-8; 8:26-39. This distinction concerning the way in which a person becomes a part of the church is important, especially in light of the proposition in some Emergent circles which contends that a person can be part of God's people, the church, without an overt faith in the finished work of Christ. Selmonivik (Pagitt & Jones: 2007) presents a radical form of this within the Emergent Church movement. He proposes a modified universalism when he states:

“If a relationship with a specific person, namely Christ, is the whole substance of a relationship with the God of the Bible, then the vast majority of people in world history are excluded from the possibility of a relationship with the God of the Bible, along with the Hebrews of the Old Testament who were without a knowledge of Jesus Christ-the person. The question begs to be asked: would God who gives enough revelation for people to be judged but not enough revelation for people to be saved be a God worth worshiping? Never! God enlightens every human ever born and opens a way for a relationship with him.”

This quote serves to show that the nature of the church as a group of people called into existence from the world through faith in the finished work of Christ is a pivotal fulcrum of understanding the church, especially as one considers church health and church growth. If everyone is called into assembly – then the assembly is the world. If everyone is, by virtue of enlightenment by God, as proposed by Selmanovic in the previous quote, a part of the church and the people of God, then, somehow we have moved a long way from the principles of what it means to be the church as historically narrated in the book of Acts. If Selmanovic is correct in his universalist assertions, the church also then exists only as an expression of the many different expressions of this “God-faith” and universal “God-people”. If this be true then so much of the New Testament material that highlights the missional nature of the church as an entity sent into the world is naive and misplaced – because if all are God’s people then why seek to reach those whom the Bible presents as not God’s people. This distinction of the church as different to the world, a called into assembly group of people for a missional task (Hedlund 1991: 9-300; Kritzing1994: 194; Roxburgh 2004: 1-16; Stetzer & Putman 2006: 2-3) comes into far sharper focus in the general and Pauline epistles of the New Testament. It is to these New Testament epistles or letters that we now turn our attention with a view to gleaning a stronger understanding of the nature of the church.

7.4 The Church in the Pauline and General Epistles

In this section a summary of the nature of the church is given. This summary is derived from an overview of the New Testament letters and so, in this section, the approach is somewhat different to the previous two sections, which reviewed the nature of the church in the Gospels and the nature of the church in the book of Acts. The material in the epistles is vast and a summation under various headings may thus prove more useful than a verse-by-verse study of the vast material on the church that emerges in the epistles. This broad outline of the nature of the church is adapted from a number of sources (Chafer 1976; Grudem, 2000; Alexander *et al.* eds: 2000).

7.4.1 The Church is Local and Universal

The church may be defined as . . . “a company of saved people who are by their salvation called out from the world into living, organic union with Christ to form His mystical Body over which He is the Head. That outward form of the church which is a mere assembly of people must be restricted to those of one generation, indeed of one locality, and may include the unsaved as well as the saved. Over against this, the Church which is Christ’s Body and Bride is composed of people of all generations since the Church began to be, is not confined to one locality, and includes only those who are actually saved.” (Chafer 1976:127). “In the New Testament the word “church” may be applied to a group of believers at any level, ranging from a very small group meeting in a private home all the way to the group of all true believers in the universal church.” (Grudem, 2000: 857).

In the New Testament letters we find various sizes and categories of church, all of which are termed “church” regardless of their size, such as:

1. A house church in Romans 16:5
2. A church in an entire city such as in 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 1:1 and 1 Thessalonians 1:1.
3. A church in a region addressed as a unit since the regional church seems to be facing the same issues, such as in Galatians 1:3. For comment on the location of the Galatian region here referred to, James Montgomery Boice (Gaebelin *ed.* 1976: 412-417) gives helpful assistance in identifying the Galatian region at the time of Paul’s writing of this epistle.
4. The church throughout the entire world which is comprised of many house, city, regional churches, is termed the universal church, but this global church is still called “the church” such as in Ephesians 5:25 or 1 Corinthians 12:28.

7.4.2 Metaphors for the Church

The New Testament uses a wide range of metaphors and images to help the reader understand the nature of the church (Grudem, 2000: 858). These metaphors can be divided into different categories such as:

1. *Family images* such as those in 1 Timothy 5:1-2; Ephesians 3:14; 2 Corinthians 6:18; 1 John 3:14-18. This concept of the church as a family alludes to a key

element of the nature of the church, namely that the church is a complex and diverse system (Richardson 1996: 24-171; Armour & Browning 2000: 106). Each component of the system is essential to the health of the system. Another metaphor that describes the church is that of “organism”. The organismic nature of the church is closely tied to the concept of the church as a system, or as Hirsch 2006: 179-216) aptly names it, an “organic system”. The challenge in church life is to view the church as an organic system and develop a sound systems approach to church life. A key characteristic of a church that sees itself as an organic system is an organic missional church. The chart below on the next page (Hirsch 2006:196) contrasts an organic missional movement church to an institutional church.

<i>Organic Missional Movement</i>	<i>Institutional Religion</i>
Has pioneering missional leadership as its central role	Avoids leadership based on personality and is often led by an “aristocratic class” who inherit leadership based on loyalty
Seeks to embody the way of life of the Founder	Represents a more codified belief system
Based on internal operational principles (missional DNA)	Based increasingly in external legislating policies/governance
Has a cause	Is the cause
The mission is to change the future	The mission shifts to preserving the past
Tends to be mobile and dynamic	Tends to be more static and fixed
Decentralized network built on relationships	Centralized organization built on loyalty
Appeals to the common person	Tends to become more and more elitist and therefore exclusive
Inspirational / Transformational leadership dominant; spiritual authority tends to be the	Transactional leadership dominant; institutional authorizing tends to be the

primary basis of influence	primary basis of influence
----------------------------	----------------------------

A similar and very helpful chart is developed by Theron and Lotter (2008: 4). Their chart contrasts the institutional church and the organic, Spirit enlivened Body of Christ. If a local church in Canada is to remain true to its organic nature and to the sense of “ekklhsia”, as elucidated in an earlier section covering the etymology of the word, it will need to continually seek to imbibe and manifest the characteristics in the left of the above column.

2. *Agricultural images* such as branches on a vine in John 15:5, an olive tree in Romans 11:17-24, a field of crops in 1 Corinthians 3:6-9 and a harvest in Matthew 13:1-30 and John 4:35.
3. *Construction images* such as a building in 1 Corinthians 3:9, a temple in 1 Peter 2:5, God’s house in Hebrews 3:6.
4. *Body images* such as in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:15-16, and Colossians 2:19 (Bible 1984). These passages also alert the reader to the possibility that the church, like the human body, is a complex system that is highly integrated and co-dependent as Kistemaker (2002: 429) states: “The human body is a highly diversified organism. Each member has its own distinct function but also contributes to the working of the entire body. So it is with the body of Christ, in which every member has received some spiritual gift. In this body, the employment of each gift is designed not to serve the individual member but the entire church.”

The importance of understanding that the church is a system, highly diverse, yet highly integrated and co-dependent is germane to the topic of Church Growth and Church Health as Christian A. Schwarz uncovers in his on-line seminars, “Natural Church Development” (2007). In systems thinking, “Congregations are spiritual and human social systems that are complex, connected and changing.” (Herrington, Bonem and Furr 2000: 144). The metaphors for “church” in the New Testament alert the reader to the concept that the church is a highly complex and adaptive system. A later section of this thesis develops this systems nature of the more fully. The nature of the church as a system could prove to be a vital factor in developing the health and subsequent growth of a local church. If the church is a system, as the body and family metaphors suggest, then to neglect this aspect of the church’s nature may prove harmful to the life of the church body and harmful to the effective or natural growth process of the church as a living, healthy organism (system).

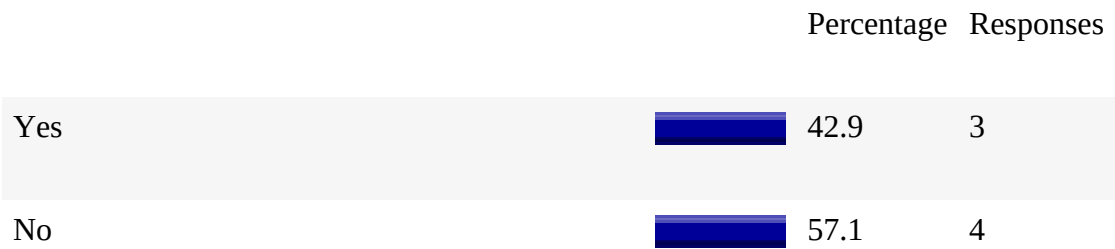
As Bellinger (2004) states: “A system is an entity which maintains its existence through the mutual interaction of its parts.” Ephesians 4:1-16 suggest that the church will only be strong when each part of the church (system) is doing its work. The systems approach to church life and function may be a crucial component in recovering the health and vitality of churches in Canada and thus a key part of their capacity to grow and reach their surrounding community with the Gospel. This concept of health for outreach raises the thorny question of the purpose of the church (Grudem, 2004: 867). Does the church exist reach the lost, or does the church exist to edify those who, by faith, have received the salvation offered by God to all who believe in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ? Does the church exist to address social injustice, or to lift up the poor and needy? Is the purpose of the church to make disciples who are imitators of the Lord Jesus Christ? Does the church exist as a haven, as a club, as a transformative vehicle in a fallen world, as a haven of status quo or a bastion of conservatives and archaic lifestyles? What, according to the New Testament epistles, is the purpose of the New Testament church? It is true that whatever one perceives the purpose of the church to be, it is that perception that will drive ministry and focus within the church. If the church exists to uplift the downcast or care for the poor – then the focus and ministry of the church will be upon social equity and poverty reduction. If the purpose of the church is to reach people who do not know the Lord Jesus Christ then all that is done will be to that end. A proper understanding of the purpose of the church, as this flows from the nature of the church, is vitally important to the function and consequent health of the church.

Chapter 8: Appendix 2: Full Results from Lockean Delphi Survey

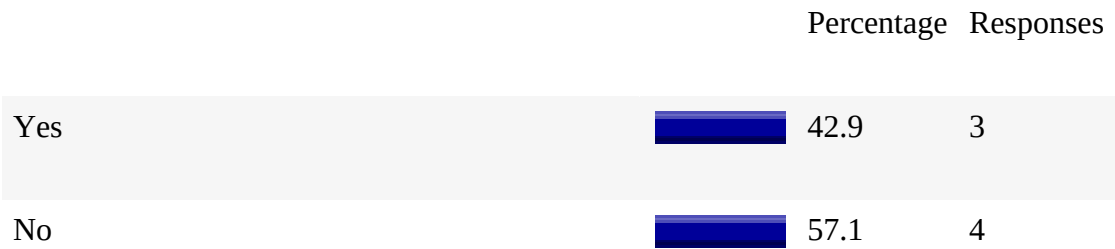
8.1 First Iteration

Results for: LOCKEAN DELPHI - EVANGELICAL CHURCH

- 1) I would like a copy of the completed PhD and you can send an electronic version of the PhD "A Model for the Growth of the Evangelical Church in Canada" to my e-mail adress at: (please enter your e-mail address if you would like a copy of the completed PhD):
- 2) I am the Lead/Senior Pastor of the Church



- 3) I am a Denominational Leader (Regional Director, President etc)



Total responses: 7

4) I am an Academic that researches issues related to the Canadian Evangelical Church

		Percentage	Responses
Yes		37.5	3
No		62.5	5
Total responses:			8

5) Education Level

		Percentage	Responses
High School		9.1	1
Undergraduate Theological		27.3	3
Undergraduate Non-Theological		18.2	2
Masters Theological		36.4	4
Masters Non-Theological		0.0	0
Doctoral Theological		0.0	0
Doctoral Non-Theological		9.1	1

Post-Doctoral Theological		0.0	0
Post Doctoral Non Theological		0.0	0

- 6) Please state your current denominational affiliation: e.g Baptist, Lutheran, United, Presbyterian etc.

(The last five responses are given)

- Presbyterian Church in Canada

- Baptist

- Wesleyan Church of Canada

- pentecostal assemblies of canada

- Baptist

- 7) Please state your age

(The last five responses are given)

- 52

- 63

- 38

- 46

8) I would describe my Theology as:

		Percentage	Responses
Fundamentalist		0.0	0
Conservative		0.0	0
Traditional		25.0	2
Progressive		0.0	0
Evangelical		50.0	4
Emergent		12.5	1
Liberal		0.0	0
Other		12.5	1

9) Please state the length of time in your current ministry position

(The last five responses are given)

- 13 years

- 14 years

- Two years

- 12 years

- 8 years

- 10) I believe the Evangelical church in Canada is facing the following challenges to its health at this time:
(Please write as much as you would like and cover any area that you think is challenging the Evangelical church's health at this time):

(The last five responses are given)

- like other churches in Canada, trying to adapt to the change in religious culture within Canada. The evangelical church traditionally used a strong mainline church as a reference point. Now that the mainline traditions are extremely weak, how do evangelicals distinguish themselves? How does one evangelize when you are no longer trying to persuade people with some knowledge of the Christian faith to take that faith more seriously or understand it in a different way, but who have no knowledge of Christianity?

- - multinational society
- consumerism
- lack of strategic planning with implementation
- lack of good Bible content preaching
- lack of life-related preaching
- lack of equipped leaders

- Culturally Canadians, and evangelical Canadians, want a customized spiritual experience. They resist denominational doctrinal authority. Evangelicalism, in part, was a reaction to theological liberalism. As such, it gave particular attention to doctrinal precision. In the current climate this is a problem, not because people necessarily want to embrace a liberal theology, but because they don't want to have

external restrictions placed on their theology. This places the person at the centre and frustrates attempts to foster community or common mission. There's good data on this by the way.

- Hard question - however it is my personal belief that the evangelical church in Canada may be entering the most opportune time for growth. Unlike some of the Christian pessimists I think that if we open up the doors in a genuine way to the hurting of our community they will stream in.

- 1. Leadership development
- 2. Corporate Prayer
- 3. Church living and acting by faith
- 4. Commitment of members and adherents

- 11) I believe that the Evangelical Church in Canada would grow in size and/or effectiveness if: (please write as much as you need to and please feel free to record anything that comes to mind)

(The last five responses are given)

- developed an effective evangelism strategy for reaching people with no Christian background; effective, if it was possible to develop a way of truly distinguishing oneself from Canadian culture on fundamental issues (economics, war and peace, attitudes to life and God's creation) as opposed to the more traditional moral issues (sexuality, morality)

- - Christians saw themselves as missionaries i.e. on a mission
 - Christians were adequately equipped to share their faith
 - Churches exhibited the following:
- The Eight Quality Characteristics of Growing Churches
- 1. Empowering Leadership
 - 2. Gift-oriented Ministry

- | | | |
|----|---------------|-----------------|
| 3. | Passionate | Spirituality |
| 4. | Functional | Structures |
| 5. | Inspiring | Worship Service |
| 6. | Holistic | Small Groups |
| 7. | Need-oriented | Evangelism |
8. Loving Relationships

- The evangelical church will not grow as long as its people reflect the culture around them. Personal priority is what is primary for the individual as a person. The church often caters to this by preaching what Christian Smith calls "Therapeutic, moralistic, deism," which means "what is good for you, be good, and God will be benignly disinterested while you help yourself."

- We "touched People" literally and figuratively
 We "displayed Joy" in our personal lives and in our services.
 We "focused on lost" people not self
 We "communicated better" with skeptical world.

- 1. We were more involved in practising evangelism
- 2. We were more involved in the community
- 3. Had more accountability and care for one another
- 4. We shared our resources with one another

12) The Evangelical Church needs to address the following areas of church life if it hopes to thrive and impact the Canadian population with the Gospel:

(The last five responses are given)

- More focus on Scripture - listening to God's Word, and applying it - Sermons need to move back to more traditional exposition
 Meaningful Music

Development of a sacramental life

Development of prayer

- - leadership

- preaching

- equipping of the saints

- The church needs to develop a common life together where people are willing to make sacrifices in their time. Time is the new currency and how people use their time is the key to understanding their priorities. In Canada we by in large are free from want. Time and money are interchangeable and so we now buy off church participation with money, or we simply decide to "spend" our time elsewhere. We also need to find a way to reinstate a meaningful church discipline. We don't discipline because it offends peoples sense of spiritual autonomy.

- Church leadership must have a vision that connects to the community. Church leadership must have a measurable implementation strategy to present the congregation with.

The church leadership must have a sustainable plan (showing consistancy) to the community.

The church leadership must be willing to sacrifice more than those following in the pews if they want things to change. Question? Pastors are you among the top financial givers percentage wise in your church? Do we want people in our churches to more than we are? Your church will only go as far as leadership - spirits reproduce spirits.

- 1. Prayer

2. Real fellowship

3. Assimilation

4. being friendly

13) I think that the Canadian Evangelical church has been affected by the following cultural or macro-environmental trends:

(The last five responses are given)

- The de-Christianization of Canada and Western Culture (outside of the USA)
The anti-religious nature of much Western thought, much of it in response to the Christian Right in the USA

- - influx of people from other countries, cultures and religious backgrounds

- See questions above.

- Consumerism,Materialism,perfectionism,...

- 1. entertainment instead of worship
- 2. lack of commitment
- 3. little involvement

14) I believe that the type of leadership needed to bring health and growth to Evangelical Churches across Canada is leadership that is characterized by (please write down anything that comes to mind or that you have been reflecting on in terms fo this issue):

(The last five responses are given)

- prayerful discernment - compassion - willingness to speak the Biblical truths, even if they go against the traditional Evangelical meta-narrative which determines how Scripture is read

- - mission, vision, passion, intention and action

- I think that "leadership" per se is part of the problem. We have a culture of leadership which is really quite narcissitic. Everyone is a leader which simply means that everyone wants to be important and have the autonomy that they perceive goes along with leadership. In the church leadership has become a charisma. We "bring leadership" or we "give leadership." Leadership is a gift I can give you and it is an unqualified good. We don't talk about "bad leadership." We talk about a "lack of leadership" making leadership an unassailable virtue like love. There is an evangelical industry around leadership which runs completely counter to the call to us which is principally to be disciples or followers. The language and emphasis on "Church Health" is another manifestation of the same thing. People who are obsessed with health are obsessed with themselves, not with any outward mission. The same is true in a church. We aren't concerned with the lost when we are constantly checking our health. (It's great to rant once in while :)

- Grace, mercy and perseverance. Leadership can't bail out when the going gets tough. Leadership that is also focused on the spiritual disciplines. Leadership that genuinely has encountered the Lord through the WORD of God and has experienced POWER of God in life.

- | | | | |
|------|-------------------|-----|--------|
| - 1. | Passion | for | Christ |
| 2. | Compassion | for | people |
| 3. | Dependence on God | | |

15) Please write down any other thoughts/comments or insights you may have concerning the Evangelical Church in Canada

(The last five responses are given)

- The Evangelical church in Canada has seen itself as more successful than the

mainline churches in maintaining members, etc. in the last three decades. There is a great deal of truth here - however, the data suggests that with a few exceptions (the Alliance being one) most Evangelical churches have stopped growing, or are in modest decline. Numbers aren't everything - but here they indicate that the larger cultural trends which have so powerfully impacted the mainline churches are now affecting Evangelical churches. There is a tendency, unfortunately, to deny this and to assume that correct theology will win. I think the next two decades will see dramatic changes within the evangelical community in Canada.

- - the younger generation gives hope

- Rick Hiemstra completing the survey.

- Too many to write.

- We are lacking in trust for one another
We have lost our contact with a lost world

8.2 Second Iteration

Results for: Lockean Delphi Second Iteration

1) Declining Biblical Literacy

The previous Delphi surfaced a concern over the declining biblical literacy and knowledge of the major tenets of the Christian faith. How would you suggest the Evangelical church in Canada address this decline?

(The last five responses are given)

- faith in the home initiatives, wholistic integrated living in community and neighbourhood communities

- expository preaching and structured Bible studies

- One would be to develop a catechism of theology for children. We need to start with those we have and educate them before we move to instruct those who have no knowledge of scripture.
- Elevate grade 1-8 "sunday school" programs from being an afterthought to being a core, highly resourced ministry. Promotional campaigns to get churches onside, matching funding to improve these programs, training and resource development and distribution. 8+ year old kids are easily ready to learn biblical interpretive methods like inductive bible study, phrasing, and exegesis.
- A return to active Christian education in the church for all ages: children, youth and adults. Revitalize Sunday School. Return to Biblical preaching. Revive the concept of church-based theological training.

2) Individualized Spirituality

There is a strong trend in Canada towards an individualized and customized spirituality. How can the Evangelical church in Canada address this trend? As you reflect on this question, can we use this trend to strengthen people in their discipleship? How do help Christians to understand the need for and benefit of Christian community?

(The last five responses are given)

- NT teaching, expression of local church in oikos like socio settings

- I am not sure that the 'individualized' approach/trend is helpful.

Community/others and service is lessened by the individual approach.

- I still think that the best way to do this is through the community of small groups. While it is good to strengthen the individual I also believe that as

scripture says "Iron sharpens Iron". We also need each other to help us grow in grace and knowledge.

- See #1 above. It begins with child and youth training. I would submit that a significant cause of "individualized" spirituality is because the majority of 20-30 somethings have never learned the core doctrines together. They don't know why or what they believe, and certainly can't be sure they believe the same thing as the person next to them, even though they grew up in church together.

- Through Biblical preaching and an emphasis on true Christian community.

3) Lack of Strategic Planning

Many in the previous survey lamented the lack of strategic planning and consistent, sustainable, enduring implementation of the planning within the life of the church. What mechanisms would you suggest to address this perceived need for strategic planning within Canadian Evangelical churches?

(The last five responses are given)

- strategic planning is part of the business model that has lost the life of the church as a Spirit movement of Jesus followers

- pastors need to discuss this in their fraternals

- I think that Boards need a yearly retreat to reflect upon their mission and vision to make sure that all that they are doing is fulfilling their vision. Too often we are busy but not being wise in spending the energy we do in effective ministry.

So I feel we need a yearly evaluation and assessment as to the programs we are carrying out or implementing are accomplishing our goal.(vision). (sic).

- Increased inter-church projects. Less reinventing what others are already doing.

Take a city-scale approach to the evangelical church to foster so-operation and by necessity each partner/participant will need to think bigger/longer term/ and more strategically in order to be able to participate at a multi-church, city-wide scale.

- Strong, elder-led congregations where accountability and vision is stimulated through shared leadership.

4) Lack of Equipped Leaders

Most respondents lamented the lack of trained and equipped leadership within the local church. What suggestions do you have to address this issue of a lack of trained leadership within the local church? How can local churches train and develop leaders to ensure that there is a broad base of godly leadership within any given local church?

(The last five responses are given)

- rabbi model, dust of the rabbi's sandals life on life in place of curricular plans
- Encourage the members to attend less church services to free themselves up for more 'church service'. So much of what we do is 'in house' and cognitive. We need to help them with 'hands on' practical service in the community and train them to be the presence of Christ, making the invisible God visible.
- there are several things that can happen; 1. we have invited a person with a great deal of knowledge in leadership development to come and speak to us over a weekend, 2. we do leadership development for the first half hour at all our Board meetings, 3. find a seminar to which you can take your leaders to (we have chosen

Willow Creek Leadership Summit)

- Just do it. Develop a leadership philosophy that says the church will identify and mentor emerging leaders internally before posting a job advertisement for their next vacant staff position. Hiring from outside the church is rarely a good idea. Its a unique solution to a specific problem, it should not be the normal response to leadership needs.

- By establishing leadership training as the requirement for all spiritual leaders within the local congregation.

5) Weakness in Biblical Preaching

Many respondents proposed that one of the realities weakening the Canadian Evangelical church is a lack of biblical expository preaching. What steps would you suggest to address this

lack and to encourage pastors to structure their church ministry in such a way that they have the

time and freedom to develop expository messages?

(The last five responses are given)

- "expository" has become the catchword of criticism against the pulpit. people need to live in the Scriptures, by the Scriptures.

- This is a challenge because the lack of volunteers in the church requires the staff/pastors to do more ministry that cuts in to research/prep time.

- This is more difficult to address because many of the students coming out of Seminary are being taught to preach stories rather than to be expositional.

I am really not sure how this can be addressed other than through Seminars and

written materials on the need for expository preaching.

- This response seems self-refuting. If "many" respondents suggest that there is a lack of biblical expository preaching, then we can assume that those many respondents think that it is everybody else that isn't doing what they are doing in their church (unless they are hypocritically calling for a kind of preaching they don't practice). But apparently since "many" of them think that way, then many of them must be preaching expository sermons.

If I was doing this survey I would look closely into this response to make sure its not just a popular "meme" in the culture... virtually every pastor I meet says that there is a lack of expository preaching, but that they themselves prefer and practice it. Since its pretty much everyone I meet, I am wondering who all these supposed pastors are that they don't think preach expository sermons? ... my guess its just a throw-away comment referring to the mainline churches.

Alternatively, the comment could more accurately reflect that the congregation doesn't seem to respond to or learn much from expository preaching... lending to teh feeling that "the church" (broad generalization) seems happier with topical sermons, which would colour the view on what sort of preaching must be taking place... see question one.

- Preach from the Bible and not just on contemporary subjects. Make Biblical preaching and teaching a priority in the life of the church and in the teaching pastor's ministry assignment.

6) Lack of Real Life Engagement

In line with Biblical expository preaching is the need, as presented by the

respondents, to develop a theology of engagement. That is to say, how does the expository preaching of the bible intersect with the real life challenges of 21st century living? Added to this how do we develop incarnational preaching and incarnational ministry in our lives and in the lives of the church family? Do you have any suggestions on how we might better connect with and engage the realities of life?

(The last five responses are given)

- missional practice as the forefront of local church life.
- use illustrations in the messages that relate to life and stories of the day. Tell stories of how some are applying these truths to life.
- Many pastors who are gifted academically do not have the ability to light a fire in their congregations. They have great material but it does not get off the page.

I still believe the best way to engage with you congregation is to meet with them during the week so you can meet their needs from the pulpit.

Visitation and being where our people are is not only needful it is absolutely critical to being able to sense and know the needs of our congregations.

I still believe this is the best way to melt both aspects of expository preaching and engagement. Put your people into the message.

- Assess every ministry, every volunteer hour and ever staff hour spent in your church. How many of those hours/dollars/resources are spent on church members vs on non-church people? My guess is that 90% of the total church resources simply recycle back into existing church members.. less than 10% actually hits the people who need the gospel. The reality is people put dollars in an offering plate to

support ministries that care for them and their kids.

- The scriptures, presented clearly and faithfully with relevant application to everyday life, will speak powerfully to 21st century believers. Pastors should not hesitate to preach the whole counsel of God and the whole of scripture.

7) Lack of Corporate Prayer

How do we develop a hunger for and vitality in corporate prayer?

(The last five responses are given)

- modelling, repentance of privatized consumer goods and services faith
- Not sure! Pray about it. Remind people of how the church advances...on her knees. Address the culture of the day which is 'self help' to show the inadequacies of that and the need for dependance on God.
- This only comes from once again leadership at the top demonstrating a life of prayer.

Secondly get your prayer warriors front and center in the church showing the congregation by example, modeling a life of prayer. This can be done and must be done.

- It starts with the pastoral staff and elders.
- Churches pray most and best when they are desperate. Church leaders should begin by asking God to lay upon the hearts of their people a burden to pray, and should not be surprised by situations that arise that drive their people to pray in desperation.

8) Lack of Commitment

Respondents lamented the lack of commitment amongst members and

adherents in Canadian Evangelical churches. How do we strengthen the commitment level of those who are a part of the church - especially given the commuter society in which we live and the added time pressures of many two income family's?

(The last five responses are given)

- commitment to what? the church or the kingdom. I think many people want to be helped to be kingdom loyal but are weary of church programs

- as above maybe less 'church services' and an evaluation of programs in light of our vision and mission. "Is this program [that is requiring X workers] contributing to where we are going and to what degree/priority?

- I am not sure there is a lack of commitment. The lack of commitment is seen when we do not provide the environment for people to come and participate in Sunday corporate worship. We have become so predictable on Sunday it is boring. Why are we so tied to tradition and culture? Why do we not venture out and risk in our messages and Sunday a day when people will say, I wonder what is going to happen today.

- Church used to be the only real support and social outlet outside home and work. Now the government has taken over most of the church support roles, and there are 10,000 social and entertainment possibilities. The church simply needs to find its unique place in the lives of its members, and cultivate/strengthen that unique place... whatever it is. It will be different for different churches, but the biggest target is children/teens.

Care for and love a couple's kids and they will love you for doing it.

- Church membership has meant too little in North American evangelicalism in the past half-century. There needs to be a renewed emphasis on what it means to be a functioning member of a local church.

9) Syncretism vss Kingdom Living

How do we help Christians to view themselves as witnesses to a lost world and as citizens not of this world but as citizens of the Kingdom that is coming? Respondents lamented the way in which the Evangelical church in Canada is often indistinguishable from the world in the areas where it matters - in Kingdom ethic. How do you suggest we address and attempt to reverse this trend?

(The last five responses are given)

- forward engagement that prompts confrontation of values.
- by example and teaching....just keep at it.
- the church in Canada has become so "me" centered that they have forgotten the "go" mandate. What must take place in many of our churches is to realize we have a social as well as a spiritual responsibility to those in our communities. The church family needs to be outward focused and not inward focus as we have been for so many years. We have always invited people to church now it is time to leave the building and go out and participate in our community without compromising our faith.
- Its all about one on one relationships. You start with a core of 5-6 people who are committed to mentoring people, and then let that core grow. There is no other way to do it.

- By Biblical preaching that is clearly and fearlessly presented. Also by the consistent practice of church discipline on the part of local church leaders.

10) Discipleship and Spiritual

Disciplines

How do we design our church life and ministry to assist believers with life transformation through a real discipleship experience and enduring practice of the psiritual disciplines of bible reading, prayer and sacramental living?

(The last five responses are given)

- life on life discipleship.

- provide guides..motivate by teaching..share testimonies/stories. Some will some won't.

- One of the ways that I am finding most effective today is that of having accountability partners. Holding one another accountable in bible reading, prayer and outreach.

Its also all about one on one relationships. You start with a core of 5-6 people who are committed to mentoring people, and then let that core grow. There is no other way to do it.

6,8,9,10 are all the same question. And the answer (one on one mentoring) will result in your answer for #4.

- Meaningful small group studies & relationships, coordinated with pulpit ministry. Less "scattered" studies and a more concentrated, integrated focus on wholechurch spiritual disciplines.

Chapter 9: Appendix 3: Results for Teen Interest in Church in Canada

These survey results are from Free Online Surveys: <http://www.freeonlinesurveys.com/>

1) Do you believe that there is a God?

Percentage Responses

Yes 35.4%, 17 responses

Yes - I believe in God 50.0%, 24 responses

Yes - but only as a force 0.0 0

Yes - but not like the God of the Bible 2.1%, 1 response

Yes - but not a personal God 0.0 0

No - there is no God 8.3%, 4 responses

No - just aliens 0.0 0

No - only departed spirits 2.1%, 1 response

Other 2.1%, 1 response

2) I think that the church can help me know if there is a God or not:

Percentage Responses

Yes - the church can help me find God 73.3%, 33 responses

Yes - but I am not really interested 0.0 0

Yes - but when I am older 2.2%, 1 response

Yes - but I think the church will take away my fun 4.4%, 2 responses

Yes - but I don't want people to think I am weird 0.0 0

No - I will find God my own way 6.7%, 3 responses

No - I will find God if I need Him when I am ready 2.2%, 1 response

No - Church will not help me find God 8.9%, 4 responses

Other 2.2%, 1 response

3) I think the church can help people who are struggling with loneliness or depression or emotional pain:

Percentage Responses

Yes - the church can help 76.7%, 33 responses

No - the church is not helpful 7.0%, 3 responses

Other 16.3%, 7 responses

Total responses: 43

4) I think church is:

Percentage Responses

Full of hypocrites 23.3%, 10 responses

Full of strange and weird people 0.0 0

Boring 7.0%, 3responses

A Waste of Time 4.7%, 2 responses

Old Fashioned 4.7%, 2 responses

Only care about what I wear 2.3%, 1 responses

Don't care about who I am 2.3% 1 response

Other 55.8% 24 responses

Total responses: 43

5) I go to church:

Percentage Responses

Once a week 53.5%, 23 responses

Once a month 7.0% 3responses

Once a year 0.0 0

For funerals 4.7%, 2 responses

For weddings 4.7% 2 responses

Never unless I am forced to 7.0%, 3 responses

Other 23.3%, 10 responses

Total responses: 43

6) I would go to church if:

Percentage Responses

They had great music 10.3%, 13 responses

I could hang with friends and have coffee 9.5%, 12 responses

If I could watch it on a large screen 0.8%, 1 response

If it had lots of video clips 2.4%, 3 responses

The stuff they talk about is helpful 19.0%, 24 responses

I could ask questions about the talk when I need to 9.5%, 12 responses

I could text questions about the talk 3.2%, 4 responses

They didn't have a talk - just music and video clips 1.6%, 2 responses

People were friendly and nice 16.7%, 21 responses

There were lots of people my age 15.1%, 19 responses

Other 8.7%, 11 responses

7) I would do church or religious stuff if they:

Percentage Responses

Blogged it 10.0%, 4 responses

Twittered it 5.0%, 2 responses

Live Streamed it on the Net 15.0%, 6 responses

Podcast it 5.0%, 2 responses

Naah - just not interested! 20.0%, 8 responses

Other 45.0%, 18 responses

8) **When it comes to church I think . . .**.(The last five responses are given)

- that it is necessary for some. A crutch, a stand by in times of trouble. I like the ideals and i believe many, but i feel that it is too narrow a spectrum. There is so much more to everything.
- I could learn more about religion and traditions
- helpfull, time consuming, boring at times, older people, friendly environment, old fashioned, gospel(good)...
- that it's a waste of time because I am not religious.
- Of Worshiping God and understanding his will for my life. It's a time where I can fellowship with other Christians. In the past, church has been a place of hurt, so when it comes to church I am torn between hating its politics but loving growing, learning, and fellowshiping.

9) I have always wondered if church or church people could help me with . . .

(The last five responses are given)

- Nothing.
- emotional or physical distresses
- anything I go through at times (being a youth vs. the elders completely relating to my situations)
- nothing, see above answer
- Nothing. The only thing that Church can help me with is spiritual growth. I don't

like being helped by church people.

10) I think the church in Canada is:

Percentage Responses

Dying 17.5 17

Dead 2.1 2

in need of change 20.6 20

Just like Politics - boring and useless 1.0 1

A Waste of time 2.1 2

Helpful to some people 12.4 12

Helpful to many people 17.5 17

In need of more good programs for the youth
of Canada

20.6 20

Other 6.2 6

Chapter 10: Appendix 4 Unchurched Perspectives on Church in Canada

Results for: Unchurched Perspectives on Church in Canada

1) I Currently Attend Church

Percentage Responses

Weekly 33.3 (13 responses)

Monthly 0.0 (0 responses)

Yearly (Christmas and Easter) 7.7 (3 responses)

Weddings and Funerals 28.2 (11 responses)

Never 17.9 (7 responses)

Other 12.8 (5 responses)

Total responses: 39

2) I think Church is helpful to Canadian society

	1 Indispensable	2 Very Much	3 One of Many	4 Moderately	5 Definitely NOT
As a Moral Compass	8 (20.51%)	13 (33.33%)	9 (23.08%)	6 (15.38%)	2 (5.13%)
As a Help to the Poor	3 (7.69%)	9 (23.08%)	9 (23.08%)	11 (28.21%)	6 (15.38%)
As a Strength to	6 (15.38%)	13 (33.33%)	7 (17.95%)	11 (28.21%)	0 (0.00%)

the Hurting					
As a Necessary Institution for Marriages	6 (15.38%)	12 (30.77%)	8 (20.51%)	8 (20.51%)	5 (12.82%)
As a Necessary Institution for Funerals	6 (15.38%)	11 (28.21%)	13 (33.33%)	5 (12.82%)	4 (10.26%)
As a Place for Spiritual counsel and encouragement	9 (23.08%)	17 (43.59%)	4 (10.26%)	7 (17.95%)	0 (0.00%)

3) I Think Church is:

Percentage Responses

Helpful to my life 46.2 (18 responses)

Redundant in my life 10.3 (4 responses)

Useless to my life 12.8 (5 responses)

A waste of time 0.0 (0 responses)

Other 30.8 (12 responses)

Total responses: 39

4) I Would attend church if:

Percentage Responses

They talked about current issues 0.0 (0 responses)

They talked about current issues in a helpful way 0.0 (0 responses)

They teach the Bible with conviction 16.1 (5 responses)

They showed more kindness to strangers 0.0 (0 responses)

They didn't worry about how people dress 3.2 (1 responses)

There was not so much infighting and church politics 22.6 (7 responses)

Other 58.1 (18 responses)

Total responses: 31

5) I used to attend church regularly (at least once a month) but I stopped because:

Percentage Responses

It was boring 3.3 (1 responses)

No one seemed to care if I was there or not 6.7 (2 responses)

I was offended by someone in the church 0.0 (0 responses)

I was offended by something the minister said 3.3 (1 responses)

I didn't like the music 0.0 (0 responses)

The church changed and I didn't like it 0.0 (0 responses)

The church became too multi-ethnic 0.0 (0 responses)

The church was not multi-ethnic enough 0.0 (0 responses)

Other 86.7 (26 responses)

Total responses: 30

6) I think that churches in Canada should (please write anything here that you think would be helpful):

(The last five responses are given)

- Focus more on issues that affect everyone, not just those with all the same beliefs.

- I don't believe you have to attend church weekly to have beliefs and morals. I find it a little too much like a cult and I prefer to have strong moral and spiritual beliefs on my own time and within myself.

- be less judgemental, be less "preachy", be more tolerant of alternate lifestyles

- keep on going as is

- Stop thinking that they have all the answers and that there is a Bible verse in response to every situation. Every religion thinks they are the chosen ones that are going to heaven and all others to hell. That puts me off to all of them.

7) I really think that the following components would make church more attractive:

Percentage Responses

Contemporary music 9.4 (11 responses)

Drama 7.7 (9 responses)

Movie Clips 5.1 (6 responses)

Question and Answer Time 12.8 (15 responses)

Comfortable seating 8.5 (10 responses)

Shorter more focused talks by the minister 9.4 (11 responses)

Divorce Recovery 6.8 (8 responses)

Addiction Recovery 7.7 (9 responses)

Helpful BLOGS (Anger, Fear, Anxiety, Bullying) 8.5 (10 responses)

Helpful Tweets 5.1 (6 responses)

Helpful PODCASTS 6.8 (8 responses)

Other 12.0 (14 responses)

8) I would attend Church if:

Percentage Responses

I could go on a day other than Sunday 0.0 (0 responses)

I could find and build meaningful friendships 10.3 (3 responses)

I could join a Small Group (church people meeting at someones house) that meets my needs 3.4 (1 responses)

I knew someone at the church 0.0 (0 responses)

I was convinced that it would add value to my life in some way 31.0 (9 responses)

I was asked to help in some way 3.4 (1 responses)

I was left alone and could remain anonymous 0.0 (0 responses)

Other 51.7 (15 responses)

Total responses: 29

9) Please enter anything else you feel would be helpful concerning the church in Canada:

(The last five responses are given)

- I don't believe you have to attend church weekly to have beliefs and morals. I find it a little too much like a cult - with everyone repeating and speaking together - and I prefer to have strong moral and spiritual beliefs on my own time and within myself. I believe strong morals and beliefs can be taught within the home and through family and friends.

- Churches and religion need to be more tolerant and welcoming of alternate ways of life. Church shouldn't be about Sunday services and one way of thinking. It only provides comfort and healing to those who believe in that same way. Church should allow its members to believe in the way that best serves that member. I believe in God but I do not need to go to Church to believe. It isn't necessary for me to go to a place where I am expected to believe in a "cookie cutter" kind of way. This does not mean I am not a moral, decent, upstanding citizen. I am not sure church plays a significant role in society anymore. They are expensive to run and unless they become more tolerant will become redundant and archaic, if they aren't already.

- Generally I feel that religion in itself is a bad thing. It creates conflict all over the world. Live a good life and be considerate of others.

- Keep preaching the truth and encouraging people to know what the Church is about - fellowship around the Word, encouraging one another, sharing testimonies and learning to love each other - there is too much emphasis on praise and worship – feelings and emotions etc. A return to Biblical methodology of church planting . . .

Be truthful, honest, and humble and be sensitive to the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 11: Appendix 5 Survey of Canadian Church Pastors

Results for: Evangelical Church Health Canada

Pastors

1) Contact Details

1. Church Name:

2. Pastor Name:

3. E-Mail Address:

4. Phone # (with area code):

2) Do you think the Evangelical Church in Canada is in decline?

Percentage Responses

Yes 64.5% 49

No 35.5% 27

Total responses: 76

3) Do you feel optimistic about the ministry of your church at this time?

Percentage Responses

Yes 93.4% 71

No 6.6% 5

Total responses: 76

4) Do you think that your church is healthy at this time?

(The following questions will help define the concept of church health)

Percentage Responses

Yes 67.1% 51

No 32.9% 25

Total responses: 76

5) As a pastor, do you feel that the majority of the people who attend your church are spiritually healthy?

Percentage Responses

Yes 50.0% 38

No 50.0% 38

Total responses: 76

6) Are the people within your church passionate about learning the Bible and how it applies to their lives? (Acts 2:42)

Percentage Responses

Yes 78.9% 60

No 21.1% 16

Total responses: 76

7) Are the people within your church clear on their purpose, goal, mission, vision? (Acts 2:42, Ephesians 3:21)

Percentage Responses

Yes 55.3% 42

No 44.7% 34

Total responses: 76

8) Does your church have a clear prayer plan or prayer focus? (Acts 2:42, 1 Thess. 5:17, Ephesians 6:18-19).

Percentage Responses

Yes 63.2% 48

No 36.8% 28

Total responses: 76

9) Does your church have a clear mechanism for measuring the spiritual health of the members and attendees? (Hebrews 5:11-14).

Percentage Responses

Yes 23.7% 18

No 76.3% 58

Total responses: 76

10) Has your tenure at your current church been a short medium or long one? (Long = 7-15 years; Medium 3-6 Years; Short = 0-2 years).

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Percentage Responses

Short (0-2 years) 26.3 20

Medium (3-6 years) 22.4 17

Long (7-15 years) 34.2 26

Other 17.1 13

Total responses: 76

11) Is conflict and division a problem in your church – if so can you share in the “Explanation” section what the core issue/s is/are? (1 Corinthians 6:1-7,

Ephesians 4:1-5)

(The last five responses are given)

- Not really...things come up, but for the most part those things are actively dealt with properly. We actually have a wonderful unity in the church, but we are still humans with preferences and comfort zones, so toes are bound to be stepped on, and miscommunications sometimes happen.

- Not really...things come up, but for the most part those things are actively dealt with properly. We actually have a wonderful unity in the church, but we are still humans with preferences and comfort zones, so toes are bound to be stepped on, and miscommunications sometimes happen.

- There are no real conflicts at this time. Struggles but no underlining division.

- Not much. Just an occasional occurrence.

Core issue, pride which refuses to honestly admit when wrong and/or forgive.

- Some "talk the talk" but don't "walk the walk". Some don't attend Sunday services - some other events take priority (outdoor sports, activities, etc.)

12) Does your church have a clear process for selecting and training God's people for works of service within your local church and beyond? (Ephesians 4:11 –

13).

Percentage Responses

Yes - we select and train people regularly 39.6 42

Yes - we select people for service in the church but we don't train them

14.2 15

No - we don't have a selection process 8.5 9

No - we don't have a training process 9.4 10

Our church workers are nominated by the congregation

9.4 10

Workers are chosen because of their business acumen

1.9 2

Other 17.0 18

13) Do the churches within your oversight have a clear plan and process to select and train ministry leaders and future leadership of the church? (2 Timothy 1).

Percentage Responses

Yes - we select and train leadership in our

church

42.1 32

Yes - we select leadership but we do not do

any training

13.2 10

No - Leadership in our church is nominated by

the congregation

13.2 10

No - Leadership in our church emerges from

those most willing

14.5 11

Other 17.1 13

Total responses: 76

14) In your opinion, what would make your church healthier?

(The last five responses are given)

- Younger families and singles grasping the importance of actively serving Christ...pushing themselves beyond just showing up. For the older group...perhaps pushing themselves to connect with the younger families more, and using those times of connection to encourage them forward rather than sharing their own opinions in a more negative way (examples would be: clothing style preferences, unrequested advice about children, etc.

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- Having a better balance in regards to age groups. We have a noticable lack of young couples and young families.

- More intentional training and accountability. Also more intentional outreach and training to that end.

- Stronger commitment to studying God's Word (instead of hockey!)

15) Do you think the Evangelical Church in Canada is in decline and if so - do you have suggestions for how this decline might be reversed?

(The last five responses are given)

- No...I'm still too young and inexperienced to answer with authority on such a question, but I don't think the church is in decline as much as it is being refined. I think the last generation was a little more comfortable than this one seems to be about doing what they should do or "ought to." This generation (teens to young families) I'm finding need to be told the `why`s and `how comes` before they are motivated...they don't seem to just jump into a system as easily. When I look at the worship times at different churches and conferences I'm seeing a different type of connection between God and His people. More emotional, but hopefully not less grounded. In this time of overly accessible information the danger of course is that you have so many options you can't make up your mind, but the blessing is that people seem to be asking more questions now...and if they continue digging they'll find that Jesus truly is the way the truth and the life - I can't wait to see what will happen in my own Young Adults when they come to the point where they know how to refine their questions, and have the ability to find good answers. I think the Evangelical Church is slowing down to find its proper footing again so that it can launch forward with the ability to show a relationship with Jesus that doesn't just fit nicely into Sunday and next to impossible the rest of the week...they want to know how to actually live this Christ honoring life, in effective ways...ways that make sense to what they see in the New Testament. I think the Evangelical Church in Canada is realizing that more and more people aren't just walking into churches and fitting...they are learning how to reach the ones who have been hurt by church, turned off by church, and simply don't trust the church. Its a great time to be a pastor, but it certainly not a time to be lazy with your faith...I think it may seem to some that the church is in decline because givings might be down, or there aren't as many churches, etc...but I think its just taking some time to be refined and in some ways the ministries need to be redefined - after all if the student hasn't learned until the teacher has taught, I guess we'd better get our act in gear and learn how to teach in ways that people know how to listen.

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- Yes it is in decline. I believe we need to be more effective in preaching the Word and in the training of leaders to lead.

- I'm not sure more fine tuning of church machinery is the answer. We need a movement of the Holy Spirit - revival - of brokenness over sin, coldness in our lives/churches, and the reality of lost people headed for hell.

- no organ and piano, and an outward thinking vision.

16) Do you think that there is a direct link between the HEALTH of a Church and the ability of a church to reach the unsaved around them?

Percentage Responses

Yes 98.7% 74

No 1.3% 1

Total responses: 75

17) Is there anything that you need that would assist you in strengthening the health or outreach of your church, your ministry, your family or your own ministry/ or life?

(The last five responses are given)

- Wow, what a question!

health of church...more disciplined christians experiencing God, and sharing those experiences with one another. Confession of sins, and forgiveness of one another...more humility, honesty, and dedication to truly living this faith out right. Outreach...if everyone was living it individually the changes would wow people, and we wouldn't have to advertise...we'd have to figure out where to put them all.

My Ministry...we're building up our core group of about 12 people right now in the Young Adults group...helpign them get real and dedicated, and as they mature I think this ministry will truly be ready for God to take us wherever He wants our next big step to be...(we're not a closed group by any means right now, but our studies are intense - because our intension is to grow in the right ways before we get caught up in number type growth.

My Family...we are certainly going through an overwhelming time, and prayer is the best help we could receive I think at this point (though of course money donations would also certainly lighten a lot of the load :))

My own Life...I think I just need to slow down for a couple days and spend some quality time with God, without stressful distractions. Then I'd like to buy my wife some flowers and eat a meal just the two of us. I also need to work on spending more time daily in prayer, and silence. (To be quite honest...I am coming off a busy few weeks here, so some of these answers are a little biased to my experience this month, rather than as a rule for my ministry experience here - which has actually been incredible!)

- Wow, what a question!

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- What we need is more committed people to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the control of the Holy Spirit.

- I think I have the tools and resources necessary, by and large. I know more already than I do!

- we need a better building to be able to invite new people to come and stay.

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