THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MODEL FOR CULTURE CHANGE
AT MGT FAMILY CHURCH (2001-2006)

By

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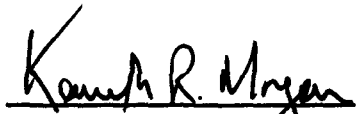**McMASTER DIVINITY COLLEGE**

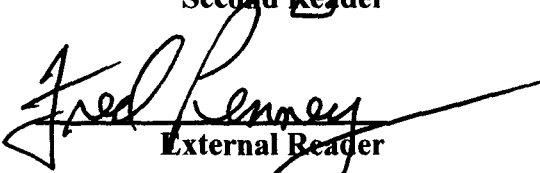Upon the recommendation of an oral examination committee, this thesis-project by
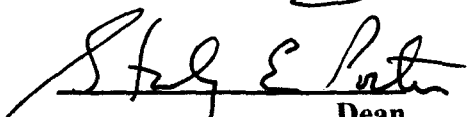
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ABSTRACT

The Development of a Model for Culture Change at MGT Family Church (2001-2006)

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Doctor of Ministry, 2007

A congregation is as strong as its mission and vision. The Canadian evangelical church is in the process of considering its effectiveness particularly in terms of it missionality. This question has caused MGT Family Church leadership to step outside its current traditions and praxis to consider the necessary elements for a biblical and engaging church. The problem of this research project was to identify a model of culture change that would serve church leadership as they sought to implement congregational renewal.

This five-year project began with the articulation of ecclesiological considerations and was closely followed by a study concerning the missional expectations of the local church. The role of the local church has been synthesized into three values as expressed in corporate church activity and in the lives of church members and known by the acronym 'SAM.' (**S**piritual Formation, **A**uthentic/Accountable Relationships and **M**issional Activity)

The scriptures speak of the expectation of spiritual growth and maturity in terms of one's relationship with God. Church leadership must endeavor to establish a church that facilitates spiritual formation in the lives of the congregation irrespective of where each person is in their spiritual journey.

Second, a believer grows when he or she is in relationship with another person or a group of people. The church is a catalyst for the development of small communities that regularly meet together for mutual support and spiritual growth. Additionally, a believer is missionally effective when he or she is in relationship with a seeker.

Third, the Kingdom of God grows when believers are missionally engaged. Corporate congregational activities must be conducive to missionality and supporting instruction for the individual must be available.

Culture change implementation is largely the responsibility of church leadership. Today's pastor must be equipped to lead his or her congregation in the direction of Kingdom effectiveness. The way in which he or she chooses to lead will determine the effectiveness of the proposed culture change.

Portico, formerly MGT Family Church, a Pentecostal church in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada has been the subject of a culture change during the period from 2000 to 2005. The leadership team consisted of men and women who were cognizant of the church's history and its successes and failures, its strengths and its weaknesses. Over the period of two years church leaders conducted an intense study to determine the nature and extent of a proposed culture change. This was followed by the implementation of measured changes between 2000 and 2004. In early 2005 the culture change was fully and forcefully implemented with Sunday services totally dedicated to Revolution Sunday, a full articulation of the new church culture.

In early 2006 the author conducted a survey among Portico congregants. Seventy-nine people responded and the results were tabulated through the use of SPSS version 8.0 data management system. Participants volunteered their responses concerning the church culture change.

Research shows that organizational culture renewal is best facilitated through an informed and carefully designed process which is adjusted to meet new challenges over the course of time. As local church leadership teams begin to consider the potential of a renewed church culture and grapple with the associated challenges the Canadian Pentecostal church will increase in its missional effectiveness.

To

the three people who mean the most to me,

Donna, Alicia and Joshua

and whose love and support are my greatest treasures.

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One's life is enriched by those whose paths directed by God intersect with one's own. I am thankful for parents who have always encouraged me to attain life's highest level. I am indebted to Rev. Calvin Ratz, who mentored me for ten years before mentorship was fully understood or articulated. I owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Andrew Irvine who believed in me and invited me into a life-changing journey. I am deeply grateful for the academic companionship of Dr. Mark Steinacher. Without the ongoing support, inspiration and understanding of Rev. Doug Rhind, the pastoral staff at Portico and the congregation over the course of this project, completion would have only been a dream. I wish to thank Jim Craig whose missional heart beats within his chest and whose input has always been thought provoking. Last, but not least, I am thankful for Sue Carlisle's diligent scrutiny of this document. It is my prayer that the greatest days of the local Canadian evangelical church would be in the chapters yet to be written.

Contents

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Local church and denominational leaders are observing the continual decline in Canadian church attendance.[1] These observations prompt questions concerning the future demise of the evangelical church.

> Why do churches and denominations die? The answer is simple. Because they change the wrong things and hang on to the wrong things...they die because they hang on to the methods and traditions. When they confuse what to change and what not to change, they die.[2]

Thankfully the news is not all bad.

> A small cloud is on the horizon. The winds of change are beginning to gather strength and with certainty a storm is coming. All over our nation there is a quiet movement of the Spirit of God that is causing believers to re-examine the way they 'do church.' Churches around [North America] are throwing out old measures of success. It is no longer merely about size, seeker sensitivity, spiritual gifts, church health or the number of small groups. It is about making a significant and sustainable difference in the lives of people around us-in our communities and in our cities.[3]

To discover the purest form of an organization, in terms of its philosophy, purpose, original intent, type of expression and activity, one should examine it in its infancy. Luke describes the New Testament church shortly after its inception.

> They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47)

This is the picture of a unified group of people who had purpose and direction and were exhibiting health by its significant growth.

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[1] Church Attendance http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/catholicism/churchattendance.html, p. 1. November 13, 2006. How Many People Go Regularly to Weekly Religious Services? http://www.religioustolerance.org/rel_rate.htm, p. 1. November 13, 2006.

[2] Peter C. Wagner. The New Apostolic Churches Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2000. p. 8.

[3] Eric Swanson, Ten Paradigm Shifts Toward Community Transformation Dallas, TX: Leadership Network, September 2002. p. 3. http://www.leadnet.org/resources/docs/booklet.pdf, January 1, 2005.

Today's church leader may discover that the level of biblical literacy concerning local church principles or intricacies is wanting. Ask a group of churched young adults why the church exists and the response may be blank stares.[4] With additional prompting, the responses are often functional as opposed to philosophical. "The church exists so that we can worship together" or "so we can hear the pastor preach the Word of God." Without discounting the functional aspects of the local church, the reason for the existence of the church, historically and today, is more significant.

> The world is taking part in a spiritual quest, but many citizens of this century, no longer believe that the Church is an asset to their quest. Institutional religion today is tearing itself apart externally, as it collapses internally. The choices are clear. Religion moves into the future and beyond exile or it dies.[5]

This is a wakeup call.

Local church leadership needs to return to the formative questions and foundational principles concerning the existence of the church.[6] The initial question concerns purpose. Fundamentally, why does the church exist? For some, including pastoral leadership, church attendance and involvement has been part of their lifestyle since they can remember, and this question has never been pondered. They might answer, "The church exists because it always has," or "because it is God's desire to have a place where Christians meet." There may be an element of truth in each of these statements. That, however, is not

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[4] This was done in September 2004 at a Portico small group gathering of eight young adults. All of these people had been part of the church since childhood and are what some would refer to as 'lifers.' In most cases their parents brought them to church as babies and they have continued to attend since.

[5] John Shelby Spong. <u>Why Christianity Must Change or Die.</u> San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row Publishers, 1998. p. 188. Michael Bott and Jonathan Sarfati. <u>What's Wrong with Bishop Spong?</u> http://www.answersingenesis.org/Docs/1119.asp, p. 1. April 9, 2006. "John Shelby Spong is an influential public speaker, writer and media figure. He is also Bishop of Newark in New Jersey. He claims he is a Christian; yet he champions causes that historic Christianity has often fought tooth and nail against. Bishop Spong is well known for ordaining practicing homosexuals, denying the bodily resurrection and virginal conception of Christ, and for deriving his moral code from modern human experience rather than the Bible." While Spong may differ in some of the major tenets of evangelical Christianity, he has something to say about the effectiveness of church. His agenda may be in question, evidenced by the lack of a biblical solution, but he has insight into the problem within many local churches.

[6] James Emery White. <u>Rethinking the Church.</u> Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1997. pp. 25-37.

reason enough for pursuing the development of a church similar to the one described in the New Testament as facilitated by Restorationists or Primitivists, who rejected Protestantism and sought a return to the forms of early Christianity,[7] while missing the point of the local church as God's redemptive presence in the world.

While recognizing that the church has similarities to other social institutions, it must also be stated that the church is philosophically different.[8] Living in a societal setting where the economy is market-driven, and the marks of success are growth and exposure, these values have often been the measure of success for the local church. There is a realization that Kingdom growth is not optimally experienced through church programs or cloistered meetings in a building dedicated to that purpose.[9] The activity of the local church, as has been developed over the last centuries, is failing the postmodern world.

> The form the church presently takes, the world it gets its bearings from, was mostly formed in the Enlightenment and early Modern period. In a post-modern time that which was of approaching reality is now going, going, gone and our way of church life is passing away with it...we have to prepare for this death and begin to envision what the 'resurrected' church might look like.[10]

Modern Christians tend to centralize their spirituality as a function of the local church. They attempt to fulfil their 'need to worship,' their 'need to be engaged in mission' through the evangelistic efforts of a local church, their 'need for children's programs' and their 'need for purpose' through the strength of their commitment to the local church.[11]

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[7] Restorationism and Precursors of Pentecostalism
http://faculty.leeu.edu/~droebuck/CHH532%20pdf/Restorationism-Precusors.pdf, p. 2, January 5, 2007. Restorationism http://neirr.org/restorationism.htm, p. 1, June 3, 2006. Some Restorationist movements, such as Adventists, have retained a Christian basis for their faith. Others, such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Latter Day Saints (Mormans) and Christadelphians have a differing orthodoxy as illustrated in their beliefs concerning the divinity, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

[8] George Barna, The Second Coming of the Church Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 1998, p. 131-132.

[9] James Thwaites, The Church Beyond the Congregation
http://www.christianitymagazine.co.uk/engine.cfm?i=92&id=62&arch=1, p. 1. January 1, 2005.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Jason Zahariades, Detoxing from Church http://www.theofframp.org/Detox.html, p. 1-2, January 1, 2005.

Christ followers must be urged to move from "being churched to being the Church,"[12] a community of people who are passionate about Christian values as opposed to focusing on church activities, being spiritually formed while in relationship with others and missionally impacting the world.

An organization that has lost sight of its purpose has lost its soul.[13] The church may have lost its soul. It may be grappling with its role in a society that is spiritual but not religious while coexisting in a culture that fails to consider the local church as the place to find answers to life's questions. Yet, people continue to search for hope and spiritual freedom from guilt and sin. The church, while patterning itself after the New Testament church, and positioning itself to relate to the culture in which it is ministering, can respond in a significant way.

From the description of the church, found in Acts 2, one may discern that the Jerusalem congregation was actively involved in worship, ministry, discipleship, community and evangelism. This sets the pattern for church activity for all time. For purposes of this thesis, these five activities will be reduced to three categories,

1. Spiritual Formation including worship, discipleship and ministry
2. Authentic/Accountable relationships or community
3. Missional Activity as expressed in service and evangelism.[14]

The role of this dissertation is to embark on a formative journey that, through the case study of Portico,[15] will prompt the reader to examine the context of his or her ministry. With New Testament church patterns in mind, leaders will be able to use biblical principles to recalibrate their specific church culture.

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[12] Ibid. p. 2.

[13] Allan Cox and Julie Liesse, <u>Redefining Corporate Soul: Linking Purpose and People</u> Chicago, IL: Irwin Publishers, 1996. p. 3.

[14] These three categories, Spiritual Formation, Authentic/Accountable Relationships, and Missional Activity have become affectionately known as SAM.

[15] Portico means 'entrance' or 'a welcoming place.' A portico is often a columned area that gives shape to outside space. There is also an interesting biblical connection to Solomon's Porch (portico) where people entering and leaving the temple met and connected.

Prior to his ascension, Jesus was very clear about the task of the church. He insisted that making disciples (Matthew 28:18-20) is a life-long process. It begins by reaching out to those who have not expressed faith and remain disenfranchised from God. If seekers respond to salvation through Jesus Christ, church leadership must ensure that the discipleship process moves on to an equipping stage that includes instruction in Spiritual Formation, Authentic/Accountable Relationships and Missionality. Once these general purposes of a local church are understood, the leader, or leaders, may turn to consideration of the church's mission.[16] This is the determination of where is the congregation is going and what needs to be emphasized in the next period of time.

Leaders should not shy away from strategic development. Church leadership makes choices either to concentrate on existence and survival or cast vision for God's intent for their local church. It does not matter which way someone walks if they are not concerned about where they are going. The same is true of the church. Without dismissing the common aspects of the local church, each congregation must determine what makes it unique and what the specific objective of their particular local church should be. The local church should be consumed with a desire to reach those who have not found faith and spend a significant amount of its resources strategizing how to make disciples.

If one of the purposes of the church is missionality, they must consider who they are trying to reach. The church, as described in Acts 2, was a cultural church.[17] The Jerusalem church was primarily filled with Jewish believers who, at a later time, were called to the Gentiles through the ministry of Paul and others. For a church to fulfill its biblical mandate it must identify the type of people to whom it is called. The effectiveness of a church is dependant on its

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[16] James Emery White. Rethinking p. 28.

[17] This may not be in the way one thinks of 'cultural churches' in Western society today; a church with a distinct ethnic flavour as observed by a homogeneity that is not indicative of the community in which it exists. For example, a Mandarin-speaking church may exist in Toronto to serve the needs of Mandarin speaking people, but it is largely irrelevant to the majority of the people of that greater metropolitan area.

ability to identify its target group and develop its ministries in such a way as to make its message culturally engaging.

The definition of success in church circles may vary. For some, it may be found in the number of people regularly attending services or in the size of the annual budget. Others assess whether or not the church is alive and growing by the existence or non-existence of programs for all ages and life stages.

Any assessment of personal and corporate growth must be carefully processed. The church is not to be solely judged on its structure or organizational effectiveness. The church, as the people of God, is primarily concerned with discipling fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ who then lead others to Christian faith. Success for a local church means establishing an organization where spiritual discovery and maturing is consistently taking place. While considering both the quantitative and qualitative dimensions, church leaders must return to biblical constructs to determine success.

Church practitioners are responsible to establish strategies to insure that congregational life is being transformed in a way that is constantly increasing its effectiveness. Often leadership creates a plan without first giving adequate consideration to purpose, mission, vision, target audience, and definition of growth and health. Only after this is thoroughly articulated, can the pastor and his or her leadership team create a strategy. Because the list of programs, curriculum, and techniques is limitless, those who lead congregations, need to examine what is being utilized in other contexts, and then embark on a Spirit-directed process of creating a strategy that will provide maximum impact for their own community.

If the local church does not wish to lose its way, its leadership must understand God's specific intent for the church and adapt accordingly. With an understanding of the basic principles of biblical ecclesiology, the priority of God's missional heart and an appreciation for the context in which the local church exists, this thesis explores the necessary church cultural changes that will insure that the congregation is living up to the expectations of Jesus Christ. This is the

journey of the people of PORTICO (formerly MGT Family Church), and their determination to discern God's unique intent and purposes for their local church.

Background Factors Leading to the Project

One of the first exercises in the Doctor of Ministry journey took place in a retreat setting just outside Hamilton, Ontario. Our moderator instructed each participant to illustrate their life story on a large sheet of paper giving particular attention to the 'ups and downs' and 'significant turning points.' For me this was a major contribution to a self-awareness which has led to this project.

At that point in time I was at the mid-point in my life. I realized that the personal lessons and experiences of my upbringing and early days of ministry, both negative and positive, were the things that would shape my future effectiveness.

The Early Years

My family of origin could be described as loving and caring. My father and mother found faith in their twenties during World War II. The church they attended was the same church I 'attended' one week after my birth. Kingston Gospel Temple had been planted by a Pentecostal pioneer in the 1920s and was one of two Pentecostal churches in a city of 50,000.

My earliest church recollections are of Sunday school, children's church, boys' and girls' clubs, vacation Bible schools and day camps. In each setting the Bible was the central focus. However, as I grew into my teenaged years the emphasis of church programs was experiential. This was evidenced in the multitude of altar calls highlighting salvation and a baptism in the Holy Spirit. Not only did the church have legalistic expectations as articulated in acceptable 'do's and don'ts,' but spiritual formation was presented as an onerous duty.

Even before reaching my teenage years I remember realizing that my church did not engage mainstream culture. My church experience seemed to be irrelevant to those in my school. A disconnect formed between church life and life in the real world. At times I observed spiritual abuse in the name of the

power of the Holy Spirit resulting in a personal reaction against its misuse. Furthermore, because I relied on the experiential aspects of Pentecostal faith my spiritual walk may be characterized as the pathway of a roller coaster.

In the 1960s the Kingston Gospel Temple was one of the largest Pentecostal churches in southeastern Ontario. Looking back, I understand that the church grew numerically but conversion growth was marginal at most. During this period the greatest number of newcomers came as a result of the charismatic renewal. As in most Pentecostal churches, my home church was not missional. Our church merely attracted people from mainline denominations.

To say that I was disillusioned with the church in my high school years is an understatement. On one hand the 'Jesus people' movement was in full swing. On the other hand the traditional Pentecostal churches continued to propagate what I considered *passé* church culture. Even though I knew I was called to vocational ministry I refused to obey. It took a 'dark night of the soul' experience at a secular university to resign to God's call on my life to ministry.

During this time period my attention turned to the positive aspects of my home church. Congregational members cared for each other. My pastors were strong leaders and served the needs of young people. However, I resolved not to repeat what I interpreted as the mistakes of the leadership of my home church. This has provided the impetus for the entirety of my ministry pathway.

Ministerial Training

The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada adhere to the bible school movement. Pastors train for three or four years in practical subjects and enter ministry before being ordained after two full years of service. In 1974 Pentecostal ministerial training embarked upon a major shift. More students than ever before were enrolling and Eastern Pentecostal Bible College was in the hiring mode. The new faculty had acquired post secondary degrees outside the Pentecostal training centers and they began bringing creativity to the classroom. Many of the teachers challenged me, and my classmates, to begin to think about church leadership in different ways.

At the same time church growth literature began to appear prolifically. Authors expounded ideas concerning body life and gift-based ministry. Pastors were encouraged to lead their churches into engagement in their local context. Practices such as preaching and worship were about to change drastically. Youth ministry was no longer viewed as 'conducting a service' but providing a well-rounded program that included evangelism and discipleship. Teaching methodology was revisited accompanied by an encouragement to be as innovative and engaging as possible.

Initial Ministry Experiences

During my last year of Bible school I was invited to serve as the youth pastor at Calvary Pentecostal church in Peterborough, Ontario. It was a challenging setting for a young inexperienced pastor to practice his craft. That was a wake-up call I will never forget. While attempting to build the program through creative methodology I came to realize it was necessary to have a missional dimension.

Two board member's sons caused me a great deal of grief through misbehavior. After a period of fasting and prayer I felt impressed to concentrate on them as individuals and, through a series of activities, built a relationship with them. This was a formative point in the development of my ministerial philosophy.

After a one-year educational experience (completion of a Bachelor of Science) in the United States, my wife and I returned to Canada to give leadership to the youth and children's ministries at Lakeshore Evangelical Church in Dorval, Quebec. There were three major developments in this setting. First, the church was, as their name suggests, very evangelistic. In fact, their reputation was that they were the most non-Pentecostal church in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. I was amazed at how comfortable I was in a setting that prioritized evangelism.

Second, a very high percentage of the congregation was involved in small groups, so much so that this ministry became the 'entrance point' for many new

believers. Having never been in a small group before, the group that my wife and I led was so rich and rewarding that we have been proponents of these types of relationships ever since.

Third, the senior pastor had a business and journalism background that profoundly impacted his ministry style. He successfully led the congregation through a number of significant culture changes by employing biblical principles, business savvy and positive communication. At each step of the way he mentored me by explaining what he was doing and why. As the months passed hope began to build in my heart that established churches could be changed. The biggest challenge was yet to come.

In 1983 the senior pastor was invited to lead a congregation in Abbotsford, British Columbia. My wife and I and our new-born daughter followed quickly thereafter. One could best describe this new ministry setting as a conundrum. It was one of the largest Pentecostal churches on the West Coast and yet it was firmly planted in the ethos of the 1960s. For the next eight years I was privileged to give leadership to a major church culture change. Over that period of time the congregation doubled in size.

The Watershed Moment

In 1989 a group of pastors and board members traveled to Portland, Oregon to hear Pastor Bill Hybels and his ministry team elucidate the merits of a seeker-sensitive church. While being committed to evangelism and discipleship, it was his contention that a weekend service can be designed to reach those who are investigating faith in Jesus Christ. The role of church members is to invite those with whom they have relationships. A weeknight service provided teaching for the believer.

Building upon the previous church culture change the pastoral staff at Abbotsford Pentecostal Assembly began to strategize for this major shift in ministry philosophy. Leadership diligently worked to reconcile evangelism with Pentecostal experience and praxis. While there was much excitement, a portion of the congregation actively began to resist the new direction. This was a major

lesson in 'what not to do' when changing the culture of the church. Influential members of this traditional Pentecostal church undermined all that was proposed and within the next eighteen months most of the pastoral staff had moved on.

More Recent Ministry Experiences

In 1990 I was invited to give senior pastoral leadership to Evangel Pentecostal Church in Montreal, Quebec. This traditional Canadian Pentecostal church had been adversely affected by the English exodus from the province due to the rise in Quebec nationalism. They were struggling to regain the strength and vitality they experienced in the 1970s.

The four years that I served Evangel could be characterized as the best of times and the worst of times. Early in my tenure I worked diligently to 'get leadership on board' in terms of missionality. A group of pastors and board members took a trip to Chicago to hear the Willowcreek story. Leadership began to facilitate a slow implementation of a few seeker-sensitive sermon series.

For two years there was major success. The third year was a different story as one or two former board members decided that they were against the 'new direction.' At the end of the year two families left the church and in year four the church began to change significantly for the better.

As I look back on this time I can see that the lessons I learned in this church have contributed greatly to this project. This thesis gives me the opportunity to systematize the learnings so that leaders in similar situations can benefit from principles I learned 'the hard way.'

The 'learning curve' continued after I accepted a position at MGT Family Church. I was in my early 40s and life fell apart. The church was progressive and was accomplishing much. The pace of change was breath-taking, but the prevalent leadership style was dictatorial and bordered on tyrannical. The church experienced significant growth due to the rapid growth of Mississauga, but church leadership was being severely wounded. The situation was extremely unsettling to me as I had never experienced this type of dysfunctionality before, but I did resolve never to lead in a similar manner. During this time I realized

the importance of establishing strong relationships and communication during culture change.

The McMaster Divinity College Experience

It may be accurate to say that my reasons for enrolling at McMaster were suspect. I knew that any future teaching position at a Pentecostal bible college is predicated on the successful completion of a Doctor of Ministry and viewed the process as simply more education.

However, I was unprepared for the serendipitous moments on the journey which have ultimately become high impact moments. Coming out of an experience-based tradition I was pleasantly surprised by the spirituality of those I previously considered 'mainline' and academic. The introduction of Foster's *Devotional Classics*[18] into my formation was one of the most significant factors in my entire life. As a boy raised in an 'Orange' home[19] I would never have believed that the writings of traditional church leaders, including Roman Catholics, could be so formative.

My McMaster experience could be characterized as a collegial exercise of exploring a new frontier which has prompted me toward a more thoughtful spirituality. I also possess a more clearly articulated philosophy of ministry which could be characterized as 'equipping' for the ultimate purpose of missional activity.

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[18] Richard Foster, <u>Devotional Classics: Selected Reading for Individual & Groups</u> New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1990.

[19] <u>Profile: The Orange Order</u> http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/1422212.stm, p. 1. January 5, 2007. William of Orange united Protestants against the Roman Catholic church. The support of this organization was strong in the times of my Anglican grandparents.

Assumptions

To embark on a journey of culture formation or organizational renewal one must make certain assumptions. In some cases these assumptions are context specific while others may be associated with the topic in general.

The Bible is the main 'operational manual' for the local church. Descriptive and prescriptive passages inform the church leader. Principles, praxis and warnings can be ascertained from both Old Testament and New Testament scriptures. Any proposed methodology will be evaluated according to biblical truth.

Since New Testament times the local church has taken on many different forms reflecting its cultural and historical contexts. For the purposes of this paper it will be assumed that the subject under discussion is the evangelical church. The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada lists over forty denominations as members in its consortium.[20] Each of these groups subscribes to the value of evangelism, that is that the local church is to be God's mission to the world. Although this may not be a value boisterously practiced it is assumed that an evangelical church should be 'all about evangelism.' Failure to express this value has spawned the missional church movement. While such models as the house church are recognized as contributing to Kingdom endeavors, the focus of this paper is missional renewal in the Canadian evangelical church as illustrated by the case study of a specific Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada congregation.

If missionality is an inherent value in the evangelical church the church should grow quantitatively. However, like any skill-based activity, effectiveness increases as a result of the upgrading of one's abilities. For the local church this means that spiritual growth will positively impact one's missionality. Spiritual formation is not only applicable to one's vertical relationship with God, it is also increases one's effectiveness to engage nonbelievers.

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[20] Evangelical Fellowship of Canada www.evangelicalfellowship.ca, November 20, 2006, p. 1.

This paper makes a case for the role of the church in spiritual formation and the pursuit of relationships within the local church. It is assumed that, along with missionality, all aspects of church life can be categorized under one or more of these three principles.

Church governance styles can have great impact on renewal efforts. Without passing judgment on one type of church government or another, this paper assumes a congregationalist ecclesiology in which each congregation is autonomous. Culture change in church governance systems which are presbyterially or episcopally-oriented will not be discussed.

There have been examples of grass roots culture change. One needs only to consider the fall of Communism. A similar revolution may be possible within a local congregation. However, proposals within this thesis assume that culture change is the responsibility of local church leadership. Those who are in positions of influence are urged to take initiative to determine the health and vitality of the organization and begin to strategize accordingly. Subsequent change, as a function of the spiritual gift of leadership, must be designed with purpose and methodical in its implementation.

Having said that, as Jesus builds his church he welcomes the efforts of all members of his body. He has bestowed a wide variety of gifts in each congregation to fulfill congregational purposes. As is intimated above, some of these gifts are more directly applicable to renewal while others may be more effectively exercised in other facets of church life.

It is assumed that the most appropriate style of leadership welcomes a team mentality. This paper is not about men and women who seek to serve God and their fellow congregants by blazing a pathway of church renewal without inviting others to join in the endeavor.

A thoughtful church takes note of its successes and shortcomings. Portico, formerly MGT Family Church, has functioned as the context for this culture change discussion. The learnings presented in this paper are not confined to the achievements encountered in the renewal process from July 2000

to early 2006. Advances also came through understanding and responding to he many failures, both large and small.

Definition of Terms

Artifacts:

Visual items in the local church setting that attest to congregational history or values. Bronze plaques, slogans, pieces of furniture or wall hangings are examples.

Authentic/ Accountable Relationships

Biblical relationships in a congregational context are measured by their quality. Vulnerability, transparency and cooperative learning are marks of authentic and accountable relationships. Participants interact together and view their friends as people who 'journey together.'

Baby Boomer

A person born between 1946 and 1964 as a result of men coming home from World War II, finding life partners and subsequently raising families.

Connecting

The process of working with people who have been exposed to the people or ministry of Portico and seeking to engage them in the pathway of spiritual formation, authentic/accountable relationships and missionality.

CORE

The 'department name' for those who are responsible for small group ministry, outside the wall ministry and connecting at Portico. Originally the word was an acronym for Christians On the Road to Excellence but this has been dropped and the title retained, for now.

Culture

The part of human existence that is best expressed by 'the way we do things around here.' Culture is expressed in religion, living styles and the way in which each society or organization carries out business.

Engagement

The attempt of a person or group to seek to understand the context in which they live with an accompanying effort to communicate a message (in the case of the church, the gospel) in a manner which is understood by all.

Evangelical church

The type of church which views a major part of its mandate as reaching people through various means who have yet to profess faith in Jesus Christ.

Generation X

This describes people born between 1965 and 1978; those who characterize the onset of postmodern thought.

Generation Y or Generation Next

This describes people born between 1979 and 1999 and is marked by full integration of postmodern thinking.

Governance

The articulated organizational structure of a church that defines 'who is responsible for what' and 'who does what.'

Incarnational Living

An understanding that to reach a people group one must live among them to learn their culture. This methodology has the potential of increasing missional effectiveness.

Leadership

The person or group of people who have the greatest influence in an organization, not necessarily as a result of a formalized position.

Leadership Style

The way in which a person leads can be characterized by words such as dictatorial, laissez faire, controlling, benevolent and serving. In many cases these values may be best expressed on a scale. A person may tend toward one of the above while exhibiting secondary and/or corresponding leadership characteristics.

Mainline Church

As a rule, these historical churches are those which may tend more toward social action and liberal theologies as opposed to evangelical theology and evangelistic activity. Counted among their number are such denominations as the United

Church of Canada and the Anglican Church of Canada. It should be noted that there are some notable congregations which exist as exceptions to this rule.

Mission Statement

A one-sentence description of the organization's unique role in its context.

Missional/Missionality

The intentional decision to join God in his mission and be his representative to one's culture and the world.

Modern/Modernity

The system of thought that relies on rationality, objectivity, realism and logic. Traditionally the church presented the gospel in this way and encouraged people to make decisions.

Organic

The characteristic of an organization that relies more on the inter-relationships of its people as opposed to its programmatic aspects.

Organization

A group of people with a similar goal or vision that has formalized through a variety methods including an agreed-to structure, governance and behavioral expectations.

Organizational Change

The process of making adjustments in an organization's assumptions, values, methodology and the ensuing results.

Pentecostal

This is the group of people who believe that the Acts 2:4 experience is applicable today and has entrenched the baptism of the Holy Spirit within church doctrine. This historical group arose approximately a century ago and are not to be confused with charismatics who emerged in the 1970s and are not as dogmatic concerning the necessity of an experience of glossalalia as the primary evidence of the 'fullness' of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life.

Postmodern

This is the system of thought that relies on understanding, subjectivity, skepticism and relative truth. These characteristics are evident in globalization, consumerism and the fragmentation of authority.

Redemptive Potential

A community can be analyzed to determine the percentage of people who do not have faith in Jesus Christ and their receptivity to an appropriate presentation of the gospel as compared to the ratio of those who do have faith. Another factor concerns the religious entrenchment of those found in a region. In the southern United States one may discover that a high percentage of people are part of a church community while in suburban Toronto Islamic or Sikh immigrants have virtually no interest in exploring Christian faith.

Relevance

Any time the term 'relevance' is used in this paper it refers to the attempt to apply the principles of Christ's message to current situations. While the message remains the same the methodology changes in order to creatively engage the audience.[21] This is not to be confused with a relevance that is advocated by some who believe that the gospel can be fundamentally altered to relate to those without faith.

Renewal

This describes the process that focuses an organization back on its original intent or recalibrates it to a new focus. In both cases the organization gains new energy and life.

SAM

This is the term used to express Spiritual Formation, Authentic/Accountable Relationships and Missionality.

Seekers

This describes people who have yet to 'cross the line of faith' and yet are on a journey to find faith. They may be in the beginning stages or quite active in their spiritual search.

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[21] See Engagement, p. 16.

Small groups

A group ranging in size from six to sixteen people who meet for the purposes of spiritual formation, relationship building and corporate missionality.

Spiritual Formation

The personal and corporate process and activities associated with becoming more Christ-like.

Spiritual Gifts

The spiritual abilities given by the Holy Spirit to believers as described in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12 and 1 Timothy 5.

Traditional Church

A traditional church is one the leadership seeks to preserve their ecclesiastical tradition at the expense of missionality and engagement with their context.

Values

The philosophical underpinnings of an organization that inform organizational methodology and behavioral expectations.

Vision Statement

A short description of what the organization should look like at an agreed-to point in time.

Review of Related Literature

The nature of this project necessitated scrutiny of literature from various disciplines ranging from theological to organizational theory. For purposes of this thesis the literature has been categorized into six types; the local church, the believer, culture, culture change, culture change in the church and congregational and denominational source documents. References in this overview will include the author and title so as not to replicate bibliographic content.

The Local Church

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen investigates ecclesiastical traditions, contemporary and historical expressions concerning church practices and contextual approaches to the formation of ministry in *An Introduction to Ecclesiology*. In *Essence of the Church* Craig Van Gelder retraces the history of misguided ecclesiologies and builds the foundation for a sound missiological ecclesiology. In *Decoding the Church* Howard Snyder approached the study of ecclesiology through an organic metaphor. He proposed that a biblical church can impact the world.

The builder needs a blueprint to construct a building successfully. *Sharpening the Focus of the Church* (1974) by Gene A. Getz was an early work which elucidated a three-pronged approach to the contemporary church; New Testament principles, church history and contemporary needs as expressed in the culture of the day. With these things in mind, the church leader is responsible to develop a strategy which includes objectives, goals and standards. In 1978 David Watson's *I Believe in the Church,* he further contributed by differentiating between the nature and life or activities of the church.

A number of more recent books are helpful in discerning local church praxis. Eight functions are outlined by Christian Schwartz in *Natural Church Development.* These characteristics are discernable by a survey and serve to determine a church's ministry weaknesses and strengths.

A case study is often helpful in understanding the nuances of developing a local church in a local context. The story of Willowcreek Community Church is told in *Rediscovering Church* by Bill and Lynne Hybels. With the intention of missionally reaching their community they developed a vision for a biblically functioning community and an associated mission and strategy. Books like *The Purpose-Driven Church* by Rick Warren assist in congregational development around a central focus.

The health of a church is always a concern. Peter Scazzero states there are inherent weaknesses in today's churches in *The Emotionally Healthy Church*. He establishes a link between emotional health and spiritual maturity and it is his contention that a structured pathway of discipleship is of utmost importance.

Current trends in the North American church are the focus of George Barna's writings. Through careful research he discerns the values, attitudes, beliefs, religious practices, demographics, life goals, and spiritual expectations of today's Christians. In *Growing True Disciples, Leaders on Leadership. The Power of Vision* and *The Second Coming of the Church* he has focused on growing churches and the factors that have contributed to their success.

Recent ecclesiological writing has contained a significant missional bent. As Walter Kaiser suggests in *Mission in the Old Testament*, mission, universal in scope, was a divine desire from Creation. New Testament missional practice is rooted in Old Testament mission. In *The Mission of the Church in the World* Roger Hedlund uses the lens of mission to approach the biblical theology of the local church. An exhaustive evangelical treatment of this subject by George W. Peters elucidates the theory and biblical mandates for missions in *A Biblical Theology of Mission*.

The definitive work on mission, *Transforming Mission,* penned by the late David Bosch alerts the reader to the current missional crisis in the Christian church. After establishing New Testament missional patterns he goes on to propose workable solutions for contemporary congregations.

Lesslie Newbigin has elucidated a standard on issues of gospel, culture, contextualization, and postmodernism and the role of the church therein in such works as *Foolishness to the Greeks, Open Secret* and *The Gospel in Pluralistic Society.* It is his contention that only through the integration of faith and practice will the local church impact its context. In *Be My Witnesses. Missional Church* and *The Continuing Conversion of the Church*, Darrell Guder refers to this approach as 'the church as a missional community' in every situation and calls for a revamping of the traditional approach to mission.

Lois Barrett gives practical insights by citing a variety of church examples and how they related to their contexts in *Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional* Faithfulness. In The *Church of Irresistible Influence* Robert Lewis continues this theme showing how a church can use God's love as an 'incarnational bridge' into one's community. A corresponding work is Brian McLaren's *The Church On the Other Side* which outlines tested strategies for pastors and churches that want to relate to the postmodern world.

Church leaders are always looking for a curriculum for leadership training. Sonlife.com has developed a curriculum for *Growing Healthy Churches.* The assumption is that Jesus discipleship activity is his proposed missional methodology for the local church.

Kenneth Birch and Jim Craig have had the greatest impact on the Canadian Pentecostal church in their published and unpublished papers which have been presented to denominational leaders. Of particular interest are *Toward a Definition of Missions* and *A Philosophy of Missions.*

The Believer

Understanding spiritual maturity is an important aspect in the process of forming a pathway of discipleship. Alister McGrath investigates *Christian Spirituality* from a theological perspective. Although James Fowler writes *Faithful Change* and *Stages of Faith* in the context of the southern United States, he has much to offer church leaders concerning spiritual formation. Gabriel Moran offers a critical analysis in *Religious Education Development* by applying Fowler's

work to the local church. Suzanne Johnson empowers the practitioner to facilitate spiritual formation in the local church classroom in *Christian Spiritual Formation in the Church and Classroom*.

The means of spiritual maturity is discipleship. In *The Cost of Discipleship* and *Life Together* Dietrich Bonhoeffer drives this concept of sacrifice to the common believer while discerning between "cheap grace" and "costly grace." In *Choose the Life* Bill Hull has added to this study by moving the Christian discipler's attention to the process and the people reminding us of the importance of the development of character. In 1978 Richard Foster outlined the Christian spiritual practices and disciplines that facilitate the process of discipleship. *Devotional Classics* consists of fifty-two selections that act as catalysts in spiritual formation. More recently Dallas Willard has expanded on the journey of self-transformation as found in the practice of the spiritual disciplines in *The Spirit of the Disciplines Renovation of the Heart*. In *Sacred Pathways* Gary Thomas advises that diversity in approach is a strength in spiritual formation.

Douglas Pagitt is a practitioner. Solomon's Porch in Minneapolis is his test tube where he experiments with new ways of *Reimaging Spiritual Formation*. This missional community uses worship, physicality, dialogue, hospitality, belief, creativity, and service as means toward spiritual formation.

Gilbert Bilezikian's *Community 101* makes the case for the church to fulfil its mandate through the power of community, the inherent characteristic of a New Testament church and as found in salvific history. Community can be expressed in all aspects of church life and is authentically beneficial to a congregation intent on reaching postmodern society. In *Bonding: Relationships in the Image of God* Donald Joy expands by exploring the theme of intimacy as part of our human nature providing the potential for healthy relationships.

The growth of small groups over recent decades has been prolific. Julie A. Gorman investigates the true nature of Christian community in *Community that is Christian*. It is a practical text that assists in training small group leaders

and addresses many of their challenges. Other practical contributors are Wayne and Clay Jacobsen who give examples of how to create authentic relationships and communities in *Authentic Relationships* and Jeffrey Arnold whose *Big Book on Small Groups* speak to leaders, coaches and strategizers. These works assist in the development of vision, mission, values, and initial steps necessary to build a church of small groups.

Willow Creek Community Church provides a great case study for the evolution of small groups. They have gone from being a church with small groups to being a church of small groups. Bill Donahue and Russ Robinson were the architects and devoted their ministry to figuring out the step-by-step process as articulated in *Building a Church of Small Groups*. However the theory has not automatically become practice. Willowcreek has recently hired Randy Frazzee the author of *The Connecting Church*. He acknowledges the natural suburban aversion to community and recommends a systematic geographic consolidation of small group relationships.

Culture

The Christian's response to culture is an interesting dialogue. H. Richard Niebuhr refers the church member's two-way wrestle with both God and their cultural context in *Christ and Culture*. In *Christianity in Culture* Charles Kraft investigates cross cultural communication and the relationship between cultural forms and supracultural norms. This has been referred to as missional anthropology and contextualization. In *Plowing in Hope* David B. Hegeman further explores the theology of culture and the need for the local church to be a godly culture for our civilization.

In the last 15 years North American society has changed more radically than ever before. Middelton and Walsh juxtapose scriptural resources (truth) upon the postmodern culture in *Truth is Stranger than It Used to Be*. In *Soul Tsunami* Leonard Sweet urges the Christian church to explore new ways of being the church that are true to our postmodern context. In *More Ready Than You Realize* Brian McLaren tells his story concerning evangelizing postmoderns

through conversations and friendships referred to as 'a dance.' A similar theme is found in *Finding Faith* which helps spiritual seekers in their spiritual search by asking the right questions.

To understand the postmodern Lee Strobel unveils *Unchurched Harry and Mary*. They are those who are perfectly happy without God. Strobel urges the Christian to develop an action plan to reach those with whom we work and live in close proximity.

Culture Change

It is a matter of debate as to how much the business world has to offer the church in the matter of changing an organizational culture, but in *Organizational Culture and Leadership* Edgar Schein presents a text to managers and students to understand the dynamics of organizations and change. Neal Ashkanasy, Celeste P. M. Wilderom, and Mark F. Peterson offer a *Handbook of Organizational Culture and Climate* which provides an overview of current research, theory and practice in the field of organizational culture.

In a similar vein, John Kotter gives practical advice in *Leading Change* including the need to foster a sense of urgency within the organization. He advocates the facilitation of culture change through teams rather than individuals. The way a team works together will determine the success of culture change. Patrick Lencioni targets group behavior in *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*. Robbins and Langton explore in depth the soft skills necessary for a major shift in organizational culture in *Organizational Behavior*. Jim Collins is best known for his book *Good to Great*. This volume deals with the principles of taking a good company and making it great. Social sector leaders challenged his thesis concerning their agencies and institutions which resulted in his recent monogram, *Social Sectors*.

In *Managing Organizational Change* Patrick E. Conner investigates marketplace change as evidenced in connectivity, downsizings, and rightsizings and helps people understand and cope with organizational change. Rapid shifts in technology have prompted Peg Neuhauser to write a book called *Culture.com*

with a roadmap of strategies to shift an organization's culture from a liability to an asset. Price Pritchett is even more practical in his handbook *High Velocity Culture Change* for managers that contains 27 specific guidelines on the metrics of a positive transition. Frances Hesselbein also focuses on the leadership quotient in culture change in *The Community of the Future.*

Change in the Church

Not much has been written on the theology of change and I relied heavily on the unpublished work *Theology of Corporate Change* by Jim Craig. I also found Roger Beaumont's use of the realities of war to explain the chaotic nature of change in interactive groups in *War, Chaos and History* very helpful. In Mark Steinacher's thesis *An Aleatory Folk: An Historical-Theological Approach to the Transition of the Christian Church in Canada from Fringe to Mainstream 1792-1898* he offers examples in church history which assist in converting change theory to ecclesiastical practice.

Such diverse authors as Pierre Berton and Reginald Bibby have discussed the topic of the Canadian church in society in *The Comfortable Pew* and *There's Got to Be More.* The former presents a pessimistic outlook, the latter an optimistic view. Donald Posterski offers new strategies for presenting Christ to a changing world in *Where's A Good Church?* This is accomplished by culture engagement as we build credibility in our context.

The problem of the contemporary church, according to Jennifer Ashley, is that it is not relevant to twentysomethings. In *The Relevant Church* she advocates the establishment of new communities of faith which challenge the traditional church model and engage a new generation with enthusiastic worship and a life-impacting message. Marva J. Dawn feels that contemporary culture can be reached by existing congregations through worship by *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down.*

To successfully facilitate change one needs to conduct a proper diagnosis. George Gallup is very comprehensive in the tools he provides for a church and

community. In *Emerging Trends* he encourages leaders to be biblically grounded, visionary, and enable congregational members to know their context.

The Purpose Driven Church has become a classic in church operational literature. Rick Warren's thesis is that growth will occur naturally if the purposes of the church are biblical. Dan Southerland constructs a step-by-step process that can guide church leadership in the transition from being program driven to purpose driven in *Transitioning*. On the similar subject of change in the church Gene Appel proposes a strategy for implementation with real life success and failure stories that serve as lessons about how to guide the local church through an organizational culture change in *How to Change Your Church*.

Leadership is an important component to culture change. The contemporary pastor is often the recipient of 'mixed messages' concerning his or her role in the local congregation. Such expectations have changed over the course of history. In *Creative Disarray* Ronald E. Osborn traces the evolution of pastoral functions from the eighteenth century to the present. Another example of this problem pertains to apostolic leadership, as outlined by C. Peter Wagner in *The New Apostolic Churches*, in which he extols the virtues of a strong hierarchal expression of the spiritual gift of leadership.

Lawrence Richards tackles the *The Theololgy of Leadership* while Robert Coleman uses the example of Jesus' leadership style and activity as a pattern for today's evangelism in *The Master Plan of Evangelism*. A prolific writer on leadership, Ken Blanchard, expounds the virtues of situational leadership; the art of a flexible leadership style to match the people and their context. In *The Leadership Style of Jesus* Blanchard gives advice for the development of internal domains, the heart and the hands. Bill Hybels, a Blanchard disciple, urges those with the leadership gift to engage in team-building, decision-making and developing emerging leaders in *Courageous Leadership*.

The topic of visioneeering is explored by Andy Stanley in *Visioneering*. This refers to the preferred future or a destination. For Stanley the only option is a missional church. For Jim Peterson this means a *Church Without Walls* as

opposed to a place where a group of people congregate and where the only function is to build up believers. In *Crossing the Bridge* and *Leading a Culture of Change* respectively Alan Roxburgh and Michael Fullen address church leadership with a focus on creating a missional environment.

The leader must not attempt culture change on his or her own. E. Stanley Ott explores the potential of team-based ministry in *Twelve Dynamic Shifts for Transforming Your Church* and Gil Rendle in *Leading Change in the Congregation* discusses the manner in which a leader should address the resistances that people feel with accompanying diagnostic models and tools.

Local Church and Denominational Specific Literature

For a denomination not known to preserve its past, documentation for this project was readily available. For matters of Canadian Pentecostal history, Thomas Miller's *History of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada* was immensely helpful. The archivist at the denominational office, Marilyn Stroud, carefully guards the unpublished works of Nancy Woodley, Helen Aello, David Hatton, George Grosshans and Lillian Miller which tell the Portico story. Over the years pastors and staff members have faithfully filed *MGT Family Church Annual Reports* and created special literature. Irving Whitt and James Craig collaborated on *A Philosophy Missions,* a document on Canadian Pentecostal missionality that was invaluable for this research.

Statement of the Problem

Introduction

A group of people contemplating the construction of a new structure should design and pursue a careful process. As they proceed, the nature of the organization and its mission and vision will be implanted in their minds. They will consider the desired function and consult other groups who have been through a similar journey. At some point, they will interview architects with a view to engaging the services of the one who best understands their situation and offers the greatest expertise. Drawings are presented, construction begins, and the form of the building begins to take shape.

For local churches to fulfill their biblical mandate, a similar process must be embarked upon. Leadership must consider a wide variety of factors when developing a local body of believers. These include biblical principles, the culture of the day, and organizational structure and strategy. The challenge is more complicated if the church is pre-existing and modification is necessary to bring it into alignment with aforementioned considerations. For purposes of this study, three fundamental core cultural values will serve as parameters for changing the culture of a local church: Spiritual Formation, Community and Missionality.

Churches, whether a new church plant or through an amicable or disagreeable split, are often founded upon a desire to be a 'true New Testament church.' Leaders undertake a thorough search of the scriptures and church traditions in what is hoped to lead to the establishment of a congregation embodying all of the characteristics of New Testament churches. First identified in the period between 1795 and 1881 as Restorationism, church leaders reacted against established churches and secularism, and assumed an attitude that they were facilitating "a rediscovery and establishment of the original form of Christianity."[22] By emphasizing the reasons the local church exists, they drew conclusions concerning the shortcomings of their churches. This resulted in non-

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[22] Restorationism http://neirr.org/restorationism.htm, p. 1, June 3, 2006.

traditional approaches to such doctrinal issues as baptism, trinitarianism, free-will conversion and non-substitutionary theories of atonement.[23]

Although internal Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada literature refers to Pentecostal denominations as revivalist, they are not without a Restorationism mindset.[24] Pentecostal services in the late 1800s and early 1900s may have appeared restorationistic in that it was assumed that these spiritual and emotional outpourings were normative in New Testament churches. This mindset continued even into the Latter Rain Movement of the 1940s and 1950s and sounds a warning to present-day Pentecostals.[25]

Perhaps the tendency toward Restorationism is due to an insufficient hermeneutic. One may ask; "Are certain first-century ministry practices normative for churches today simply because they appear in the Bible?"[26] In other words, should contemporary church leaders simply replicate the vast array of practices of the churches in Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus and Corinth?

One may respond to this query by differentiating between prescriptive and descriptive passages in the New Testament.[27] Prescriptive passages are divine precepts that are of primary importance addressing and dictating the way churches should organize and conduct their ministries. These writings provide guiding principles for the establishment of a Christian congregation and standards of practice for such aspects as spiritual formation, community and evangelism.[28]

Descriptive portions of the New Testament, secondary in importance only in that they are more specific in the area of Christian practice, provide concrete

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[23] Ibid. p. 3.

[24] See Footnote 7.

[25] Scott Bullerwell, Strange Fires http://www.spiritwatch.org/firerestore.htm, April 4, 2006, p. 1. Scott Bullerwell, a former Eastern Pentecostal Bible College professor, while sounding a warning, refrains from calling Pentecostal involvement in Restorationism a cult.

[26] Aubrey Malphurs, Doing Church: A Biblical Guide for Leading Ministries Through Change Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1999, p. 72.

[27] Ibid.

[28] One example is local church support (financial and prayer) for Paul as he traveled to plant churches in Asia.

examples of behaviour for congregational life. These writings imply that such activities are to be exercised in the life of local congregations.[29]

For an organization to survive and be successful in its endeavors, it needs to maintain a continual focus on its reason for its existence. An institution with a 2000-year history, such as the Christian church, has the potential to lose its impact if it wavers from the original intent as outlined in the New Testament. The challenge for the present-day local church practitioner, when giving leadership to a congregation, is to adhere to, yet contextualize biblical principles while determining praxis in the absence of an absolute claim to the normativity of one's model. It is possible to practice a highly biblical and God-honouring ecclesiology that is radically different from that of another church, which is also highly biblical.[30] The challenge is for each congregation to determine an appropriate ministry philosophy and praxis for its context.

This task is compounded by the tension of an ever-changing cultural setting. Congregational leadership must determine how to engage mainstream society while adhering to the biblical values of missionality, community and meaningful spiritual formation. These two streams of values, biblical and cultural, must be considered and acted upon in a way that minimizes contradiction.

As of 1999 Portico had entered into very little discussion concerning the patterns of churches as described by the New Testament. Although there had been some success, as indicated by numerical growth, a lack of mission, vision, direction and strategy was evident. Clyde Hugh's description was very accurate.

> Many churches have lost sight of their vision and purpose. The founder's zeal and passion were lost in the generations that followed him [sic]. Succeeding generations in the church may be following the tradition but have gravely rejected the power and function of their ancestor's dream.[31]

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[29] Churches are admonished to remember Christ's death in The Lord's Table, pray, fast, fellowship and provide biblical teaching.

[30] Howard A. Snyder and Daniel V. Runyon, Decoding the Church Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2002, p. 42. C. Mark Steinacher, Personal Notes from a Conversation March 30, 2006, p. 1.

[31] "Get It?!" Enrich Fall 2004, p. 19. (Leadership Magazine for the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada.)

This was the challenge for MGT Family Church. Established in 1972, ministry functions were established in keeping with an informal set of core values including ministry to families and outreach to the community.[32] As the regions of Peel and Halton have rapidly grown and become more diverse, the church has followed suit. However, little examination had been undertaken to determine if the original mission and vision[33] continued to be applicable or had informed church praxis.

In some cases, the local church has also become a culture unto itself with the primary purpose of retaining self-serving worship as opposed to holistic growth for the purposes of serving God and engaging others.

> A pathology of the [North] American church has been to disconnect belief from behaviour. People think that if you say the right words and believe the right things, you'll receive your get-out-of-hell-free card, and that's it. In the meantime they manage their sin until heaven.[34]

This flawed approach to the mindset and activities within the local congregation has the potential of hindering the people of God from being the church.[35] Such approaches to spiritual formation, the building of community and missional activity are church centrist and consumerist in character. To combat this problem, all aspects of human existence should be viewed holistically. The local church has failed to instruct Christ-followers and seekers of the importance of one's spiritual journey as it informs the entirety of one's life. A recent survey among North American church members points out personal barriers to life transformation.

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[32] At a pastors' retreat in Spring 1999, the senior pastor reported on the predominant themes and values emerging from his conversations with a number of the founding families of MGT Family Church.

[33] C. Mark Steinacher, Personal Notes from a Conversation p. 1, July 6, 2006. This has been further complicated by the fact that there are few pioneers remaining that can remember, other than in general terms, the nature and specifics of the mission, and vision and memory can morph over time.

[34] Bill Hull, Choose the Life: Exploring a Faith that Embraces Discipleship Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2004, p. 19. He insinuates that a church "all about me" is addictive and counterproductive to the fundamental principles of Christianity.

[35] Jason Zahariades, Detoxing from Church http://www.theofframp.org/Detox.html, p. 1, January 1, 2005.

1. They lack passion, perspective, priorities and perseverance to develop their spiritual lives.
2. Few attend a church that pushes them to grow.
3. Few attend church that provides resources.
4. Many said that regardless of good intentions, their real passions lie elsewhere.
5. They are too busy; schedule and energy follow greater passions.
6. Most were satisfied to engage in a devotional process without regard to the product in their lives. One sees this most readily in small groups that live on relationship alone and include no missional component.
7. Activities offered are good but not challenging.
8. Not one adult surveyed said that his or her goal was to be a committed follower of Jesus. Believers have been trained to test their faith by doctrine rather than behaviour. Thus the idea of following and doing does not enter into the salvation equation.[36]

If leadership and membership of a local church does not possess a clear understanding and agreement of why it exists as a congregation, and what it offers to a believer and a non-believer, it certainly will be ineffective in impacting its world. This highlights the need to shift from a 'functional' or 'pragmatic' to an 'ideological' or 'prescriptively theological' view of ministry.[37]

Effective churches are those which build on the strength of four cornerstones, orthodoxy, community, relevance and outreach.[38] As previously stated, for the purposes of MGT Family Church renewal, these principles have been synthesized into three: spiritual formation,[39] membership in an authentic community and a missional attitude manifested in evangelistic activity.

Another misconception concerns the activity and influence of the church and whether it is confined to the time in which the congregation meets. A three-phase model for this type of church as described in the words, 'gathered,' 'deployed' and 'dispersed.'[40] The people of God should gather[41] for worship and

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[36] George Barna, Growing True Disciples Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Publishers, 2001, p. 49.
[37] C. Mark Steinacher, Personal Notes from a Conversation p. 1, March 30, 2006.
[38] Donald C. Posterski and Irwin Barker, Where's A Good Church? Winfield, BC: Wood Lake Books, 1993, p. 19. Orthodoxy is defined as being in touch with truth. Community is being in touch with personal needs. Relevance is being in touch with the times. Outreach is being in touch with the needs of others.
[39] The terms 'spiritual formation' and 'discipleship' are often used interchangeably. A discussion of the differences in these terms is found on page 98.
[40] Donald Posterski and Irwin Barker, Good p. 200.
[41] 'Gathering' indicates not only the service components of congregational life, but also smaller gatherings of Christ-followers.

spiritual formation, be deployed in relationships beyond the church building and dispersed to live an engaging personal lifestyle of ministry to the world.

Spiritual Formation

Cultural Christians are those who have grown up in the church or in a mostly Christian environment, and who more or less 'go along.' These Christians vary widely in their beliefs and behaviours. They believe in Christ, try to keep the Ten Commandments, go to church at least some of the time and pray occasionally, but they fail to live intentional lives based on Christian teachings and practices.[42] Pastors have assumed that discipleship is taking place in their congregants rather than lovingly, deliberately and systematically equipping them for the development of Christ-like character in their lives.[43] This has resulted in the troubled church of today, filled with people who are spiritually immature, as revealed by their inability to express emotions in a biblically acceptable manner, a tendency toward a defensive position and the lack of vulnerability. These people are also threatened by, or intolerant of, other viewpoints of those inside and outside the church and exhibit a lack of balance by either much too selflessness, neglecting even the needs of their own family, or operating with the motto, 'It's all about me.'[44]

> Evangelicals have done a superb job in evangelizing people, bringing them to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, but they are failing to provide believers with approaches to living that keep them going and growing in spiritual relationship with him.[45]

This misunderstanding of spiritual formation is more complex in Pentecostal churches where there has traditionally been a strong emphasis and reliance on experiential and emotional aspects of faith.

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[42] John C. Blattner, Leading Christians to Maturity Alamonte Springs, FL: Creation House, 1987, p. 53.
[43] E. Stanley Ott, Twelve Dynamic Shifts for Transforming Your Church Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdman's Publishing Company, 2002, p. 9.
[44] Peter Scazzero, The Emotionally Healthy Church Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 2003, p. flyleaf.
[45] Alister E. McGrath, Spirituality in an Age of Change Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1994, p. 9. The assumption that the evangelical church has done a superb job in evangelizing will be challenged.

The personal and public challenges of finding faith in post-modern life demand that the church develop 'conjunctive faith;' a model of spiritual development that does not legislate or privatize faith.[46] This includes finding "alternatives to our crippling reliance upon methods of publicity that define our debates in terms of the extremes."[47] The role of the local church is to assist the believer to address his or her spirituality in such a way that Christian faith grows and matures from a 'saving' faith to the unifying and empowering possibilities of 'ordering' faith.[48] The challenge for the local church in renewal is the reconsideration of its role in spiritual formation and the recalibration of all of its activity to insure the implementation of biblical discipleship.

Community

Human interaction in the local church is of high importance. The scriptures do not allow for exclusivity in the local church. It is an institution built upon relationships characterized by warmth, acceptance and openness fulfilling the human needs of social interaction and self-esteem.[49] The established church of the first century was a highly social organization as observed in the daily meetings of members. (Acts 2:46) People, all of whom are on a spiritual journey, search for a sense of belonging to respond to the need of self-worth and emotional expression[50] while contributing to the life and spiritual growth of others.

As the evangelical church has grown and evolved, it has at times assumed the characteristics of an organized club. While it is apparent that "membership

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[46] This subject will be explored in a significant manner in Chapter III concerning spiritual formation, p. 94.

[47] James W. Fowler, Faithful Change: The Personal and Public Challenges of Postmodern Life Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996, pp. 177-178.

[48] Ibid. p. 178.

[49] Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs http://www.needs.sambush.info/maslow's_hiearchy_of_needs.html, p. 1, November 18, 2005.

[50] The term 'emotional expression' is not used in the religious (Pentecostal) sense but in relation to one's personal need for emotional development.

has its privileges"[51] there is marginal personal commitment to one another. Contrast this with the first century church which,

> was not a static 'thing.' Rather, by definition, it was a living missional people movement. The church took its shape from the people who were being moved by the Spirit, seeking to live in relationship with God, fulfill His purposes, and live in love-one-another community. God's diverse people, led by the Spirit, became the definition of what the church was. Structures accommodated the movement.[52]

The challenge for Portico has been, and continues to be, to structure the church in such a way as to maximize social interaction. Suitable environments, in addition to Sunday services, should be designed to build a quality of community marked by accountability in which each person contributes to another's spiritual formation while challenging them to a missional lifestyle.

Missionality

While few would disagree with the need for spiritual formation and community, there seems to be a hesitancy for Christians to engage in intentional missional activity. "Too often we have circled our wagons, created little enclaves of piety and worship, built walls around our communities of faith, and invited people in only if they were willing to become like us."[53]

> In our increasingly secular, post-Christendom, post-modern world, it is clearly time for the followers of Jesus Christ to deconstruct the church for ourselves in order to begin building churches that genuinely exist for the others in our midst. It is time to start building churches for all those who are either outside or on the margins of faith, as well as for all those who are either on the outside or on the margins of social acceptance.[54]

In relation to this shortfall of missionality in contemporary churches, the term 'introverted churchliness' assumes the identification of the church with the Kingdom of God, and an accompanying withdrawal into herself and a loss of sight with respect to the world.[55] This lack of evangelistic initiative has resulted in a decline of church attendance and participation and a selective consumption

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[51] American Express http://www.americanexpress.com/canada/en/trademarks.shtml, p. 1, June 3, 2006.
[52] Planting Kingdom Life in People
http://sojourner.typepad.com/house_church_blog/2004/05/index.html, p. 1, January 1, 2005.
[53] Walt Kallestad, Turn Your Church Inside Out Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Press, 1989, p. 10.
[54] Ibid.
[55] G. C. Berkouwer, Studies in Dogmatics Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdman's Publishing Co., 1976, p. 418.

of religious services.[56] Members of Canadian society, while coping with work and family-related stress, come to the realization that their spiritual needs are not being met. People continue to be receptive to spirituality but they are not looking for churches, and furthermore, churches are not looking for people.[57]

Local churches may, at times, attempt to preserve the methodology and culture that was successful in yesteryear. However, the culture of the church as known in the 1960s to the 1980s, or earlier, has become ineffective. This is a result of 'Boomer burnout' on church, changing immigration patterns bringing non-Christian religions into the country, and a lack of Christian orientation for Generation X.[58]

> Many of our cities have no [evangelistic] church and the programs that do exist have not kept pace with the modern world. As a result, a generation of young people has largely grown up without church ties. It is apparent that there is a lack of robust health among Canadian evangelical churches.[59]

The reaction of church leaders has been to attempt to stop the collapse of church culture instead of reconceptualizing a Christianity that engages those who are not part of it

Until the emergence of a missionally minded church leadership, missional activity in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada was confined to cross-cultural activity in an 'across the sea' locale. The local church participant was absolved of any missional activity other than prayer or financial support, because, unless they were 'called' to one of these mission fields, they remained behind to support their local church. The denomination served as a missions agency and congregations were expected to support the endeavor. Although there was constant discussion concerning evangelism, it was viewed as an add-on to church activity or a special event as opposed to a missional lifestyle. Throughout

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[56]Reginald W. Bibby, There's Got to Be More Winfield, BC: Wood Lake Books, 1995, p. 15.
[57] Ibid. p. 27.
[58] Reggie McNeal, Transition p.1. McNeal alludes to the increasing number of people born between 1946 and 1964 who have left church.
[59] Clarence Bradbury, "Leading Turnaround Churches" Horizons: Salvation Army Christian Leadership Magazine Toronto, ON, March/April 2004, p. 15.

the 1980s, the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada's definition of missions was broadened to include activity in major Canadian cities and French Canada, but the expectation of a missional lifestyle for each church member was not articulated.[60] The need remained for the development of a personal and congregational missional mindset marked by the intention for each church to engage the community in which it was located.

Relevancy is not a new or uncontroversial topic of discussion. In 1965 Pierre Berton chastised the church for lagging behind culture.[61] In 1987 Reginald Bibby asserted that churches had sold out to culture by providing "religion a la carte."[62] The Church has developed itself by reacting to society's demands and a 'consumer-driven church' has arisen, one that has failed to emphasize the importance of an active personal missionality. This has resulted in a 'Christian uselessness' as demonstrated in the number of people who flock to worship at Christmas and Easter, but ignore the church's existence for the rest of the year, except in times of crisis like September 11, 2001.[63]

A study of churches today may reveal that some are in the process of dying a slow death. The biblical mandate of reaching lost people is not being met because the message of Jesus Christ is not being effectively shared. As such, the local church has become irrelevant to day-to-day living and has lost its place in Western society. Local churches are viewed as *passé* cultural expressions, currently existing as a subculture, and out of touch with reality.[64] Participation in the life of a church is rarely considered and it may be the last

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[60] Irving Whitt, World Evangelization-Whose Mandate An address at Congress on Pentecostal Leadership, Toronto, ON, 1987.

[61] Pierre Berton, The Comfortable Pew Toronto, ON: Lippincott Publishers, 1965.

[62] Reginald W. Bibby, Fragmented Gods Scarborough, ON: Irwin Publishers, 1987.

[63] Rodney Clapp, A Peculiar People Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996, p. 16. Fluctuation in Church Attendance at 9/11 Terrorist Attacks http://www.religioustolerance.org/rel_rate.htm, p. 1, January 6, 2007. After an initial spike in church attendance, it is reported that figures dipped soon thereafter.

[64] Some would say that New Testament church culture was designed to be counter-cultural. There is some merit to that thinking in that a personally redemptive lifestyle, as prescribed by biblical values, is largely in contradiction to societal norms. The same is true for the ministries of a church. However, one must not ignore the need for contextualization of the gospel as suggested by Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:20-23.

place a person will seek for spiritual formation or meaningful relationships. The conscientious church longs to touch the lives of men and women, but, instead, finds itself "on the periphery, often pleading in vain for admission to be where the action is, where plans are made and strategies discussed."[65]

Furthermore, people who do attend church may simply be churchgoers and not in a process of growing into fully devoted followers. This is especially troublesome when one pauses to consider the immense array of resources afforded to the Western church. If the gospel is about spiritual growth, then it is time the church engaged in the process of personal and corporate change.[66]

Church leadership has sought an explanation for this current crisis. Some tend to blame society itself as if it had been a deliberate choice of secular culture to marginalize the church.[67] Often the local church has vacillated on both its type of expression and the reason it exists. The contradictions are found in church history.

> The church has preserved ancient culture and dead languages, fostered great art, fostered tacky art, destroyed great art, launched and supported missionary expansion, ridiculed and hindered missionary expansion, healed the sick, fed the hungry, ignored the sick and forgotten the hungry, inspired capitalistic achievement, critiqued capitalistic achievement, opposed communism, baptized communism, promoted conservative politics, promoted liberal politics, fought other denominations, promoted ecumenism, retreated into a subculture, penetrated new cultures.[68]

This may be the opportune time for the church to examine its willingness to adapt to a changing society in an effort to optimize its missional effectiveness.

On another front, Pentecostals are known for their tendency toward emotive spirituality. By the very nature of their doctrinal stance, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is accompanied by speaking in ecstatic utterances.[69] The practice

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[65] Henry Nouwen, The Wounded Healer Garden City, NY: Image/Doubleday, 1979, pp. 86-87.
[66] Gene Appel, Why Change Personal notes from a presentation at the "How to Change Your Church ... Without Killing It." Conference, Central Christian Church, Las Vegas, NV, January 27, 2003, p. 1.
[67] David Horrox, The "Missional Church": A Model for Canadian Churches http://www.presbyterian.ca/evangelism/missionalchurch.html, p. 1, January 6, 2007.
[68] Brian D. McLaren, The Church on the Other Side Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 2000, p. 27.
[69] Fred Penny The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada http://www.stjosham.on.ca/education/penta.htm, p. 1, August 15, 2006. At Pentecostal

of the Pentecostal church has been to focus on experiential activity while failing to address strategically the necessity of evangelism. One can sceptically observe that 'power' encounters often do not result in character change such as a marked reduction in selfishness, pettiness, prejudice, laziness and fear. Furthermore, maturing Christians should be promoting racial healing, environmentalism and contributions to their community.[70]

The local congregation needs to consider aspects of church life that can be changed to increase relevancy. This will include moving beyond a focus on programming and estate and returning to the basics of engaging people as was demonstrated in first century churches. Worship, not doctrine, may be the new battleground for church divisions in the matter of a church's determination to be relevant, there is a need for alternative musical styles[71] although this may be disconcerting for those who have enjoyed traditional hymns for the past forty years. Relevancy in the church means biblical teaching and preaching will equip the believer for faith application and expression in the workplace and spurns the Christian to respond compassionately to societal needs.

The search for relevance, taken to its logical conclusion, may lead to consumerism. The church may become based, not on biblical principles, but on what the market will bear. Congregational leadership becomes more concerned about creating a relevant environment and expression instead of declaring truth. A helpful outlook may consider a church mission and vision where the church is like a 'way station' as opposed to the symbolic embodiment of a spiritual pilgrimage.[72] This new model of church recognizes,

> that pastors are no longer chaplains to a Christian culture. It requires that Elders, Deacons and members take seriously their calling as missionary people in our own land. Every congregation would become a mission outpost. The church would no longer be

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Assemblies of Canada conferences and institutions, this is commonly referred to as "Our doctrinal distinctive."

[70] Brian D. McLaren, Other p. 31.

[71] In extreme cases, such as Muslim background believers, music is not a part of their regular worship and any congregational singing may be offensive.

[72] Donald Posterski and Irwin Barker, Good p. 51.

> seen as a provider of religious services to Christian consumers, but as the apostolic people of God on an active mission to a fallen world.[73]

The missional church refuses to compromise the principles of spiritual formation and community while attempting to 'speak the language' of their 'target audience'.

Until 2001, Portico leadership viewed success in terms of the quality of internal programs. The assumption was made that if programs were running smoothly, the needs of men, women and children were being met and the organization would naturally grow numerically. This is a tendency toward institutional maintenance rather than a freedom for the church to concentrate on the spiritual needs of those who are both inside and outside the church.[74] Such a centralized church model has undermined optimal spiritual formation, community and missionality. A refocusing and pruning of programming needs to take place to provide a complementary balance and cooperative effort between these three core values.

Portico has prayerfully and carefully chosen a culture and strategy that it believes is biblical, culturally relevant, relationally oriented and missionally effective. Admittedly, this is not the only way. Other churches, proceeding through a similar formative process may find a different church culture that meets biblical criteria and is effective in their context. "Congregations that grow genuine disciples, effectively meet human needs, help people grow in faith and create a place to belong with friendships of the heart and ways to serve"[75] have returned to the basic principles of first century churches.

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[73] http://www.presbycoalition.org/wg nw.htm p. 1, January 1, 2005.

[74] Jürgen Moltmann, The Church in the Power of the Spirit London, UK: SCM Press, 1992, p. 328.

[75] E Stanley Ott, Shifts p. 5.

Deliminations

To undertake successfully a writing project of this magnitude one must confine one's observations and activity to a fixed time period and location. In the case of this thesis, *The Development of a Model for Culture Change at MGT Family Church,* the location is self-evident; the time span runs from October 1999 to December 2005. Very few references concerning culture change take place outside this reference.

This is problematic from the perspective that the change process is incomplete. Although there have been major accomplishments in this five to six year period, church leadership continues to engage in culture change and formation. At the time of this writing (November 2006) the mission statement is being reconsidered. The main thrust and intent will not change but there is an indication that a new nomenclature and language around the theme of community will be engaged.

In 2006 there has been a concerted effort to complete the strategy/culture circle.[76] The CORE team has been diligent to delineate the expected behaviour of Portico attendees. Time or space does not allow for the description of the step-by-step process and training available to congregants for spiritual formation, authentic/accountable relationship and missionality.

The vision of the church has expanded to include a multi-site/venue approach to ministry. A stewardship campaign was completed in May 2006 and a building program is in the planning stages.

As the activities of the church continue to intensify, it has necessitated the addition of a number of staff. The expectations of existing staff continue to become more refined. For the second time in three years it was necessary to part ways with a youth director.

As a direct response to the need for communication concerning the culture of the church, the equipping function of the church has become a major

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[76] See page 288.

focus. Leadership and general believer-equipping workshops have been introduced into the annual ministry calendar.

The inability to divulge fully ongoing culture change, as limited by the passing of time, is not the only delimination of this project. The ecclesiological doctrine of Canadian Pentecostals is functionally oriented and articulated throughout the nation by district officials. There is a lack of a reflective ecclesiology, missional or otherwise. Any in-depth discussion of doctrine usually centers around distinctiveness as expressed in the term 'thoroughly Pentecostal.' This is not a factor in the ensuing project nor is there an attempt to rectify the situation save for the topics of ecclesiology and missionality.

Although there will be general references to Pentecostal church culture, these will not be dwelt upon. This thesis is intended to be the description of a proactive process to instill the principles of spiritual formation, authentic/accountable relationships and missionality into the culture of the church.

Spiritual formation will be articulated principially. While recognizing that spiritual disciplines are the greatest asset in spiritual growth, any reference to specific activities will be passing at most. For example, it should be noted that during the last five years the congregation has been called to corporate and personal prayer during the entirety of the culture change process. A prayer team, mainly consisting of intercessors, continues to meet.

Corporate missionality should result in community transformation. This project does not enumerate MGT Family Church's social involvement.   The congregation has been involved in major endeavors including feeding the homeless in urban Toronto and supporting AIDS victims through a local charity. The differentiation between advocating for the marginalized and not being involved in social issues such as same sex marriage is not within the purview of this project.

Similarly there is a major shift taking place concerning the practice of cross-cultural missional activity. MGT Family Church has always resourced

missional/missions endeavors around the world. The form and emphasis of this activity is undergoing a major restructuring. By early 2007 changes will be implemented reflecting the culture shift that took place in the previous six years.

There are several allusions to leadership shortcomings during the history of MGT Family Church and the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. Full disclosure would not be beneficial to this study. This thesis, and the principles it contains, is to serve as a forward-looking document in an effort to be constructive for future leaders.

One of the passions for the present ministerial staff at Portico is to be available for resourcing other church leaders inside and outside the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. To this point the hosting of Willowcreek Canada conferences has been the sum total response to this desire. Although little or no explanation of this appears in the body of the thesis, this is an outgrowth of the proposed culture, and further plans will unfold.

Some of the values and actions of a previous renewal of culture must be revisited. Small groups connecting was a major priority in the early part of the culture change journey. However at the time of this writing another staff member has been hired to champion this value. The 'revisiting' of some aspects of culture change is not a topic of discussion in the ensuing chapters.

Furthermore, one of the initiatives, investing in the lives of leaders, has been a miserable failure. Pastors agree that it is difficult to instill an organization level of coaches among small group and ministry leaders. At Portico, CORE has disbanded the coaching staff and is attempting another approach. Time does not allow a full investigation of this downfall or others like it. The desire of the ministry staff is to create an 'organic style' leadership structure where future leaders are raised in the context of relationship. This was, and continues to be, a challenge.

The consortium seeking to join together to build a community center project appears to be dead. In 2005 a large number of meetings took place. In

2006 the group met only once. It is impossible to do a *post mortem* on this idea to determine if it has any future.

The thesis refers to the reality of conflict in culture change. In 2005 a number of conflicts arose. Even though these involved only a few people they have been at the highest levels and energy draining to the leadership team. For obvious reasons, any discussion of conflict needs to remain theoretical.

There are times when the Portico ministry staff asks, "What did we get ourselves into?" Organizational culture change has many benefits and often results in greater effectiveness.   On the other hand, the challenges are numerous and daily. For this reason the contents of this paper must be confined to the major high points of the journey.

Chapter II – RELEVANT THEOLOGIES
Ecclesiology - The Theology of The Church

Introduction

Throughout the last two millennia, Christ-followers have examined the classic biblical texts concerning the common foundational elements of a New Testament Church.[77] Each study resulted in differing emphases depending on the student's historical context and theological framework, often resulting in controversy. "There are hot controversies about the true Church. What constitutes it--what is essential to it--what vitiates it?"[78]

The North American church, and the Western church for that matter, has been largely defined by the buildings in which it meets.[79] For example, home churches have become increasingly popular among certain demographics.[80] Others view the church as a hierarchy, an institution or group whose mandate is political action.

In this chapter, the theology of the local church will be discussed by examining its divine basis, Jesus' involvement in church formation and the difference between the church local and universal. Not only is it important to understand the origins of the Christian congregation, but equally important is the need to establish the practices of a local church as outline by the Scriptures. Church leadership must understand New Testament principles concerning spiritual formation, community and missional activity.

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[77] Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, An Introduction to Ecclesiology Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002, p. 13. Karkkainen suggests that one of the only church groups not to have a fully articulated ecclesiology is Pentecostalism.

[78] Howard A. Snyder and Daniel V. Runyon, Decoding the Church Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2002, p. 19.

[79] David Watson, I Believe in the Church London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1978, p. 119. He quotes Howard Snyder as suggesting the church buildings are a witness to Christendom's immobility, inflexibility, a lack of fellowship and a witness to our pride.

[80] Del Birkey, The House Church Kitchener, ON: Herald Press, 1988. This entire volume explores the House Church model.

The Divine Basis for the Church

Although many of the principles for ecclesiological development are found in the New Testament, one must not overlook the divine origins of the local church. Some may argue that the church is the fulfillment of God's plan for Israel or a second alternative to His People. "The church, by faith in Jesus the Messiah, became the true Israel, the true people of God."[81] This is best answered by examining the origin of the church as λαοσ του τ'εου, the people of God. The early Christians did not view their gatherings as a new post-Pentecostal phenomenon, but the continuation of the covenant-making activity of God with the patriarchs.[82] He dealt collectively and individually with the Israelites, a community of faith, in a purposeful manner. God's *modus operandi* was to reveal himself to humanity in an effort to establish relationship with his people.

The writer to the Hebrews illustrates the thematic nature of continuous community faith from the times of Moses and Abraham to the early church. In the writing to the New Testament believers, the relationship these men, among others, had with God was the foundational basis for the growing early church; although it was not 'made perfect' until Christ and his church were established. The name 'Jesus' is viewed as a link between God's people of the Old Testament and his people in the New Testament. It was a derivative of 'Joshua' meaning "the Lord is Saviour" and it was predicted that he would "save His people from their sins."[83] (Matthew 1:21) The church is seen in unbroken continuity with the old covenant; with the promises, prophecies and sacrifices being supremely fulfilled in Jesus Christ.[84]

Because God initiated the covenant relationship as a precursor to the develop of the post-resurrection church, early Christians continued to view

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[81] David Watson, <u>Believe</u> p. 78

[82] Bill J. Leonard, <u>The Nature of the Church.</u> Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1986, p. 19.

[83] Bruce Shelly, <u>Church</u> p. 17.

[84] David Watson, <u>Believe</u> p. 78.

themselves as God's covenant people. (Hebrews 11:39)[85]   Peter, speaking to members of the early church, affirms this by quoting Hosea; "Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God."[86]   Just as God called the Old Testament people together under the umbrella of a covenant, he continued to call the εκκλεσια together as an assembly or congregation. The church is more than a group of people who have a similar Christian faith. They have been called together by God to listen to the voice of God.[87]

Ecclesiology and History

Each historical church has emphasized one particular formative aspect when delineating their theology. [88] The church has been viewed as an Icon of the Trinity, (Eastern Orthodox Ecclesiology) the People of God, (Roman Catholic Ecclesiology) Just and Sinful, (Lutheran Ecclesiology) the Fellowship of Believers, (Free Church Ecclesiology) the Power of the Spirit (Pentecostal/Charismatic Ecclesiology) and the Church as One. (Ecumenical Movement Ecclesiology) When one stops to ponder these ecclesiologies it is conceivable that these unique approaches may impact the quantitative and qualitative aspects of church growth locally and universally.

> The church is not just another social organization or human institution. While it has organizational and institutional dimensions, it is more that just the sum of these. The church is the creation of the Spirit. God's divine power and presence indwell the people of God. This makes the church is a spiritual community as well as a human community. The church is both a spiritual reality and a sociological entity. It has divine roots in the eternal purposes of God, yet exists as a historically conditioned organization. It is both holy and human, both spiritual and social.[89]

The Scriptures contain many directives concerning the design and praxis of the local church. Ecclesiological study must remain rooted in the spiritual vein while not neglecting social responsibilities and impact. This examination will include New Testament church government, the ministerial, social, sacramental

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[85] Bill J. Leonard, Nature p. 20-21.
[86] David Watson, Believe p. 78. 1 Peter 2:10.
[87] Bruce Shelly, Church p. 20.
[88] Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, Ecclesiology pp. 17ff.
[89] Craig Van Gelder, The Essence of the Church Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2000, p. 116-117.

and relational activities of its members and the role of the local church upon the spiritual development of the believer.

The New Testament narrative gives strong indication to the Christocentric nature of the church. In a didactic moment with Peter, Jesus points to himself as the church's foundation.

> Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. (Matthew 16:16-18)

Later Luke, Paul and Peter refer to Christ as the chief cornerstone. (Acts 4:11; Ephesians 2:20; 1 Peter 4:6) The church is to be built upon the confession that Jesus Christ is the Son of the loving God.

The provisional benchmarks for a biblical church are found in Jesus' incarnation, life, ministry, death, resurrection, and continuing reign. "Our ecclesiology depends on our Christology; how we understand the person and work of Jesus Christ."[90] The teaching of the local church, derived from the life of Jesus, should enable believers to positively engage all aspects of human life.

The interrelationship between Christ and the church comes into play. If Christ "is the 'subject' of the church then on the doctrine of the church, Christology will become the dominant theme of ecclesiology. Every statement about the church will be a statement about Christ. Every statement about Christ also implies a statement about the church."[91] Whatever the definition to which one might subscribe, it is imperative that leadership understands the origin, creation and operation of the local church as Christocentric. This impacts the active role of Christ in the building of the church, a fact that must not be overlooked by those who are engaged in its 'construction.'

The scriptural term 'the Church' has two separate, but complementary meanings. Membership of the Church, universal or catholic, consists of those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. The term 'church universal' may arise from the picture found in Hebrews 12:24-24 where

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[90] Howard A. Snyder and Daniel V. Runyon, <u>Decoding</u> p. 28.
[91] Jürgen Moltmann, <u>The Church in the Power of the Spirit</u> London: SCM Press, 1992, p. 6

the faithful are seen on their way to heavenly Jerusalem. The members of this group have their names recorded in heaven as an indication of their faith decision to make Jesus Christ their Lord and Saviour.[92]

To describe the differences between the church universal and the local church some would label the two divisions as 'visible' and 'invisible.' Although these words may appear in creeds, they are not used in scripture. This term 'invisible' emanates from the perspective that one cannot know who are believers in the past, present or future. Only God is aware of who has made faith decisions.[93] Some go to great lengths to discern which scriptures refer to the church universal and which ones are directed to the local church. Taken to its logical conclusion this division may become problematic.

> There are not two Churches, one visible and one invisible. Nor must we think, with Platonic dualism and spiritualism, of the visible Church (being earthly and 'material') as the reflection of the real invisible Church (being spiritual and heavenly). Nor is the invisible part of the church in its essential nature, and the visible part the external form of the Church. The one Church, in is essential nature and in its external forms alike, is always at once visible and invisible.[94]

It may be more accurate to see these two entities as seamless;

> It is precisely as partially overlapping entities that both the local church and the universal church are constituted into the church through their common relation of the Sprit of Christ, who makes them both into the anticipation of the eschatological gathering of the entire people of God.[95]

From this perspective it is evident that, although human participation is imperative, the local church (at any level, from local to the universal) is not primarily a human responsibility.[96] "The church is ... not only to proclaim the Kingdom, but to bear in its own life the presence of the Kingdom."[97] A caution must be sounded. To identify the Kingdom of God with the church would be erroneous. The full power and glory of God as revealed in His Kingdom is in the

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[92] Charles R. Swindoll and Roy B. Zuck, Understanding Christian Theology Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2003, p. 1086.

[93] Ibid.

[94] David Watson, Believe p. 333.

[95] Miroslav Volf, After Our Likeness Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998, 141.

[96] Jesus said, "I will build my church." Matthew 16:16-18.

[97] Roger E. Hedlund, The Mission of the Church in the World Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991, p. 179.

future and the role of the church is to press toward this ideal.[98]   While the church is not the Kingdom it is a community of believers engaged in the work of the kingdom and as such it is God's expression of Kingdom values. (Matthew 16:18; 1 Peter 2: 9-10) However, it is God who builds the church and ultimately His Kingdom. "...there can be no Church without God's kingdom; but they remain two distinguishable concepts: the rule of God and the fellowship of men [sic]."[99]

It must be stressed that the church is singular; there can never be more than one church.[100] This oneness is something that is crafted by the Spirit of God who gathers the church. "The church remains the mysterious *creatio Dei*, created by the presence of the Comforter in the midst of elected justified sinners."[101] While there is a plurality of churches in the world, the true church is defined by those who believe in one God, one Jesus and in one Spirit. In some quarters, particularly among our Roman Catholic brothers and sisters, the universality or catholicity of the church is a core value. The term εκκλεσια may refer to the company of believers formed on the day of Pentecost into the body of Christ.[102] Contrary to the dogma of the Roman Catholic Church, these people form the company of the redeemed whether or not they attend or participate in the life of a local church.

The local expression, or congregational gatherings of these people, is also referred to as the church.[103] New Testament believers met as congregational members in corporate gatherings in the temple, synagogues and in house churches.[104] In letters to the Romans and Corinthians Paul addressed issues of

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[98] Watson, Believe p. 51.

[99] Roger E. Hedlund, Mission p. 180.

[100] Charles Van Engen, Mission p. 106. The term εκκλεσια is singular.

[101] Ibid. p. 107.

[102] Robert P. Lightner, Evangelical Theology Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1986, p. 228.

[103] In writing to the various congregations in the then-known world, Paul uses the salutation, "To the church of God in...."

[104] Roger Upton, New Testament Church Meetings http://www.geocities.com/sovgracenet/meetings.html, March 6, 2006, p. 1.

local concern. In both cases, he talks to the church.[105] "Every congregation gathered together in one place is in Christ with every other congregation gathered together in other places and at other times."[106]

Paul's directives to the Christians in Colossae and Ephesus would also suggest there exists common ground and relationship between these two ecclesiastical terms. He dealt with such heretical movements such as Gnosticism which taught that that everything physical was evil and that people could attain a higher spiritual understanding through intellectual development and best accomplished in seclusion or apart from the 'body of Christ' universal.[107] In his letter to the Ephesians, concerning faith and local church praxis, Paul uses the reference εκκλεσια (the called ones) to refer to congregants. Watson warns against the thinking that the church universal is simply a sum of all the local churches from around the world:

> The whole gospel, the fullness of God, the finished work of Christ, together with the 'immeasurable greatness' of his resurrection power, the complete gift of the Holy Spirit together with a full range of his gifts and ministries, and the 'very promises' of God offering full salvation-all these are available in every place wherever the church, great or small is to be found. 'Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them, said Jesus, and he is the undivided Christ.[108]

While the individual believer, local church or denomination, is not the Church, their function is to represent it, and Christ, well.

Paul's local church thinking is "not so much with Greek logical propositions as with Hebrew-style pictorial representation or images."[109] Among the fifteen word-pictures revealing the nature of the church are the saints, the body, soldiers ready for battle, the family of God and the bride of Christ. Some of these terms may be more enlightening than others. For instance, Paul, likening the church to the body of Christ, gave the reader the indication that Christ (as the head of the church) cannot be separated from the body. "...because there is

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[105] David Watson Believe p. 98.
[106] Jürgen Moltmann, Church p. 343.
[107] Earl L. Henn, Does Paul Condemn Observing God's Holy Days?
http://sabbath.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Library.sr/CT/RA/k/497, p. 1, March 6, 2006.
[108] David Watson, Believe p. 110.
[109] Charles Van Engen, Mission on the Way Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1996, p. 106.

no head without a body, Christ must in the fullest sense be understood as a unity of head and body... Christ is therefore only Christ in the full sense together with the church."[110]

> Paul clearly has in mind something more than the sum of believers in one place. Had this been his intention he would probably have referred to the body of Christians; but in fact he specifically writes about the body of Christ. It seems clear that he is speaking of an organic unity, in which Christians not only belong to Christ and to one another within his body; they also abide in him and find life in him.[111]

When the local body of Christ meets, members must strive for unity. As Paul suggested to the Ephesian church, this is possible because of one Lord, one faith and one baptism. (Ephesians 4:3-6)

Local churches were not to assume a vertical, stand-alone relationship to Jesus Christ without relationship to other congregations. The horizontal relationship of a church is only optimized as it stands in communion with other churches.[112] The New Testament church began as one entity in one location and grew to many churches around the then-known world. As the early church expanded, it cooperated with one another on numerous occasions, particularly in areas of missionality.[113] Practically speaking, one can drive through a town and observe numerous denominational expressions which have little or no interaction with each other. Denominationalism, doctrinal differences or differing liturgical expression need not be deterrents to a unified church universal. Church leadership must seek to be in cooperation, while maintaining ecclesiastical or demographic diversity, to realize missional effectiveness.

In examining the operational methodology of the New Testament church, those with a modern mindset would be comfortable with the delineation of a number of defined systems and guidelines. One system reduces the marks of a

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[110] Jürgen Moltmann, Church p. 72.

[111] David Watson, Believe p. 96-97.

[112] Miroslav Volf, Likeness p. 201,202. Horizontal refers to human relationships, both interpersonal and interorganizational.

[113] Darrell L. Guder, Missional Church Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998, p. 216.

biblical church to eight characteristics,[114] most of which are easily defined, discerned and measurable. Such models may be viewed as reductionistic; "...they reduce the church to only one part, or a few parts, of its reality, then blow those parts out of proportion."[115]

The local church is more than a simple gathering of people who meet once or twice weekly for worship and teaching. It is an organic entity, referred to as the body of Christ, consisting of people who have been invited to join in the creation of a congregation possessing a unique mandate, philosophy, empowerment and governmental structure. Church leadership will often focus on one of these categories in an attempt to establish what they view to be the ultimate church.[116] Such a mechanistic approach usually fails due to the fact that the church is a living organism.

Although the definition of the church has been viewed as linear, it is important to challenge that paradigm and think of it as a non-linear system.[117] A biblical ecclesiology will consider the interaction between fundamental relationships and structures in the local church. The church is a combination of unique and complex systems which interact with each other, vacillating between order and chaos,[118] often creating the illusion of disorder. The church is not simply a social organization, a worship centre or a lecture hall. It was designed

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[114] Christian A. Schwarz, Natural Church Development Winfield, BC: International Centre for Leadership Development and Evangelism, 1998. This work assesses the strengths and weaknesses of a church based on eight characteristics and, although methodologically helpful, the work lacks an articulated ecclesiology.

[115] Howard A. Snyder and Daniel V. Runyon, Decoding p. 36. This has been referred to in the fields of sociology, psychology, anthropology and philosophy as functionalism. In each of these cases the format (or function) is stressed with little or no understanding of the process. Functionalism deals with the phenomena without relating them to an underlying principle. C. Mark Steinacher, Personal Notes from a Conversation p. 1, January 2005. Functionalism http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/philo/faculty/block/papers/functionalism.pdf, p. 1, March 6, 2006. Functionalism http://www.artsci.wustl.edu/~philos/MindDict/functionalism.html, p.1, March 6, 2006. C. Mark Steinacher, Personal Notes from a Conversation p. 1, January 2005.

[116] This has led to a "plug and play" mentality where it is thought that any program that met the need in another locale, will work locally.

[117] Howard A. Snyder and Daniel V. Runyon, Decoding pp. 36-37.

[118] The subject of chaos and complexity as it relates to changing the culture of a church will be dealt with in a later chapter.

to be missional and the task of the church leader is to determine what elements and functions are needed and how to keep them in balance.

It is essential that the believer understand the importance of the local church and its relationship to The Church so as not to view the local church as an end unto itself. There exists a direct correlation between the two. One could take this definition of the local church and establish a biblical taxonomy around elements that would allow the church to recognize that while it is unified, it is also diverse. This has practical implications in that, while it is catholic and universal, the church also has a local expression and as such each congregation should be reflective of the society in which it is located. Furthermore, if the setting of the church is multi-cultural,[119] congregational adherence to the scriptural principles will equip a cosmopolitan church to experience unity.

It is not necessary for all Christian congregations to look alike as Paul's epistles testify. The issues in Corinth were different than those in Galatia. Complexity theory tells us that as systems come together and interact with their environment a unique expression ensues.[120] While each of the characteristics of the local church (as outlined by the New Testament) are important, and congregations must strive to pattern themselves after the New Testament ideal, it will depend on the context of each assembly and the giftings of the congregants as to what becomes primary in their mission and vision or a "unique ecclesial DNA"[121] without neglecting their awesome missional responsibility.

The crux of this thesis is to discover and design the process of organizational culture change necessary for the Portico congregation to engage its immediate context and ultimately the world. Before the uniqueness can be examined there must be an understanding of biblical precedents for a local congregation. This will be accomplished by investigating the work a church is called to do in the life of the believer and the world.

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[119] As opposed to homogenous.

[120] Howard A. Synder and Daniel V. Runyon, Decoding p. 42.

[121] Ibid. p. 41.

At Portico the understanding of the role of the New Testament Church has been synthesized into three intersecting and interacting systems; Spiritual Formation, Authentic Relationships and Missional thought and activity. [122] (SAM) If human life can be characterized as a journey, the design of local church activity must consider how growth (physical, mental or spiritual) can be maximized.

Spiritual Formation

There are a number of corporate activities, sacraments and liturgies that contribute to the spiritual formation of the believer. The church is the forum for the expression of corporate worship of God.[123] The root practice of worship as found in the Old Testament was continued by Christ's disciples after Pentecost in the temple, (Acts 2:46) synagogues[124] (Acts 15:21; James 1:1; 2:2; Acts 17:2) and their own homes. (Romans 16:3-5) Worship continued in the same familiar manner as before the incarnation.[125] While worship is viewed as one's expression of awe and worthiness of the divine, there is purpose in its design. "In worship the church opens itself to God's power and perspective...Genuine worship is openness to God's direction."[126] Worship is submission and sacrifice of one's total self to the will of God including all personal resources. The early church was in the habit of giving to support leadership, missionary endeavor and benevolence to the poor.

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[122] SAM is the acrostic for Spiritual Formation, Authentic/Accountable relationships and Missional thought and activity. Chapter V will explicitly deal with the role of the church in relationship to these core values.

[123] It should be noted that worship is not limited to the singing of songs or Psalms or audible praise. The Scriptures are very clear that all of life is worship. (Romans 12:1,2)

[124] Development of Christian Worship http://www.liturgica.com/html/litEChLitDev.jsp?hostname=null, p. 1, March 6, 2006. Peter J. Leithart, Synagogue or Temple? http://www.credenda.org/issues/13-1liturgia.php?type=print, p. 1, March 6, 2006. Synagogue worship, developed during the Babylonian captivity, was different than in the Temple. The type of worship in the former was developed due to the physical absence of the latter. Temple worship was sacrificially based. New Testament worship is more closely aligned to worship as found in the synagogue.

[125] David Watson, Believe p. 180.

[126] Howard A. Snyder and Daniel V. Runyon, Decoding p. 43.

Another strong element in the church's schedule is the forum for teaching Christ-followers to develop a functional worldview.[127] In Jesus' commissional statements it was his clear command that all peoples ($\varepsilon\tau$'$\nu\varepsilon$) are to be discipled and taught to observe all things as commanded by the Lord.[128] The declaration of the Word takes the form of public oratory.

> Luke ... lays such stress on the preaching ministry of the New Testament Church that he uses no less than thirteen different Greek words to describe the variety and richness of their verbal proclamation; they preached, heralded, testified, proclaimed, taught, exhorted, argued, disputed, confounded, proved, reasoned, persuaded and pleaded.[129]

The role of the public declaration of scriptural principles is two-fold; to challenge the believer to integrate biblical teaching into their personal lives and to challenge the person without a personal faith in God to consider salvation through Jesus Christ.

The challenges associated with the Christian life are met as the church journeys together. The local church establishes a corporate vision and mission that will impact all who call her their spiritual home. The sacraments give tangible opportunity for the expression of faith and mission. Baptism is the public declaration of the acknowledgement of the Lordship of Christ in one's life and signifies the entrance into the church community.[130] It serves as an opportunity for believers to declare their faith in the presence of those with who they are in relationship. A baptismal candidate is declaring that he or she has changed their life orientation from self-centred to God-centred and is now relying on the Holy Spirit to navigate life. (Romans 6) Those who gather for the observance of this sacrifice will include fellow Christian pilgrims (for purposes of corporate celebration) and those who are inquisitive regarding the faith journey of the one who is being baptized (an opportunity for missional activity).

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[127] Ibid.

[128] Arthur F. Glasser and Donald McGavran, <u>Contemporary Theologies of Mission</u> Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1983, p. 104.

[129] David Watson, <u>Believe</u> p. 200.

[130] Craig Van Gelder, <u>Essence</u> p. 148.

The Lord's supper (communion) is the corporate action of the local body of believers remembering the passion of Christ. Worship is the activity of the saints declaring the worthiness of God. Each of these activities has internal and external impact. They are facilitated corporately, or in relationship, and provide a setting for sober thought as an impetus to further spiritual growth. Leadership of the Orthodox Church refers to this weekly or monthly celebration as "family time" not unlike a mealtime when the whole family meets socially.[131]

> A congregation is a congregation all the time, even when it is scattered among secular society, but it is when it assembles together as the Lord's people on the Lord's day that it is able to realize and appreciate its unique community--and most significantly when it meets to eat together symbolically in the Lord's Supper.[132]

The last supper took place around a meal. Paul had to admonish the Corinthian church for engaging in improper behaviour at a legitimate spiritual expression. This gathering served as a fresh opportunity to confess sins, private and corporate, and soberly remember Christ's body and blood sacrifice for those sins. Those who have subscribed to faith in Jesus Christ, and participate in communion, are invited in a non-threatening way to an awakening of the need for missional expression.[133] While a non-believer may not participate, (1 Corinthians 11:27) he or she may be impacted as they observe the nature and content of the Lord's Supper.

Authentic Relationships

Integral in the nature of God is community. Creation was a cooperative effort of the Godhead. Men and women, being formed in the image of God, long for relationship, and the church is the forum for the expression of community as labeled as κοινονια. Inherent in the development of relationship are the

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[131] Renee Zitsloff, Family Centered Education http://www.incommunion.org/articles/older-issues/family-centered-education, p. 1, March 6, 2006.

[132] David Watson, Believe p. 236.

[133] John Cecil Brearly, Holy Communion as a Missional Experience: Reclaiming the Sending Sacrament Doctor of Ministry Project Report, Columbia Theological Seminary, 2004, http://www.ctsnet.edu/degree_programs/advanced_degrees/BrearleyDMinProject.pdf, p. 201, March 6, 2006.

opportunities for community. The early church met in the temple courts and homes and was engaged in communal activities.[134]

> The church as a community finds its origin and destination in the participation of each of the members in Christ rather than in the community that it forms itself. The church as a community exists by the grace of the community that Christ founds ...He leaves it to the church to form itself as a community.[135]

Because the word 'fellowship' has become synonymous with church social activity it may have lost its original significance.

> The church's nature as a social community makes it self-evident that fellowshipping is to be a ministry practice of the church. In sharing Christ in common, Christians are called to live as fully reconciled to both God and one another. Fellowship in this sense, is living out behaviours that characterize what it means to come together in community.[136]

This fellowship does not exist for the sole benefit of the believer. This network of relationships, integrally connected to Christ, exist within the church for mutual, corporate and missional purposes. In community Christians can discover accountability while developing, "...creative, effective, redemptive responses to the challenges of its growth and mission."[137] While God has provided gifts to the church in various forms (1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30; Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11), the philosophical foundation is found in the principle of the "priesthood of all believers." (1 Peter 2:5-9.) Peter likens the church to the human body, consisting of several parts working seamlessly together to accomplish great things. (Romans 12:3-5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-20)

Leaders and members of the local church are not required to work in solitude. Rather, there is a symbiotic relationship between God's work and human responsibility in a grace-shaped, gift-based community.[138] These gifts are for the edification of the body with the ultimate goal of building the church. Spiritual gifts can be categorized into endowment for ministry of the Word and

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[134] The contemporary expression for such groupings is found in the weekend church gatherings and home groups.

[135] Johannes Van Der Ven, Ecclesiology in Context Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996, p. 275.

[136] Craig Van Gelder, Essence p. 152.

[137] Howard A. Snyder and Daniel V. Runyon, Decoding p. 43.

[138] Craig Van Gelder, Essence p. 147.

equipment for ministry in deed.[139] With a wide variety of gifts, abilities and passions distributed liberally among the members of a local church, congregational effectiveness increases as they are expressed in the local body and to society. (1 Corinthians 12-14; Ephesians 4:7-16; Romans 12:4-10) The expression of the gifts are specialized for the various aspects, ministries and outreaches of the church and usually appear in the 'human package' complemented by one's personality, passion[140] and past experiences.[141]

Acceptance of such a ministry philosophy demands that the traditional clergy/laity roles be set aside in favour of an equipping philosophy,[142] (Ephesians 4:12) recognizing each person has something unique to offer the kingdom. Some are referring to this current shift, which emphasizes that the identification and training of leadership be undertaken in a new way and with new intensity, as the New Reformation. [143] "Churches demonstrate this reality when all the gifts, functioning corporately, constitute the church..."[144] The local church is involved in the work of preparing its members for mission and ministry to the world. The effectiveness of the equipping process is evident as the gospel is proclaimed around the world, and disciples are actively engaged in preaching, teaching and baptizing.[145]

At first glance, the nature of the organization of the church may seem chaotic. However, closer examination reveals there is a biblically principled structure. There are four identifiable structures in this ministry of order:[146] The congregation as a whole, the small group, charismatic or gift-based leadership

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[139] D. A. Carlson, ed., The Church in the Bible and the World Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1987, p. 79, p. 156-157.

[140] Area of person's extreme interest.

[141] A person is influenced positively and negatively by all that has taken place in their lives. Often negative experiences enable a person to more effectively 'walk with' a person going through a similar trying circumstance.

[142] The leader's role is to prepare God's people for works of service.

[143] There is a restoration of the ministry of the local church returning ownership to the laity and church leadership taking on the role of 'equippers' as in the New Testament paradigm.

[144] Howard A. Snyder and Daniel V. Runyon, Decoding p. 26.

[145] Craig Van Engen, Mission p. 109

[146] D. A. Carlson, Church p. 79.

and a form of networking or connection beyond the local community.[147] Each level serves a purpose facilitating the growth of the church through ministry to individuals. God has bestowed leadership gifts and adaptable structures to enable its members to govern themselves.

> Rule under the Lordship of Christ is not imperial domination, but self-giving service, yet it does carry authority; Christ has given the keys of the kingdom to establish his church. The discipline of government in the name of the church maintains the glory of Christ's name, reclaims the offender, and bears witness to the world.[148]

The establishment and sustainability of the church was on the mind of Jesus when he chose The Twelve. He gave three years of his life to instil into them, and his other followers, the values that would be expressed to the end of time. Following his departure, this equipped body began to give leadership to the rapidly growing church. However, things started to get out of hand because "the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food." (Acts 6) As a result The Twelve gathered all the disciples together and chose seven deacons,[149] a model of local assembly leadership thought to be similar to that of the Jewish synagogue.

> The church was greatly influenced by their Jewish culture and roots. They borrowed many ideas from the local synagogue. Synagogues were led by a "ruler" of the synagogue and a "servant" of the synagogue, both of whom were office bearers. Under the new dynamic of the Spirit, these were transformed and the offices of *episcopos* (overseer or bishop) and "deacon" emerged in the life of the church.[150]

As the church began to expand all over the world Paul wrote the churches in Rome, Philippi and to his *protégé* Timothy concerning the issue of local church government. He reinforced two types of church leadership; a group of overseers, responsible for the spirituality of the congregation, and a group of servers who facilitated the business affairs of the church. (1 Timothy 3:1-12) Paul's instructions to Titus in Crete and Timothy in Ephesus were seemingly

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[147] Howard A. Snyder and Daniel V. Runyon, Decoding p. 54.
[148] Ibid.
[149] This term is never used in Scripture in association with this particular group of men.
[150] Mark Conner, A New Testament Pattern for Church Leadership
http://jmm.aaa.net.au/articles/9305.htm, p. 1, March 6, 2006.

different. He told Titus that he should appoint elders and said nothing about deacons or that appointing new converts was unacceptable. He instructed Timothy to appoint elders and deacons and that they should not be new converts. The church at Crete was very young and so they began by appointing elders out of the available people.[151] The church in Ephesus had been around longer and was bigger, and so their organizational structure needed both roles and they had mature Christians from which to choose. It is also conceivable that the church in Ephesus was made up of people who were familiar with the role of an elder in the Jewish synagogue.[152] These groups of people were to give leadership and serve the church.

Over the history of the church there have been differing interpretations of this administrative structure.[153] Within one hundred years of Jesus' death, early church leader Ignatius reported some local churches had moved from multiple elders to a single elder. This may have been as a result of the practice of one elder being leading each house church.[154]

Nevertheless, Paul's model valued inclusivity and, in the operation of churches today, may be referred to as a plurality of leadership. This is the antithesis of an autocratic, dictatorial structure and optimizes the counsel of many (Proverbs 15:22) under the headship of Christ.[155] This was enacted at the council of Jerusalem where the church leaders of the day gathered to determine whether Gentiles could become Christians without first becoming Jews. (Acts 15)

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[151] Alexander Strauch, Biblical Eldership Littleton: CO: Lewis and Roth Publishers, 1986, p. 231-232.

[152] Stephen A. Hayes, The Eldership in Today's Church Don Mills, ON: Presbyterian Publications, 1975, p. 7.

[153] Church leadership that tends toward a literal interpretation of the Bible may view the practice of eldership in a narrower fashion. These churches would adhere to strict constructionism with an accompanying motto, "If the Bible doesn't say it, we don't do it." The majority of Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada churches have traditionally wrapped these two positions into one and referred to them as the board of deacons, which is not expressly forbidden in the New Testament.

[154] Daniel B. Wallace, Who Should Run the Church? A Case for the Plurality of Elders http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page_id=414, p. 1, April 3, 2006.

[155] This is an expression of theocracy as men and women call on God for his thoughts on the direction and issues of the local church and then confer together.

In their summary statements they said; "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us." (Acts 15:28)

It may be argued that the terms overseer, shepherd and elder are, at times, used interchangeably in the New Testament writings.[156] "The predominant Biblical attitude towards the men [sic] who lead the church is that they are 'elders.'"[157] An elder is referred to in the context of dignity and position and may refer to the wisdom gained over the years while an overseer relates to function and the nature of their work. (1 Timothy 5, Titus 1) The five-fold job description[158] for the elder entails pastoring,[159] teaching, directing,[160] giving guidance and wise counsel and prayer. (James 5:14)

Biblical references to 'elders' are usually plural suggesting that one member does not act alone. Paul, although a strong leader, worked with a small ministry team and other church leaders. In the context of the local church, these small groups[161] strive to lead while maintaining biblical values, and the mission and vision of a particular assembly.[162] Local churches can change dramatically depending on who is in leadership. The strength of this model is that the leadership and care of the congregation are not the responsibility of one of one person. A perpetuating eldership can enable the establishing and replication of the desired culture of a church.

A deacon denotes a different type of church leadership. The words that are used are $\delta\iota\alpha\kappa\sigma\nu\sigma\varsigma$ (waiter, servant, slave, attendant), $\delta\sigma\nu\lambda\sigma\nu\varsigma$ (one who binds or fastens), $\pi\alpha'\varepsilon\varepsilon\chi\varepsilon$ (servant), $\sigma\iota\kappa\varepsilon\tau\varepsilon\varsigma$ (household servant), $\dot{\psi}\pi\varepsilon\rho\varepsilon\tau\varepsilon\varsigma$ (under-rower). This serving oriented position is usually engaged in

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[156] Peter Toon, Who Runs the Church? Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 2004, p. 214.

[157] Alexander Strauch, Eldership p. 13.

[158] Neil Summerton, A Noble Task Exeter, UK: Paternoster Press, 1987, p. 39.

[159] Timothy understood that his role was to release people to ministry as Paul admonished in Ephesians 4:10-12 by preparing God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

[160] Planning and envisioning.

[161] Particularly elders.

[162] Alexander Strauch, Eldership p. 15.

positions of administration, finance and resourcing the ministries and people of the church.

The determination of who works in what area of responsibility depends on the gifts one possesses. By virtue of their work elders usually have gifts of leadership, pastor, mercy, compassion and the ability to strategize. Deacons manifest gifts of service, administration, mercy, and compassion. Plurality of leadership may be best illustrated in a concentric circle model.[163] While there are distinct aspects to the elder and deacon roles, there are also areas of intersection and work best in a complementary fashion. (Philippians 1:1)

Missional Activity

The most basic of ecclesiastical questions is, "Why does the church exist?" The answer is inherent in the activity and meaning of the Eucharist. Without downplaying the internal purposes of this activity of remembrance, this is "...to bear witness to salvation in Christ--not only 'telling' but 'doing.'"[164] The reason for the existence of a congregation is ultimately to be missional, an ecclesiological mandate which has been neglected in favour of doing the minimum necessary to get to heaven. If one is convinced of a coming Kingdom, he or she should be set free to live courageous and sacrificial lives here and now in such a way as to impact eternal outcomes.[165]

Some emphases have been given to the missional effectiveness of the church, both corporately and individually. First, in relation to its 'separate from the world' or holiness nature, the church sends a clear message to the world "when the church is alienated from its environment in Christ's way, then it can show in an alienated world that the kingdom of God, which Christ has promised is our home."[166]

Second, the church is God's visible expression of compassion to the world as can be described in Jesus' incarnational ministry model. He was God living

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[163] See Appendix 5, p. 3954
[164] Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, Ecclesiology Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002, p. 17.
[165] Howard A. Snyder and Daniel V. Runyon, Decoding p. 29.
[166] Jürgen Moltmann, Church p. 68.

among humans; the God-man. Following this example, the church is called to be a group of disciples representing Christ and living as an example of hope in the world. In regard to the missional character of the church one can discover "Two fundamental claims about the nature of the true church ... that preaching the gospel to the poor is an identifying mark of the church – part of the essential DNA [and] that this mark is a test of whether the church is genuinely apostolic."[167] While there are some major misconceptions regarding the apostolic nature of the church and its related leadership,[168] it is evident by Paul's missional activity[169] that the early church gave significant consideration to the poor and marginalized. "Preaching the gospel to the poor is essential to the church's faithfulness. It is a test of the church's apostolic mark."[170]

The successful establishment of the church cannot be facilitated on human effort alone. Those involved in missional activity must be aware of the challenges and persevere by depending on divine direction and empowerment. While the early church originated in the upper room (Acts 2:4) and was established in Jerusalem, Antioch, Philippi and Corinth, there was evidence of supernatural activity as described by 'miraculous signs and wonders' as performed by the apostles. (Acts 4:30; 5:12; 14:3; 15:12) While being relevant and inviting to the surrounding community by contextualizing itself, the church also possessed a prophetic character as "seen in the church's formation of a contrast society whose values and worldview clashed with those of the dominant society."[171] Eastern theology can be described as more Spirit-sensitive with an expressed emphasis on pnuematology (Eastern), in contrast to the Western church, which tends to give prominence to Christology. Missional effectiveness is illustrated in an Eastern focus on growth and maturation while the Western

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[167] Howard A. Snyder and Daniel V. Runyon, <u>Decoding</u> p. 20.

[168] Based on ongoing conversations with Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada pastors, the denomination appears to be headed for a split based on the dictatorial authority demanded by those who declare themselves apostles.

[169] This will be treated more definitively in a chapter concerning "The Missional Church."

[170] Howard A. Snyder and Daniel V. Runyon, <u>Decoding</u> p. 27.

[171] Ibid. p. 22. This in essence is the crux of this thesis; the challenge for local church leaders (pastoral and lay) to create a missional church that is biblical and yet relevant.

church is preoccupied with salvation and struggles to move into meaningful evangelistic activity. [172]

Luke's historical account gives a brief synopsis of congregational activities in Jerusalem (Acts 2:42-47) including teaching, fellowship, celebration of the sacraments, worship and the exercise of the spiritual disciplines. As God's presence was known and experienced church members responded by expressing care and compassion, and outsiders were attracted to faith in Jesus Christ. The written principles associated with the development of the local church are almost 2000 years old. In and of themselves they are not easily understood or applied. In their interaction with each other a complexity develops providing an implementation challenge for church leaders. While the local church carries out the mission of God and fulfills its unique mission, congregational members view firsthand "this wonderful spiritual-personal-social organism called the church."[173]

Conclusion

While we attempt to define the church by its structures, physical or governmental, we may emphasize minor aspects of the church and overlook the major principles. Practically speaking, much of Christendom has identified the local church as a congregation who meets in a building dedicated to their religious activities. In light of the scriptural ecclesiastical parameters this seems somewhat constrictive. As much as it make shake the current paradigm, the church is 'in session' when two or three or more meet together, whether in a home, coffee shop, board room or a church building.[174] Whatever the setting, Christ-followers have the potential to continue their pathway of spiritual formation in a mutually edifying way. While such activities may be inwardly directed, the outcomes are ultimately intended for missional expression.

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[172] Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, Ecclesiology p. 17.

[173] Howard A. Snyder and Daniel V. Runyon, Decoding p. 44.

[174] This has some distinct impact on the future strategic development of MGT Family Church. As you will see, less emphasis will be placed on the church building as a place to meet and more on a place to call people to faith and to equip believers.

The leadership of any local church must continually assess itself concerning these ecclessioligical principles. As can be seen in the next chapter, the theology of mission, or missionality of the church, has not been fully explored or implemented in many congregational settings. This is critical to one's understanding in the process of assessing and changing the culture of a local church.

The Theology of Mission

Introduction

Until recent years, within the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, conversations concerning missionality were minimal. Prior to the 1990s church missional activity was referred to as missions. The context for this type of ministry was most often cross-cultural or 'across the seas.'[175] Such thinking may have blinded Canadian Pentecostals to the missional theme that winds its way through the entirety of scripture. In this chapter God's missional nature will be explored commencing with mission in the Old Testament including the important role the nation of Israel played in moving God's mission forward. This missional theme continues in the New Testament beginning with declarations made by Jesus concerning his earthly ministry. Understanding his time was short, he mentored The Twelve, and other followers, to carry on his mission. Paul, and other early church leaders, responded to the call and New Testament churches emerged in all parts of the then-known world. The discussion would be incomplete without exploring the role of the Holy Spirit in mission and reviewing earlier Pentecostal thinking regarding eschatological implications of missions.[176]

Missio Dei

The International Missionary Council held discussions in the 1950s on the *missio Dei* and concluded that the mission of the Triune God was a theology as opposed to centuries of missional activity.[177] *Missio Dei* is the work that belongs to God and he is the Lord who solely initiates, owns, and sustains it. "We cannot

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[175] Kenneth B. Birch, Towards a Definition of 'Missions' A paper prepared for the Overseas Missions Advisory Committee, 1988. The Overseas Missions Advisory Committee reported to the General Executive, the highest governing body of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. In this document there is no reference to 'mission,' 'theology of mission' or 'the missional responsibility of each believer.' The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada was founded as a 'missions' organization and every effort has been made to retain it as such.

[176] The Jesus Film Project http://www.unityinchrist.com/evangelism/whyjesus.htm, p. 1, April 2, 2006. On the website concerning The Jesus Film, it is stated that world evangelization will hasten the day of Jesus' return. This was common preaching at local Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada church missions conferences until the 1990s. The term 'missions' is used here to illustrate that Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada missional activity may have hindered the develop of a theology of mission.

[177] Walter C. Kaiser Jr., Mission in the Old Testament Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2000, p. 11.

speak of 'the mission of the church,' even less of 'our mission.'"[178] His loving desire is to reveal himself through involvement with nature, his people and the local church. Those who are redeemed are invited to participate in God's mission by means of missional activity, which is referred to as missions. "Mission ... denote[s] action: being sent with a commission to perform a certain task, acting in the name of a superior, carrying out an important mandate, serving as ambassador on behalf of one's leader."[179] Although vestiges of missions terminology and programs remain, over the last fifty years the term missions has gradually faded away in favour of a one-mission view while simultaneously prompting evangelical church leadership to a deeper understanding of *Missio Dei*.

Although history is arbitrarily categorized by Old Testament and New Testament religious time periods, or other secular labelling, in reality all of humanity is divided by "the event of Jesus as the Christ... [whether] ...before the manifestation of the centre of history either in history universally, or in particular individuals, nations and groups..."[180] Redemptive mission was the centre-point of God's actions from the very beginning; universally, nationally and individually.

> Christian mission gives expression to the dynamic relationship between God and the world, particularly as this was portrayed, first in the story of the covenant people of Israel and then supremely in the birth, life, death, resurrection and exaltation of Jesus of Nazareth.[181]

When examining the Bible through the lens of mission one views the scriptures as, "a tapestry of missional themes and motifs in contexts."[182] Such themes as God's universal love for all peoples, rescue and liberation, the place of encounter with the Holy One and light to the Gentiles, contribute to mission theology. Church practitioners must create a "critical hermeneutic [to] get away from finding a few proof texts or isolated nuggets in the Bible to buttress our

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[178] Georg F. Vicedom, The Mission of God St. Louis, MS: Concordia Publishing House, 1965, p. 4.
[179] Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., The Transformation of Mission: Biblical, Theological and Historical Foundations Waterloo, ON: Herald Press, 1993, p. 18.
[180] Paul Tillich. The Theology of Missions http://religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=390 April 1, 2006, p. 3.
[181] David J. Bosch, Transforming Mission Mayknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994, p. 9
[182] Charles Van Engen, The Relation of Bible and Mission in Mission Theology Charles Van Engen et. al. eds., The Good News of the Kingdom, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993, p. 33.

missional [or missions] agendas"[183] by adhering to the missional thematic nature of the scripture. "The Bible is not to be treated as a storehouse of truths on which we can draw at random."[184] The theme of mission winds it way through the entire canon of scripture.

The motivation for the development of a theology of mission may arise from a number of common evangelical misconceptions, including the focus on personal decisions and commitment, in an effort to tally the number of 'saved souls.' Another error occurs when pastors associate the hastening of eschatological events with the 'whole world hearing the gospel' prior to the return of Jesus Christ all the while ignoring current realities. Others would equate the establishing of local church bodies with the extension of the identifiable kingdom of God in the here and now. They believe the greater the number of planted churches the more the kingdom of darkness will be pushed back. Ultimately, as this mission is fulfilled the final kingdom will be induced resulting in a positive impact on the world's societies.[185]

Mission in the Old Testament

The starting point for the study of mission theology in the evangelical church, has often been Jesus words, "Go ye therefore ..." (Mark 16:15). Church members study the scriptures as a two-part document. They view the purpose of the Old Testament scriptures as chronicling the ebb and flow of Yahweh's relationship with his chosen people while the New Testament was God's 'after thought' in light of his failed attempt with the Jewish people.[186] Careful examination of the scriptures reveals God's driving passion is a desire to reach fallen mankind. The 'sending of God' is a theme that begins in the Old Testament and winds its way through the entire scriptural record.

> The [Old Testament] is important for understanding Christian mission. The Christian mission that begins in the New Testament has its roots in the Old Testament, where,

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[183] Ibid. p. 34.

[184] David Bosch, Transforming p. 5.

[185] Ibid.

[186] John Piper, Desiring God http://www.desiringgod.org/dg/id224.htm, Appendix 1, January 6, 2007.

long before the incarnation of Jesus Christ, God was at work. God is involved with man from the very beginning of history.[187]

By definition, "...mission points to a central action: the act of being sent with a commission to carry out the will of a superior. It is God who commissions and God who sends."[188]

The missional nature of God is found initially in his character. "The supreme arguments for missions are not found in any specific words. It is in the very being and character of God that the deepest ground of the missionary enterprise is to be found."[189] He is a God who highly values and seeks to be involved in loving relationships, initially within the Trinity and eventually with His Creation. "The creation account is not devoid of missionary meaning. Some Asian theologians have suggested creation rather than redemption or salvation history as the starting point for theology."[190] Six days of divine creative activity culminated in the creation of a man and woman from whom all of humanity has been derived. This sixth day creation was given a special place; humanity was created a little less than God, crowned with glory and honour while exercising dominion over creation (Psalm 8:5-6) with only one prohibition in place. A subsequent violation regarding the forbidden fruit awakened Adam and Eve's awareness to good and evil, prompting them to run and hide from God. While being repulsed by their sin, God exercised his love for humanity and began to search for Adam and Eve. This may be the first recorded act of mission in the history of humanity[191] and underlines the relationship between the loving character of God and his creation, a theme that continues to today. The whole of creation groans in travail, awaiting redemption by its Creator.[192] Man was central in God's creation and his fallenness remains central in God's redemptive

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[187] Roger E. Hedlund, The Mission of the Church in the World Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985, p. 20.

[188] Walter C. Kaiser Jr., Mission p. 11.

[189] George W. Peters, A Biblical Theology of Missions Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1972, p. 55

[190] Roger E. Hedlund, Mission p. 22.

[191] Ibid. p. 25.

[192]Jesse C. Fletcher, The Layman's Library of Christian Doctrine: The Mission of the Church Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1988, p. 18.

purposes. "God's mission starts with the vertical concern. God wants to reconcile man [sic] to himself and all else revolves around this aspect of reconciliation."[193] The early definition of mission centers around God's entering the world he created with a view to initiating a restorative relationship with the human race and their environment.

One must pause and consider divine motivation concerning creation. Theologians continue to be vexed by the mystery of God's embarking upon a creative process that ultimately resulted in human rebellion and cost the life of his Son. However, the creative and redemptive process was not for the welfare and glory of man or the expansion of the church. Mission is theocentric in that, "the glory of God forms the highest goal of missions because the being and character of God are the deepest ground of missions... for of him and through him and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever."[194]

While some would suggest that the Old Testament is exclusively the history of God's dealings with his chosen people, others would argue for the universalistic nature of the Old Testament scriptures. Prior to the Fall, God's creation was in a complete harmonious relationship with him. After a series of three crises (the Fall, the Flood, and the Tower of Babel) God continued to seek relationship with humanity. This universalistic call, prior to and succeeding the fall from grace, was issued in an attempt to find responsive human hearts.[195] Subsequent to each of these events, God expressed his universal love for the entire world by extending his promise to bless all mortals. He had promised that out of Eve's womb would come someone who would have the authority to crush the head of the serpent,[196] (Genesis 3:15) and following the flood this promise

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[193] Ken R. Gnanakan, Kingdom Concern: A Biblical Exploration towards a Theology of Mission Bangalore, India: Theological Book Trust, 1989, p.43.
[194] George W. Peters, Missions p. 57.
[195] Jesse C. Fletcher, Mission p. 19. Fletcher suggests that not only were humans in need of redemption, but that the environment (total creation) was in need of God's redemptive power.
[196] George W. Peters, Missions as cited in http://www.directionjournal.org/article/?252, p. 1. April 6, 2006. This is referred to as the *protoevangelium*, which reveals that Salvation is wrought by God and will result in the destruction of Satan, the redemption of humanity through a suffering mediator at some point in history.

was expanded. After the flood, God's covenant with Noah was for the benefit of all living creatures. God promised Shem, a survivor, that he would dwell in his tents. (Genesis 9:27) Close examination illustrates that God's early actions were inclusive and related to all mankind.

> Genesis 1-11 was far from being a nationalistic section that favoured the Jews. It is one of the most universalistic sections of the Bible, ending with a list in Genesis 10 of seventy nations - the very "families" and "all peoples" that were to receive the blessing from God through Abraham and his collective seed in Genesis 12:3 [197]

The recorded narrative of God's actions is a history associated with all nations and his overriding all-inclusive missional intent. Each historical development contained in the scripture has theological implications in God's mission. Closely following the Tower of Babel episode, God engaged Abraham in a conversation in which he promised to bless humanity, not as a result of their own efforts, but as a divine initiative. In spite of Israel's indiscretions, God promised to shape Abraham's family into a great nation, to bestow blessing upon him personally and to make his name great for one purpose: "so that all the people on earth may be blessed through you." (Genesis 18:18) It was not God's intention to permit one nation and culture to rise to prominence over the exclusion of the others. Rather, it was God's desire to be inclusive to all nations through the servanthood of one nation, Israel.

The movement of God's actions, in relation to his mission among the nation of Israel, can be termed centripetal and centrifugal.[198] Simultaneously, God reached out to establish a relationship with the nation of Israel, both as an example of a loving relationship with a particular group of people, with the ultimate end being to look beyond this particular cultural group and to draw all men unto himself. "Although there was no overt or organized 'mission' of Jews to the 'heathen', the Jewish faith contains all the elements which make a mission 'to the peoples'"[199] meaningful and leads us to conclude, whatever the narrative or time period, that "Missions cannot be an afterthought (or a subplot) for the

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[197] Walter C. Kaiser Jr., Mission p. 8.
[198] Studia Institui Missiologici Societatis Verbi Divini Netherlands: The Steyl Press, 1989, p. 55.
[199] Ibid. p. 57.

Old Testament: it is the heart and core of the plan of God."[200] Israel's mission, albeit vastly different in the absence of a Saviour, was God-appointed, God-centered, and to all nations.[201]

The Old Testament is "...like a lonely voice in the wilderness ... boldly [proclaiming] revelational ethical monotheism in protest to Greek, Egyptian and early Indian henotheism ... polytheism and incipient philosophical Eastern monism."[202] For the non-Jewish nations and people of the world there is hope. God's mission is not exclusively directed at the seed of Abraham. "The nations are not mere decorations incidental to the real drama between God and man [sic]; rather, the nations ...that is mankind [sic] as a whole, are part of the drama itself. God's work and activity are directed at the whole of humanity."[203] God's intent regarding Israel's role was that it would be a picture of what was possible in relationship with him and, as a nation, would be used to bring the entire world into relationship with him.

Although the events immediately prior to the Exodus are often viewed as punitive, a case can be made for the declaration of a divine missional message through this time period. It is not Yahweh's intention simply to eradicate the Egyptians for sinister pleasure; rather, it is repetitively stated so that "the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord." (Exodus 7:5, 17; 8:22; 14:4, 18) God's ultimate desire was to be in relationship with all of humanity, and he used this opportunity to augment the lifestyle example of the Jewish people while they were in Egyptian captivity. Israel's history is marked by the will of One who sends his emissaries and agents to accomplish his purposes.[204] The office of these 'sent ones' frequently points to national leaders or prophets such as Moses, Aaron and Samuel. (Exodus 3:10-15; Deuteronomy 34:11) Each of these men and women were called by God to address the issues of the day and call God's

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[200] Walter C. Kaiser Jr., Mission p. 38.
[201] George W. Peters, Missions p. 124-136.
[202] Ibid. p. 129.
[203] Jesse C. Fletcher, Mission p. 29.
[204] Walter C. Kaiser Jr., Mission p. 12.

people to restored relationship with him. "The election of Israel, far from meaning the rejection of the other nations of the world, was the very means of salvation for the nations."[205] God's intent was to raise a "treasured possession," (Exodus 19:5) not with exclusionary intent, but as a means to marshal the necessary resources to reach all nations. The subsequent development of a kingdom of priests was not to be inwardly focused but it was intended to be the mediatorial role of Israel, as God's chosen people, to relate to the nations and people groups around them,[206] an extrapolation which bridges into the New Testament doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. (1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6; 5:10)

God also instructed Moses to declare to Israel that they were to be a holy nation. Perhaps the national 'holy' aspect should be understood as 'wholly.' This nation was set apart not only by their dietary laws, but also by their willingness to serve all the families on earth insuring that God's blessings would be bestowed on all who believed.[207] The role of the Jewish nation is to be a latent, preparatory stage for the soon-to-be revealed Church. The community of the Jewish nation and synagogue, the anticipation revealed in prophetic declarations and the practice of legalism are the early stages of Yahweh's mission to the world.[208]

This call was not to the Jewish people alone. "Israel itself was not a closed ethnic group with its own culture and glorious history..."[209] but a group of people from differing origins: Egyptian slaves, conquered Canaanites and other immigrants. (Exodus 12:38; Numbers 11:4) Jonah, although resisting at first, responded to God's call to preach to a community of his Assyrian archenemies.[210]

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[205] Ibid. p. 22.
[206] Ibid. p. 23.
[207] Ibid.
[208] Paul Tillich, Theology p. 6
[209] Studia Institui Missiologici Societatis Verbi Divini Netherlands: The Steyl Press, 1989, p. 56.
[210] Jesse C. Fletcher, Mission p. 30. The author suggests that Nineveh's repentance holds promise for the church's missionary efforts in the face of tremendous resistance.

God's plan of reaching out to all humanity included Ruth, a Gentile (Moabitess) who became an integral part of salvation's genealogy.

While the Jewish people were scattered around the then-known world as a result of God's judgement, large groupings of Gentiles were exposed to Yahweh. Whether it was the Assyrian exile of Judah in 721 BC or the Babylonian exile of Judah in 586 BC, the word of God was declared to a variety of nations.[211] This was also evident in the ministry of Jewish individuals extended beyond the Israeli nation. The prophet Isaiah addressed eleven chapters (Isaiah 13-23) to ten foreign nations. Ezekiel unveiled God's plan for the Gentile nations while Jerusalem was under siege by a Babylonian occupying force. (Ezekiel 25-32) Although most of these prophetic messages were judgemental in nature, there was also a clear call to a renewed active relationship with the Sovereign God of all nations.[212]

God's universal call must also be tempered by what is referred to as 'particularism.'[213] Upon their return from Babylon, Ezra and Nehemiah served divorce decrees to those who had married foreign wives. (Ezra 9:1-10:44; Nehemiah 13:23-31) What may have appeared to be a turnabout concerning the universal nature of God's mission can be understood in the context for this admonition. There was the need to clear away any religious distraction while re-establishing Judaic, Yahweh-centered worship in Israel's destroyed homeland.[214]

The missional and universalistic theme of God's desire for relationship with humanity is prolific in the formalized Old Testament worship as recorded in the words of the Psalmists.[215] For example, in Numbers 6:24-26 Moses pronounces a blessing upon Aaron and his sons. This could easily be read as exclusionary, however, the formula for this blessing reappears in the later Psalms when the

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[211] Walter C. Kaiser Jr., <u>Mission</u> p. 13.
[212] Ibid. p. 12.
[213] Eung Chun Park, <u>Either Jew or Gentile</u> Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003, p. 13.
[214] Eung Chun Park, <u>Jew</u> p. 13.
[215] Cited in Walter C. Kaiser Jr., <u>Mission</u> p. 29.

writer applies the Aaronic blessing originally bestowed upon the nation of Israel, to all of earth's peoples and nations.[216] (Psalms 4, 31, 80)

In Psalm 22 the writer takes the position of a forsaken individual crying out in anguish to a hearing God. Upon recognition of this dilemma, God addresses the poor person with a message of hope that is extrapolated to the "whole earth, from end to end...because Yahweh reigns, the ruler of nations." (Psalm 22:27-28) The Psalmist declares that God's blessing is enlarged so that His ways may be known on the earth and salvation may be experienced among all nations. (Psalm 67:2) This song is traditionally sung at the Feast of Pentecost to signify God's pouring out his Spirit on all flesh. (Joel 2:28-31) During the time of harvest, thanksgiving was expressed to God for his material blessings, "a symbol of the spiritual harvest that God desired for every tribe, tongue and nation."[217] God's deeds, spread across all of humanity, are initially declared to the nation of Israel as an example of what is possible, and indicate the Jewish duty to fulfil their purpose as a missionary force.[218] In some cases the Psalmist forthrightly declares the mission of God and admonishes the reader to "tell of his salvation" and "declare his glory among the nations ... God has been present and at work among all peoples, moving them in every conceivable way toward God's redemptive goals. [219] (Psalm 96:2-3,10)

It should be noted that some scholars would argue that there is no indication in the Old Testament of old covenant believers "being sent by God to cross geographical, religious or social frontiers to win others to faith in Yahweh."[220] Others deny this is the case. A case can be made for Canaanite conversion to Yahwehism during the Conquest. Joshua urged outsiders to

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[216] Ibid. p. 31.

[217] Walter C. Kaiser Jr., Mission p. 31.

[218] Walter C. Kaiser Jr., Mission p. 33.

[219] Wayne Stumme, ed., Bible and Mission Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986, p. 19.

[220] David Bosch, Transforming p. 17. Others would point out Jonah and Nineveh as a primary exception. Bosch suggests that Jonah's role was not missional but rather to announce doom to a wicked city.

"choose this day whom you will serve," (Joshua 24) and an incident when foreigners come to know the God of Israel.[221] (Ruth 1:16)

Mission in the New Testament

The New Testament is in stark contrast to the Old Testament due to its focus on mission; the mission of Jesus, the apostles and the Church. The missional nature of God is overtly emphasized throughout the scriptural record. (John 3:16; 1 John 4:16) "To establish the theology of mission in the New Testament one simply accepts the New Testament for what it is. No reader can remain untouched by its missionary thrust and design."[222] The story of the gospels, the admonitions of the epistles, and prophecy in John's Revelation continue to focus on God's mission to reach lost humanity.

It was the love of God that raised up a culture simultaneously to be an example and a servant to the nations of the world. However, from creation onward God chose to enlist unique, called individuals to accomplish the task of taking the message of his love to all people. In the midst of history, after sending a nation, God sent His Son to live incarnationally and to be the sacrifice for humanity's sin. The mission of the New Testament church arises from His sacrifice. Central to the mission of the early (and contemporary) church is the fact that Jesus has come to reconcile us to God. "It was not that we loved God but that God loves us that brought about the great redemptive effort."[223]

Inherent in mission theology is the central focus of the Blessed Trinity. "Mission is ... an integral part of the eternal plan of God for the world."[224] His work and plan are primarily concerned with the salvation of mankind through the loving act of sending His Son to redeem the whole person. Because men and women were created as social beings (Genesis 2:18) in the image of God, relationship and community became integral to God's mission.

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[221] Wayne Stumme, ed., Mission p. 29.

[222] George W. Peters, Theology p. 131.

[223] Jesse C. Fletcher, Mission p. 20.

[224] Studia Institui Missiologici Societatis Verbi Divini Netherlands: The Steyl Press, 1989, p. 46

The Son of God came to earth during a very interesting time period. There was a growing belief that not all Israel would be saved, but only a faithful remnant,[225] and so Jesus' initial ministry challenge was to speak to the entire Judaic society and subsequently, the Gentile world was outside his purview.

Although the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are written for different audiences, "there are two common elements--the universal dimension of the mission and continuing presence of Christ through the Spirit."[226] Viewed through the eyes of the gospellers, there may be a certain subjectivity associated with the details, but the unity of the mission remains intact.

This may contribute to some disagreement about the role of mission in the ministry of Jesus. While he condemned the conversion tactics of the teachers of the law and the Pharisees (Matthew 23:15) he constantly referred to His Father's universal mission. When healing the centurion's servant in Capernaum he stated that, "...many would come from east and west to take their places with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the feast in the kingdom." (Matthew 8:11) As he cleansed the temple, Jesus forthrightly declared that this would be a house of prayer, as opposed to a centre of commerce, and it would be for all the peoples. (Mark 11:17) Each of his acts was under the authority granted by God and contributed to the fulfilment of *missio Dei.*

In most instances Jesus' focus of ministry concerned the Jewish people.

> It was appropriate that Jesus should minister among the people who had been the recipients and custodian of the revelation of God. He came into the world as a Jew in the tradition of the Old Testament prophets. He embodied a continuity with the Old Testament tradition.[227]

Matthew and Mark both record that he was "sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel." (Matthew 15:24; Mark 7:27) Although the messianic expectations of the Jewish people may have been political liberation, Jesus was first the Messiah to the Jewish people, to create a spiritually redeemed Messianic community, an instrument for the missional age. Due to an urgency and time

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[225] David Bosch, Transforming p. 25.
[226] Charles Van Engen, News p. 42.
[227] Roger E. Hedlund, Mission p. 186.

constraint Jesus remained focused on the Jewish people with a view to providing a model of mission for the soon-to-be established church. His messianic methodology was characterized by a focus on serving others through a total openness to all social classes. Through Jesus' incarnation, death and resurrection, God's reign was fully established in the world, holding together the elements necessary for *missio Dei*.[228]

On the occasion when he released the Twelve to ministry, Jesus told them to avoid any pagan territory and pagan towns.[229] (Matthew 10:5-6) However, there is a definitive shift in his early directives from the nation of lost sheep to a focus on all nations. (Matthew 28:19) Luke, a Gentile himself, records the prophesy of Simeon that Jesus would be a "light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to thy people Israel." (Luke 2:32)

Like other rabbis of his time, Jesus called a group of disciples to a teaching relationship. While the others focused on the acquisition of religious knowledge, Jesus called The Twelve to a life of servitude ultimately expressed in the establishment of the New Testament church, the tangible expression of God's Kingdom in the then-known world. This community of disciples was not a group formed to discuss the ideology of Jesus. It was "...the formation of a concrete social group in which God's reign is experienced. Apart from the existence of this community, salvation would remain an illusion in the minds of seekers..."[230] The end of the ministry of Jesus was not primarily focused on converts to a new way of spirituality but for the higher purpose of fulfilling God's mission.

By design, many of the teachings of Jesus began with words, "The Kingdom of God is like..." His initial ministry discourse began with these words (Mark 1:14-15) and this theme continues through to his final instructions. (Acts

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[228] Wilbert R. Shenk, Transformation p. 31.
[229] The same admonition was not given to the seventy-two. Rather, Jesus sent them out among the wolves and told them to pray for more labourers for the harvest. Luke 10.
[230] Wilbert R. Shenk, Transformation p. 209.

1:3) In a time and place of political unrest,[231] the Jewish people longed for the restoration of their sovereign nation, Israel. While they may have interpreted what Jesus was saying in light of their current political situation, the Master Teacher used it as an opportunity to establish the Kingdom of God as a spiritual matter.

The Kingdom of God has been defined as "the redemptive reign of God dynamically active to establish his rule among men, and that is this kingdom, which will appear as an apocalyptic act at the end of the age."[232] This kingdom was in the hearts of the people and was made possible by eradicating the barrier of sin between humanity and a Holy God. The mission of Jesus, and ultimately the work of the believer and New Testament church, was to declare God's plan of redemption as the foundation of the Kingdom of God and its dominion over sin and death.[233] This was the message as The Twelve and the seventy dispersed to preach around the region. (Matthew 10:1-20) Shortly thereafter, in an exchange with Peter, Jesus declared a definitive link between the establishment of His church and the keys of the kingdom. (Matthew 16:18-19)

The Kingdom of God "is the primary image for understanding the biblical vision of God's salvific activity"[234] whether in the nation of Israel and ultimately in the saving mission of The Messiah. The Sovereign God longs to reign as king over the lives of those he has created. This longing, in the context of mission, is entrusted to his people as they invite others to surrender their lives to his kingship. Believers are encouraged to think about kingdom and mission as holistically as possible, ultimately contributing to its influence on earth.

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[231] Hershel Shanks, ed., Ancient Israel Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Publishers, 1988, p. 211. The population of Israel resented being in captivity to the Roman government. Although they may have resigned themselves to Roman occupations there were those who formed roving bands of brigands while the general populace hoped for their success in destabilizing the government of the day.
[232] Roger E. Hedlund, Mission p. 170.
[233] Jesse C. Fletcher, Mission p. 20
[234] Wilbert R. Shenk, Transformation p. 96.

Arising out of the study of God's Kingdom are some eschatological considerations. [235] It would appear that some branches of evangelical Christianity believe the return of Jesus Christ can be hastened by the preaching of the gospel to the last unreached person on earth. (Matthew 24:14; Mark 13:10) Some suggest that this type of thinking has the potential to paralyze missional activity.[236] To put it in lay terms, the re-establishment of God's Kingdom (in a political and spiritual sense) on earth will be when and where He wills. "The future eschatological kingdom is theocentric and transcendental, and for just this reason we can look to it with great hope as the infinite source of newness and lasting freedom."[237] The mission of the church and Christ-followers is to declare the kingdom of God and leave it up to him to determine when it is time for this aspect of kingdom missional work to end, as signalled by the return of Jesus.

Toward the end of Jesus' ministry a transition takes place as "the Sent One becomes the Sending One."[238] The recorded words of the resurrected Lord in Matthew 28:18-20 have been referred to as a "missionary mandate" enlarging the missional scope to the whole world. However, it is more than a mere command. "It is genuine theology; it is basically the proclamation of the confession of faith of the early church: Jesus the Christ"[239] and that salvation is found in him alone. A people of every nation and tongue, who exalt Jesus Christ as Lord, ultimately results in glory to God the Father.

The mandate for engagement in Biblical missional activity is supported by methodological constructs. Although the Church's theology of mission may be narrowly based on the words of a departing Jesus, the Great Commission, Jesus' model of missional ministry was multi-faceted and included "going," "making

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[235] Eschatology and it relationship to missional activity will be addressed on page 90.
[236] Gerald. H. Anderson, The Theology of the Christian Mission Toronto, ON: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1961, p. 42.
[237] Carl E. Braaten, The Flaming Center Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1977, p. 41.
[238] Wilbert R. Shenk, Transfiguration p. 73.
[239] Studia Institui Missiologici Societatis Verbi Divini Netherlands: The Steyl Press, 1989, p. 61

disciples," "baptizing," and "teaching"[240] (Matthew 28:18-20) to the "whole world." (Mark 16:15)

"Paul's life, as introduced in Acts 9, was galvanized by ... [a] sense of vision."[241] Ananias was instructed to go to Saul "for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles..." (Acts 9:15) On a variety of occasions Paul referred to his call to the Gentiles in a similar vein to God's Old Testament call to Jeremiah and Isaiah. (Gal 1:15-16; Isaiah 49:1; Jeremiah 1:5) His Roman salutation includes a reference to the "prophets in the holy scriptures." (Romans 1:1-2) In his letter to the Galatians he suggests "...God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me, so that I might preach him among the Gentiles." (Galatians 1:15) In Ephesians 3:6, Paul reflects on the incorporation of the Gentiles into the body of Christ along with the Jews. He is "amazed at the extraordinary privilege which has been given to him of preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ to the Gentiles and he believes this is a part of God's redemptive and missional plan.[242] "A new multi-racial community was taking concrete shape before people's eyes, and, in it, the wisdom of God was being displayed.[243]

Paul recognized that his mission to non-Jewish people was not some sort of extra call outside of God's main mission, but a call that was originally oriented toward Israel and ultimately to all people. He declared that Christ was a servant to the Jews so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy. (Romans 15:8-12) This was not a new thought. On a number of occasions the Old Testament scriptures, with which most Jewish people were familiar, were Gentile-inclusive calling them to praise, singing and hope. (2 Samuel 22:50; Psalm 18:49; Deuteronomy 32:43; Psalm 117:1; Isaiah 11:10)

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[240] Melvin L. Hodges, A Theology of the Church and its Mission Springfield, MS: Gospel Publishing House, 1977, p. 23.

[241] Jesse C. Fletcher, Mission p. 37.

[242] P. T. O'Brien, Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1995, p. 17-18.

[243] Ibid. p. 18.

To this end, in his letter to the Galatians, Paul expresses his disappointment with the members of this church who were propagating adherence to the law. He unequivocally states that those who believe are children of Abraham by faith in that the gospel was announced to Abraham in advance for the purpose of universal blessing. (Galatians 3:7-8) "All nations will be blessed by you." (Genesis 12:1-3) Judaism was open to the conversion of Gentiles (with the required adherence to The Law) and early Christian converts (Jewish) similarly accepted this practice. A major breakthrough happened in the cosmopolitan city of Antioch where Greek-speaking Jewish Christian heirs of Stephen were exiled there and established a multi-cultural church.[244] It is due to the universality of human depravity that Jews and Gentiles alike seek a solution to their condition. Paul is prompted to declare Jesus Christ (and his crucifixion) as the way to a relationship with God as opposed to adherence to the law or other gods.

Paul understood the centrality of mission in the establishment of the New Testament church. For him, the foundation of mission was not exclusively the events of Jesus' life; it was the activity of the Creator winning back to himself all that he had made--the epiphany of God in the world.[245] Paul took exception to anyone who wished to add to the most fundamental aspects of God's mission.[246] He declared to the Romans the need for all men simply to confess the Lordship of Jesus Christ and his resurrection. It was also his contention that missionary activity was imperative. People must be sent to preach the message so they can call on the One of whom they had not heard. (Romans 10:9-15)

Missionary activity was born out of Paul's mission and passion. He viewed the Gentile mission as his main apostolic task, setting the missional example for the New Testament church, and its members, for the time period preceding the End. (2 Thessalonians 2:6-7) As the apostle Paul carries out his mission, he is

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[244]David Bosch, Transforming p. 42, 43.

[245] Wayne Stumme, ed., Mission p. 56.

[246] This refers to circumcision or any laws that some would have sought to enforce as a condition for salvation.

used by God to establish churches through the then-known world, primarily through the conversion of Gentiles. Paul declares that the salvation of the heathen should be a prompting to the Jews for openness to missional activity. (Romans 11) "With a sense of apocalyptic urgency, Paul ambitiously, yet carefully, sets out to circle the Mediterranean world, with one eye always back on Jerusalem, in the hope that the obedience of the nations will provoke some of the Jews to jealousy."[247]

The early church carried on Paul's mission. They established local congregations that have been referred to as "social impossibilities."[248] These included naturally conflicting groups such as Jews and Greeks, men and women, slaves and slave owners, and rich and poor. Members of New Testament churches were confronted with the reality that God's mission was not accomplished at the point of their conversion. Salvation was not only based on the mercy and grace of God, but also on God's justice.[249] It was a common occurrence for early church members to grapple with hunger, persecution, oppression and injustice, but they engaged their culture missionally in such as way as to make a difference in the lives of others.

Mission and The Holy Spirit

The missional role of the Holy Spirit is evident throughout the scriptures. In Old Testament times the Holy Spirit was active in the lives of people as an active power of God to empower men and women to perform special services or to receive special revelation.[250] The voice at his baptism declared Jesus to be anointed. This was a foreshadowing of the role of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christ-followers. While his disciples had some missional involvement during his three years of ministry (the sending out of The Twelve and the sending out of the seventy-two) it was not until the day of Pentecost when the New Testament

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[247] C. Timothy Carriker, Missiological Hermeneutic and Pauline Apocalyptic Eschatology as cited in Craig Van Engen, News p. 49.

[248] David Bosch, Transforming p. 48.

[249] William J. Larkin Jr. and Joel F. Williams. eds., Mission in the New Testament: An Evangelical Approach Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998, p. 58.

[250] Lesslie Newbigin, Open Secret Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdman's Publishing Company, 1978, p. 24.

church was instituted, that the disciples began to show missional initiative. In his first post-resurrection appearance to His disciples, Jesus began to hand over the missional mantel. "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you. Receive the Holy Spirit." (John 20:21,22) A clear association between the sending of the disciples and the power of the Holy Spirit for missional activity is established. "Only the very divine authority which is the source of the missionary idea can also be the power which drives people to missionary service though an inner light."[251] This endowment of power changed the disciples into apostles who impacted the entire world by planting New Testament church communities far and wide.[252]

Early Christians needed boldness to proclaim this message in a hostile world understanding the possibility of impending persecution.[253] In his final words of encouragement before being taken up into heaven, Jesus prophetically declares that as they waited the Holy Spirit would come upon them for the purpose of witnessing in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8) This key event, foretold in Joel's writings, was to be a time of Spirit empowerment for developing early churches for the purposes of evangelism. (Joel 2:28-32) As instructed, the disciples were all together in one place awaiting the arrival of the Holy Spirit. After the supernatural manifestation of the sound of wind, tongues as of fire, and the ability to speak another language, Peter arose to explain to the gathered crowd what was occurring. He declared that those who were speaking in other tongues were not drunk but were experiencing the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy. (Acts 2:17-21) This supernatural event signified the coming of the Holy Spirit and challenged Christ's disciples to a divinely-empowered fulfilment of a universal mission as opposed to an ability to declare the gospel in a language one had never learned.[254] (Acts 2:9-11)

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[251] Studia p. 64

[252] Wilbert R. Shenk, Transfiguration p. 111.

[253] Wayne Stumme, ed., Mission p. 44.

[254] Peter Althouse, Spirit of the Last Days London, UK: T and T Clark International, 2003, pp. 16-17. Althouse describes early Pentecostals, "...the urgency of salvation with an emphasis on

With the advent of the Holy Spirit, the disciples' intensified their missional activity. On the Day of Pentecost Peter moved to an outside balcony to declare his message. (Acts 2:14-40) Later, this Holy Spirit empowered ministry continued at the Gate Beautiful (Acts 3:2) and in Solomon's Colonnade. (Acts 3:11) What began in the Upper Room and continued in an outward spread became precedent setting for the missionary age of the church. The worldwide spread of the gospel began from Pentecost,[255] serving, in part, to fulfill the eschatological sign proclaimed by Jesus in Matthew 24:14. The book of Acts articulates the role of the Holy Spirit in the lives of both Jewish and Gentile believers. At times, this activity was accompanied by tongues and/or supernatural signs. Luke records the role of the Holy Spirit as He guides the church in the determination of its future direction, the discussion of theological praxis and the sending of missionaries to unreached regions.[256]

The all-consuming passion of the early church was its missional focus. While Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals alike have made contemporary usage of tongues a central theological issue, it appears that both have missed the point.[257] "We should emphasize that Spirit-baptism (in the Lukan sense) is a

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evangelistic and missionary zeal, the insistence that both the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the sign of tongues and the work of sanctification would make the believer a more effective witness of the gospel, and the insistence on healing has an outflow of the charismatic presence of the Spirit of God in the latter days, were all heightened by the Pentecostal eschatological expectation." p. 26. Althouse records that Charles F. Parham, a Wesleyan Holiness leader, believed that Spirit baptism, often referred to as a 'second blessing,' enabled the "Spirit-baptized Christian who had no formal language training to go into foreign fields to preach the gospel in those indigenous groups. The belief was that because the time was short before Christ's return, the Holy Spirit made supernatural allowances to prepare for the coming kingdom." Because this was never experienced in reality, there are no known Pentecostal groups, which would maintain this belief.

[255] Roger E. Hedlund, Mission p. 195.

[256] Paul A. Pomerville, The Third Force in Missions Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1985, p. 47. Pomerville labels this the "Jerusalem-Centrifugal" Theory.

[257] In the Canadian Pentecostal churches of the 1950s to 1970s there was a predominant disconnect between the experiential side of Holy Spirit baptism and mission. Interestingly enough, this was a departure from the convictions of the founders of Canadian Pentecostalism who believed that missional activity was a necessary outgrowth of the activity of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. Thomas William Miller, Canadian Pentecostals: A History of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada Mississauga, ON: Full Gospel Publishing House, 1994, p. 42-43. Irving A. Whitt and James D. Craig, A Philosophy of Missions for the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada A

missiological enabling (power for witness) distinct from conversion."[258] This is true in the individual sense as well as the corporate church setting. "The mission of the church, therefore, is to live the ordinary life of men in that extraordinary awareness of the other and self-sacrifice for the other which the Spirit gives."[259] In the human journey toward redemption, God encourages Christians to be missionally engaged and prompts seekers toward spiritual receptivity.

Through the equipping nature of the Holy Spirit, he bestows gifts upon the church for the maturity of believers and signs to increase awareness for the unbeliever with the ultimate missional goal of reconciling the world to himself.[260] This empowerment was not confined to either early church leadership or those currently on the front lines of church ministry. Not only did the Spirit make Peter bold and Steven brave, missional determination was also expressed through the whole of New Testament church congregations. "These common experiences of the Holy Spirit leveled up all Christians," once again attesting to the universality of mission.[261]

Closely aligned to the role of supernatural giftings or manifestations, is the εκκλεσια that resulted in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. "Where the Holy Ghost is, there is the Christian community... The fellowship which Christians can have with God and other members of the church is established and sustained by the working of the Holy Spirit."[262] The inherent human need for acceptance and belonging can be holistically met in relationship with God and members of his

position paper presented to the General Executive of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, February 2004, p. 49. Pentecostals have focused on tongues as an end unto itself (and as such becoming a personal possession), while non-Pentecostals may suggest they are not for today or attribute tongues to the work of demonic forces. Jon Ruthven, On the Cessation of the Charismata Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993, p. 13-17. Anthony A. Hoekema, Tongues and Spirit-Baptism Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1981.

[258] Robert P. Menzies, "Evidential Tongues: A Discussion on Theological Method" Enrich Spring 2004, p. 29.
[259] John V. Taylor, The Go Between God: The Holy Spirit and Christian Mission Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1972, p. 135.
[260] These gifts include positional gifts such as pastor, apostle, prophet, teachers, public expression gifts such as the gifts of prophecy, tongues and the interpretation of tongues and the serving gifts such as administration, mercy and giving.
[261] Robert T. Handy, Members One of Another Chicago, IL: The Judson Press, 1959, p. 33.
[262] Ibid. p. 34.

Church. Community, evident in the local church, serves as an invitational message of hope to a fallen world that God is seeking relationship with everyone.

> The church as the fellowship of the Holy Spirit is indomitably evangelical and evangelistic. Our churches can be adequate to the gospel and to this age only as they exhibit genuine fellowship in the Holy Spirit, only as the members participate in the Spirit and are thus enabled more truly to become members of one another.[263]

The church is not only enabled for its mission by the Spirit, but it is the medium through which the triune God has chosen to manifest his power in redemptive mission.[264] "A relevant missiology will be one that helps the church embrace its mission fully through a clear discernment of the times, together with a vision of what a dynamic missionary response requires."[265] While some would tend to launch out on human strength alone to accomplish God's mission, and others would absolve themselves of any responsibility to bring redemption to all people, the New Testament pattern is a cooperative effort between God and humanity. The local church cannot do it alone and God chooses not do it without his people.

Mission and Eschatology

In the early 1900s, Pentecostals believed the primary motivation to the carrying out of God's mission was the hastening of the return of Jesus Christ by declaring the gospel to the last unreached person on earth. [266] It is questionable as to whether this was the intent of the New Testament scriptural writers. It appears more likely that the references to 'last things' or εσχατον, was in reference to the "universality, totality and comprehensiveness of ... the outcome of *missio Dei.*"[267]

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[263] Ibid. p. 43.
[264] Paul A. Pomerville, Third p. 129
[265] Wilbert R. Shenk, Transformation p. 30.
[266] Peter Althouse, Last p. 10. Althouse refers to the early days of North American Pentecostalism. "For the early Pentecostal movement, speaking in tongues and other charismatic experiences were signs that God's Spirit was being poured out in the last days to prepare the way for Christ's imminent return, a theology known as the 'latter rain' outpouring of God's presence. Other aspects of Pentecostalism, such as its view of missions, ecclesiology, pastoral concerns, and so on, all stemmed from its eschatological vision."
[267] Ibid. p. 222.

A completed mission is not the condition for Christ's return.[268] God is determined to embrace the whole world and there is coming a point when the mission of God will come to an end.

> ...contemporary Pentecostal theologians have shifted from the emphasis from the soon return of Christ to the delayed *parousia*, and from the fundamental cataclysmic destruction of the world to an eschatology that seeks the transformation of creation into the kingdom of God.[269]

Some church doctrine asserts that the one thousand year reign has already taken place, in a figurative sense, as early churches were being established, is in direct contrast to pre-millenialists, primarily evangelicals, who believe that Jesus will bodily return to rule and reign on earth.[270] In Creation, which included time, there were points where God stepped into human history through theophanies, the Incarnation and Pentecost.[271] Ultimately, time will end in the restored kingdom marked by peace, justice and prosperity and the presence of all those in relationship with God at a messianic banquet. The focus of Christ-followers is not the attempt to hasten end time events. Rather, it is to join in God's mission to invite as many as possible to be part of His Kingdom.

Conclusion

God's covenantal agreement with Abraham, as recorded in Genesis 12:3, is a statement of mission: the divine program of God to glorify himself by bringing salvation to all fallen humanity. His plan was not an exclusionary offer to the Jewish people. Rather, it was his intent to use Abraham and the emerging nation of Israel to reach the entire spectrum of humanity. This is where *missio Dei* begins in intensity and continues as the overriding theme of the entire scriptural record. This premise dominates all theology, strategy, and activity within human history and seeks to inform God's church in contemporary society.

To engage in *missio Dei* a Christian must view it from a number of different vantage points. First, mission is the propagation of one's faith; in

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[268] Wayne Stumme, ed., Mission p. 58.
[269] Peter Althouse, Last p. 162.
[270] The Shoah Education Project. http://shoaheducation.com/post.htm, p. 1, April 3, 2006.
[271] Peter Althouse, Last p. 162.

terms of human need, a reconciling of God to humanity through the incarnation of His Son, Jesus Christ. The ensuing mission of Christ followers is to point the way to Jesus Christ. Second, mission is a Kingdom of God issue. Christians have an obligation to spread the true knowledge of God and his church to the entirety of humanity. Third, mission includes reaching out beyond oneself as individuals and local church bodies. This is inherent in the character of the New Testament church, and a contemporary church which does not reach beyond itself does not fulfil the New Testament mandate. Fourth, mission is the act of proclaiming. Throughout the scriptural record, leaders have declared the word of God with the intention of turning the eyes of humanity from themselves to God.

The New Testament church, universally and locally, became God's seat of equipping and expression to humanity. His mission is focused on those who have yet to hear and experience the transformative power of the gospel in our Jerusalems, Judeas, Samarias, and far-off regions of our world.

CHAPTER III - The Role of the Church

Spiritual Formation

Introduction

Attending weekly worship services, obeying the Ten Commandments and refraining from certain behaviours is not the sum total of living the Christian life. Making a personal decision to become a Christian is not even enough. "There is absolutely nothing in what Jesus himself or his early followers taught that suggests you can decide just to enjoy forgiveness at Jesus' expense and have nothing more to do with him."[272]

> The Christian Life is about more than being forgiven, more than making it to heaven. The heart of Christianity is about transformation – about a God who isn't just concerned with our 'spiritual lives,' but who wants to impact every aspect of living. It's realizing that God meets us not in a monastery but on Main Street, and that all of ordinary, daily life has the potential to be lived as if Jesus himself were the one living it.[273]

Inherent in being a Christ-follower brings expectations for every facet of one's life. The Christian life could be accurately described as a journey marked by transformative activity or formation.

> Too often following Jesus has been limited to admiring the mystery of the God-man and resting in the finished work of the cross. While the basis of a relationship with God in Christ is both his person and his finished work, the ongoing nature of salvation, sometimes called sanctification, should not be ignored.[274]

More succinctly, "Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ."[275] One who is serious about their faith in God engages in whole life Christianity. "The whole point of the gospel is to be transformed into the image of Christ as Paul suggests when he says, 'My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you ...'"[276] (Galatians 4:19-20)

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[272] Dallas Willard, <u>Why Bother with Discipleship?</u>
http://www.dwillard.org/articles/artview.asp?artID=71, p. 1. February 22, 2005.
[273] John Ortberg, <u>The Life You've Always Wanted</u> Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 2002, p. flyleaf.
[274] Bill Hull, <u>Choose the Life: Exploring a Faith that Embraces Discipleship</u> Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2004, p. 19.
[275] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, <u>The Cost of Discipleship</u> New York, NY: Macmillan, 1949, p. 67.
[276] Bill Hull, <u>Choose</u> p. 24.

If these are the expectations for the believer, local church leadership must seriously consider the role of the corporate body in spiritual formation. A problem arises if a Christian desires to be transformed and his or her church fails to provide the necessary setting(s). Currently, the problem of the church is that "Evangelicals have done a superb job of evangelizing people, bringing them to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, but they are failing to provide believers with approaches to living that keep them going and growing in spiritual relationship with him."[277] Had spiritual growth been confined to one's private personal journey, the New Testament would have made little comment about the role of the local church in spiritual formation. While it is clearly evident that each person bears responsibility for their spiritual growth, the local church provides corporate activities in which the believer can find aspects of spiritual transformation not available apart from participation in congregational life.[278] The church provides opportunity for the Christian to be consistently taught and motivated toward greater Christlikeness.

The shortcomings of the local church are evidenced by local churches filled with spiritually immature people who have a tendency to be controlling, or are out of relationship with family members or have not gained control over an unforgiving or critical spirit.

> They may present themselves as spiritually mature but something is terribly imbalanced about their spirituality. The sad reality is that too many people in our churches are fixated at a stage of spiritual immaturity that current models of discipleship have not addressed.[279]

Spiritual maturity may be subjective and may be marked by adherence to a set of self-imposed rules. This is contrary to Paul's thinking, whose letter to the Colossians "affirms that the true foundation of discipleship is not strict

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[277] Alister E. McGrath, Spirituality in an Age of Change Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1994, p. 9.

[278] Congregational activity and community will be treated more extensively in the next section. p. 118ff.

[279] Peter Scazzero, The Emotionally Healthy Church Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 2003, p. 18.

observance and pious endeavor, but rather identification with the accomplishment of Christ."[280] The local church that takes these words to heart will seriously consider the necessary components of church life providing a catalyst for the spiritual formation of every congregant.

In this chapter a working definition of spiritual formation will be established and examined in relation to biblical expectations. Models of spiritual development, and its relationship to psychological development, will be examined with emphasis on James Fowler's model of faith development.[281] Three themes, arising from the biblical texts and related literature, will lead to further investigation; spiritual formation, discipleship and spiritual maturity. The benchmarks of spiritual formation will be outlined and followed by an extensive examination of the roles and responsibility of church leaders in establishing a balanced process that informs the spiritual growth of its members.

Definition

Christlikeness, ideally the goal of every believer, can be attained through a process of spiritual formation as described in the biblical narrative. Jesus told his followers to "make disciples of all nations." (Matthew 28:19) A process is implied in this commissional statement, as opposed to the theory of a one-time conversion experience. As the New Testament church is given instruction through the writings of Paul, it is understood that one should "be transformed by the renewing of your mind." (Romans 12:2) In his letter to the Romans, he uses the phrase " to be conformed to the likeness of his Son"[282] (Romans 8:29) to describe this transformative journey; he implored the Ephesians to "become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:13)

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[280] Michael Knowles, "Christ in You, the Hope of Glory" in Richard. N. Longenecker eds., Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996, p. 189.
[281] The reason that such weight is given to James Fowler is that, as was pointed out by Dr. Donald Freeman, in DM72E3 (Winter Semester 2003), other cognitive and spiritual development scholars approach this subject from a secularist viewpoint, which does not substantively serve the purposes, goals or values of the Christian church.
[282] For purposes of this discussion the term 'spiritual formation' will be utilized.

The term 'spiritual formation,' as it is used today, has its roots in the Roman Catholic Church.[283] In their ministerial training, priests enrolled in courses in spirituality. While studying classical writings and liturgical methodologies, seminarians were also being monitored in the various facets of their personal spiritual life.[284] In Christian faith and practice, recognizing one's spirituality gives impetus to spiritual formation. As in other realms of life, one must engage in a process that leads to spiritual growth and maturity.

> "Being spiritual" has to do with one's sense of the sense of the sacred, the identification and affirmation of what one considers the supreme values in human existence. Spirituality is the personal illustration of one's total commitment and loyalty to such supreme values. When we talk about spiritual formation we are speaking of the lived-out process of keeping spirituality transcendent in one's total commitment and loyalty to such supreme values... the dynamic process of receiving by faith and appropriating by commitment, discipline, and action, the living Christ into our lives to the end that our lives will conform to, and manifest the living Christ into the world.[285]

Intentional spiritual formation demands a consistent practice of patterning a person's being and behaviour according to the image of Christ through engaging means of spiritual growth.[286]

In the last decade there has been a proliferation of writing concerning spiritual formation including definitions such as, "the Spirit-driven process of forming the inner world of the human self in such a way that it becomes like the inner being of Christ himself."[287] A concurring definition is, "Christian spiritual development is a lifelong process of being transformed in God by God. It is the transformation of the whole human personality toward the highest possible degree of living in the spirit of Jesus ..."[288] The world formation "suggests that the inner being of the person is radically altered so that he or she is no longer

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[283]Frank Bateman Stranger, <u>Spiritual Formation in the Local Church</u> Grand Rapids, MI: Francis Asbury Press, 1989, p. 13. Interestingly enough, discipleship has traditionally been prolifically discussed, with a lack of emphasis on life transformation.

[284] Ibid.

[285] Ibid. p. 14.

[286] Mel Lawrenz, <u>The Dynamics of Spiritual Formation</u> Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2000, p. 15.

[287] Dallas Willard, <u>Renovation of the Heart</u> Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002, p. 22.

[288] Barbara A. Sheehan, <u>Partners in Covenant</u> Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1999, p. 76.

the same. The person who has taken in the information has been reshaped, remoulded, and significantly altered ..."[289]

The difference between the terms 'spiritual formation' and 'discipleship' are subtle.[290] The term 'disciple' gained prominence during the earthly ministry of Jesus. This referred to not only The Twelve, but also others who accepted the teachings of Jesus. In his final instructions, Jesus admonished his disciples to go and replicate themselves. (Matthew 28:19) "The etymological definition of disciple is 'learner,'"[291] and a corresponding definition for discipling is "The intentional training of disciples, with accountability, on the basis of loving relationships."[292]

While spiritual formation may focus on one's spiritual growth, Christian discipleship is the facilitation of intentionally designed training that produces fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. This type of person desires a life of transformation and continued dependence upon, and yieldedness to, the Holy Spirit.[293] The church may mistakenly think that discipling is merely an event or a class. It is more accurately described as a process in which the church provides the necessary resources to bring Christians into mature discipleship.[294] Practically speaking, a disciple is one who, "submits to a teacher who teaches

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[289] Kenneth O. Gangel and James C. Wilhoit, eds., The Christian Educator's Handbook on Spiritual Formation Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1994, p. 15.
[290] There has been some discussion concerning the meaning of the terms 'discipleship' and 'spiritual formation' and their possible differences. Some will be pointed out in subsequent paragraphs. As an overview, the weakness associated with the term 'discipleship' has occurred because it was popularized as early as the 1960s. The definition was subjective and may have been more institutionalized in expression. 'Spiritual formation,' a relatively newer term, indicates more than an experiential decision. It is an ongoing, life-long endeavor. Although at times these terms are used interchangeably in this thesis, it should be noted that Portico has adopted the use of the term 'spiritual formation.' A Discipleship Forum was established in October of 2000. The purpose of this focus group was to examine the life of the then MGT Family Church and determine if all the needed elements were in place for a person to mature spiritually. It was at that time the term 'spiritual formation' was adopted as a successor to 'discipleship.'
[291] F. Wilbur Gingrich, Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament Chicago, IL: Chicago Press, 1965, p. 131, cited in Bill Hull, Choose p. 35.
[292] Bill Hull, The Disciple-Making Church Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1990, p. 32.
[293] Bill Donahue, Leading Life-Changing Small Groups Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1996, p. 24.
[294] Ibid. p. 33.

him or her how to follow Jesus, learns Jesus' words, learns Jesus' way of ministry and imitates Jesus' life and character, and finds and teaches other disciples for Jesus."[295] When Jesus called his disciples, they were ultimately to find others who would make the same commitment as they did and perpetuate the forming of disciples through a process of spiritual formation. [296]

Discipleship infers an involvement in a thoughtful lifestyle, marked by appropriate disciplines while under the careful tutelage of another person of likeminded spirituality. The goal of transformation is to

> become mature, complete, and perfect like Jesus Christ. Entering into a life of discipleship means engaging in a process that initiates a person into a lifelong commitment to grow in the knowledge and understanding of the faith and commit to a new way of life.[297]

The only measurement or norm by which disciples compare their spiritual development is the standard of Jesus Christ[298] who among other things, achieved fruit in evangelism, and provided spiritual parenting to conserve his fruit.[299]

While agreeing with the extensive definitions above, Portico has adopted a simplified, practice-oriented, definition for spiritual formation, "A fully devoted follower of Jesus is one who is in the process of becoming more like him."[300] This marks a church leadership's reawakening to the necessity of spiritual formation.

> We are trying to have a more holistic understanding of what [spiritual transformation] means. Many churches think of your spiritual life as being separate from your physical, social, or work life. They believe if you just give people the right information about God they will live good lives. We've been asking, "How are people shaped by what they already do?" and then "How can they live out the dreams of God in their world?"[301]

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[295] Bill Hull, <u>Choose</u> p. 36.
[296] Ibid. p. 33.
[297] Robert E. Webber, <u>Ancient-Future Evangelism</u> Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2003. p. 73.
[298] Ibid. p. 16.
[299] Gary W. Kuhne, <u>The Dynamics of Discipleship Training</u> Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1978. p. 13.
[300] Marc Gauvreau, <u>Discipleship Forum</u> Notes from this discussion group, which convened weekly for over one year from October 2000.
[301] "A Leadership Interview" <u>Leadership</u> Volume XXVI, Number 1, Winter 2005, p. 13.

With this in mind, church leadership must understand the stages of one's spiritual development and the contribution the church and congregational members can make to this transformation. Although there may be some minor variations regarding doctrinal issues in Canadian evangelical circles, there is general acceptance regarding the major tenets of faith. Mental assent in spiritual matters falls far short of a spiritually formed life. In terms of spiritual formation, it is agreed that there is a progressive linear relationship between three main elements: a set of beliefs, a set of values and a way of life.[302] Because one's life is impacted by internal values, a believer must study the basic principles of Christianity and understand why he or she loves others, and in the act of living a Spirit-filled life, denies himself or herself. These values inform the way in which Christians live their lives and integrate into their social context.[303]

Moral Development and Spiritual Formation

Those who study psychology and its intersection with theology have concluded that human and moral development progresses in definable stages.[304] Furthermore, there is strong indication that there are "distinguishable characteristics of mature religious faith."[305] James Fowler and Gordon Allport are two scholars who have dedicated a great deal of study to define corresponding models.[306] This is not as straightforward as one might suspect. Allport agreed

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[302] Alister E. McGrath, Christian Spirituality: An Introduction Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1999, p. 3.

[303] At Portico, church leadership consistently articulates the difference between 'being' and 'doing.' It has been observed that, for many years, the emphasis has been on 'doing' without any development of the 'being.' In Alister McGrath's comments, he moves from a 'set of beliefs' and 'a set of values' to 'a way of life.' This represents the holistic approach of one's doing being informed by one's being.

[304] Although Fowler's works are highlighted in this chapter, developmental theorists such as Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg have presented extensive work on moral and cognitive development. However, for purposes of this paper, Fowler's findings, in relation to spiritual formation, are more helpful.

[305] Robert C. Fuller, Spiritual But Not Religious New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 165.

[306] James Fowler and Gordon Allport, cited in Robert C. Fuller, Spiritual p. 165.

with Freud that religious activity might foster psychological immaturity.[307] The challenge is to determine definable benchmarks of spiritual growth that are not counterproductive but complementary to other aspects of human life.

In *Stages of Faith,* James Fowler refers to faith as being the "human universal."[308] It is a person's or group's way of moving toward full participation in the diverse aspects of human life and "finding coherence in, and giving meaning to, the multiple forces and relationships that make up our lives.[309] Human life is a search for meaning. In this quest we establish values, determine what is of worth and look for someone to whom we can give, and from whom we can receive, love.

The home in which a child is raised has a great impact on one's moral development. Theorists point out that from an early age a person develops according to what is taught explicitly and implicitly by their family of origin.[310] This is altered by the formal educational process and interaction with members of one's culture. Tradition intersects with faith by raising one's consciousness for the need of a value system. It is with the above considerations in view that theories of moral and faith development are proposed.

It is important to understand that there is a significant difference between faith and religion. Although each person is impacted in a number of ways as they are in relationship to one another, faith is deeper and more personal than religious expression and results in the way one lives their life.[311] Many religious

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[307] Ibid. This is the antithesis of what Ortberg refers to in the opening quote of this chapter. (Footnote 268) If one's faith is not behaviourally integrated into one's personal life, what one believes and does do not correspond.

[308] James Fowler, <u>Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning</u> San Francisco, CA: Harper Books, 1995. p. xiii. It should be noted that in this case the term faith was used prior to the emergence of the current term 'spiritual formation.'

[309] Ibid. p. 4.

[310] Church educators have often assumed the major role in the instruction of spiritual formation for children while neglecting the responsibilities of parents. One such book is George Barna's <u>Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions</u> Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2003. Little emphasis is given to the need for parents to be taught how to take a predominant role in the spiritual formation of their children.

[311] James Fowler, <u>Stages</u> p. 9. Faith is defined as the internal affective aspect of life while religion refers to the external, relational expression of said faith.

groups agree that faith is not meant to be static or complete at a certain point in one's life. This is contrary to the thinking that one's spiritual journey through milestones or religious rites of passage is simply the completion of religious obligations rather than points on a faith pilgrimage. Involvement in activities such as catechism, first communion, traveling to Mecca, meditating in a Buddhist temple, accepting Christ as Saviour, being baptized in water or being baptized in the Holy Spirit and speaking in other tongues may be viewed as significant experiential points in one's faith journey. In Christian religious circles a danger arise when the local church views itself as a simply a dispenser of religious services impacting the mindset of those who attend.

> All too often people compartmentalize their religious faith. A compartmentalized faith is one in which religious beliefs and practices are clearly set off from the rest of our ideas about what makes something good, true, or meaningful. Religion can thus be thought of as involving only beliefs about the afterlife, church attendance, participating in weekly rituals and so forth.[312]

This also contributes to a tendency toward separation of faith from all other aspects of one's life. What one actually believes may or may not impact how one conducts one's personal affairs. A person may attend mass or church services on a regular basis as an expression of faith but fail to integrate any principles based upon the Bible or other holy books into his or her personal life or business affairs. Although there has been religious or faith-based activity, any evidence of life transformation is minimal.

Active involvement in a process of spiritual formation may be the antidote in the development of a strong relationship between one's beliefs and behaviour. There is need for a consistency between religious faith and psychological health as found in a spiritual life that is, "well differentiated, dynamic, and productive of a consistent morality..."[313] The expression of Christian faith is relevant in all compartments or functions of life.[314]

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[312] Ibid. p. 167.
[313] Robert C. Fuller, Spiritual p. 166.
[314] Ibid. p. 173.

Faith is a human universal. James Fowler's development research examines the manner in which people form their deepest and most personal sense of relatedness to God and the meaning of life foundational to their way of living.[315] In this study he outlines six stages of faith development.[316]

The first stage in a person's moral development should be called Intuitive-Projective faith. Around the age of two physical development and abilities take a child to a new developmental stage. "It is all about my development, my discoveries, my world and I am the centre of it."[317] This is the beginning point for active moral development. Recognizing that interaction with parents often forms a self-centered mindset, an informed spiritually transformative process must move one toward selflessness, the highest value in moral development.

Fowler calls the second stage Mythic-Literal Faith. An elementary school aged child may be able to recite what is happening, or could happen, but is unable to explain causality. Although still the center of the universe, children become increasingly aware of the differing perspective of others in conjunction with a sense of fairness and justice. For example, a child in this stage identifies himself or herself in terms of relationship; the child of, the sibling of, and the grandchild of, and so on. Fowler makes the observation that one may encounter adults who have never moved beyond this particular stage of faith development.[318] Recitations of personal, bible or fictional stories are simply that, verbatim recollections. Although there is some progress from stage one, there remains a great need for spiritual formation including the development of a Christ-like character.

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[315] James Fowler, Faithful Change: The Personal and Public Challenges of Postmodern Life Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996, p. 17.

[316] James Fowler, Becoming Adult Becoming Christian: Adult Development and Christian Faith San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2000, p. 41. Fowler's model is made up of six stages. However he refers to Primal Faith as the time period between pre-birth to years one and two, when a relationship between child and parent is established. An infant's view of God is wrapped up in the trusting relationship with his or her mother and father; a relationship marked by dependence, power, and wisdom, all of which emerge in the later stages of faith development. Faith in this case is, as Fowler suggests, is primal and instinctive.

[317] Ibid. p. 43.

[318] Ibid.

Stage Three is referred to as Synthetic-Conventional Faith. The meaning of life, which once was so clear, now becomes questionable, prompting an examination of one's value system. [319] Some of the unanswerable questions of life and faith threaten a previously held concept of justice. It naturally follows that one's concept of God is adjusted to fit what is being perceived in the world including such challenges as injustice, poverty, and dishonesty.

Individuative-Reflective Faith (Stage Four) points to the period when an adolescent becomes more discerning in matters of faith development. Instead of simply being a reflection of the values of those with whom one is in relationship, one begins to "think for themselves."[320]

Stage Five is Conjunctive Faith and points to a period in midlife when a person may go through a process when elements of one's identity, society, and experiences are integrated. As a person turns thirty-five or forty, while observing their own children's spirituality and feeling responsible to give spiritual direction, he or she strives to develop a personal identity and values. The emphasis turns from assuming the ideology of others, to a commitment to find a personal belief system while remaining under the influence of others. They feel quite satisfied to have a personal worldview that makes sense. However, in spite of concerted efforts, some patterns of behavior remain unchanged.[321] Although Fowler's observation, written in the early 1980s, may indicate this type of development later in life than it is in today's culture, this does provide a great opportunity for input from spiritual leadership. [322] At this critical juncture in the life of its congregational members, the church must be effective in its role of spiritual formation.

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[319] James Fowler, Stages p. 151-172.

[320] Ibid. p. 174-182. This may explain why teenagers abandon their childhood faith and why it is important for effective churches to create opportunities to allow them to discover Christ-like character and spirituality.

[321] James Fowler, Becoming p. 52

[322] W. C. Crain, Theories of Development New York, NY: Prentice Hall, 1985, p. 118-136. Two studies were cited. (Kohlberg and Kramer, 1969; Holstein, 1973) Both suggested there was a significant trend in advancement in a person's moral understanding at an earlier age. One's observation of contemporary society, confirms this.

The final stage (Stage Six) is referred to as Universalizing Faith. Fowler uses the words 'transformed' and 'transforming' to describe a person as they enter this phase. To reach this stage of faith development Fowler says that one must facilitate a 'decentration from self.' In terms of personal (Christian) faith the believer becomes less self-centered, or concerned about what he or she believes, and focuses on the development of his or her character and personhood for higher purposes. The mark of universalized faith is a "pervasive response in love and trust to the radical love of God."[323] This is an articulated goal of the Christian life; to become increasingly selfless[324] while striving to live for a higher purpose as found in biblical principles.

Although the strength in this stage is that one actually ponders their faith in the light of other belief systems, the weakness of Fowler's assumptions is his tendency to validate other faith systems to the same level as Christianity, a characteristic of contemporary pluralistic society. Whether one is a Jew, Muslim or Christian, one realizes that his or her doctrines, beliefs, and practices are relative. "In summary, for a person who is at this point in faith, truth lies in a person's religious experience."[325] Charles Sell criticizes Fowler's attempt to elevate this stage as the goal of one's faith by saying, not only has he departed from an evangelical view of faith, but it is unnecessary to have any faith at all.[326]

Another weakness inherent in Fowler's work is found in his assumptions. While examining his work, one imagines the spiritual maturation process as solely experienced by a white middle class American who is raised in an active Christian home.[327] Other cultures found in North America or on other continents are virtually ignored. While much of Fowler's work and principles may have

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[323] Ibid. p. 56.

[324] Christians may say more like Christ.

[325] Charles M. Sell, <u>Transitions Through Adult Life</u> Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1991, p. 149.

[326] Ibid.

[327] Fowler ties the stages of spiritual formation to specific age categories, which is a generalization that may or may not be true depending on the individual and his or her environment.

universalistic application, there should be some recognition of the diversity of culture, even existent at the time of his writing.

On the other hand, his observations do encompass a number of significant biblical and experiential touch points to which all maturing Christians can relate. The last two stages are significant and serve as a model for Christ-like character. They describe a progression toward being comfortable with one's station and calling in life while understanding the importance of the development and impact of one's relationships. This leads to optimal Christian faith and practice including a spirituality that is expressed in dependency on God and an ever-increasing selflessness.

Another characteristic of spiritual growth is the resulting change.[328] Over the period of a lifetime the influence of truth, as declared in the church community and through a personal understanding of the scriptures, brings about character change. While Fowler epitomizes spiritual maturity as 'decentration from self,' for purposes of a local church, this may be somewhat simplistic. Spiritual formation must include holistic change on the part of the believer.

The church needs to recognize those who are not Christ-followers who are in the stage of universalizing faith as characterized by the, "conscious decision to move beyond conventional faith. They have decided to question authority and begin taking responsibility for 'owning' their own faith."[329] Knowing this, church leadership can cling to the hope that if they understand the seeker's mindset, church functions can be appropriately ordered and structured.

Brian McLaren, who has written extensively on the spiritual journey of the post-modern, responds to Fowler by suggesting four stages in the facilitation of faith formation; simplicity, complexity, perplexity and humility.[330] The simplicity stage could be labelled as the 'black and white belief system.' Everything is

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[328] Although this observation is directed at the individual, it is also true for organizations. Corporate growth does necessitate change. This will receive treatment in a subsequent chapter as it relates to the church.

[329] Robert C. Fuller, Spiritual p. 169.

[330] Brian D. McLaren, Finding Faith Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1999, p. 69-70.

based on right and wrong. Complexity is faith in formation marked by the accomplishing and reaching of various types of goals. The perplexity stage evaluates spiritual growth based on authenticity and acceptance. The final stage, characterized by humility, is when one focuses on fulfilling one's potential and making the most of one's life. "God is knowable, yet mysterious; present yet transcendent; just, yet merciful."[331] A person at this point of spiritual maturity is able to be comfortable with dynamic tensions as they are discovered and understood while growing in relationship with God.

It must be emphasized that the goal of this process is more than a simple change in one's actions. In other words, "Christlikeness is not ... the focus of the process; and when it is made the main emphasis, the process will certainly be defeated." This is simply a tendency to define subjectively acceptable behaviour and such prescribed conduct leads to a lack of creativity or originality.[332] This was the protest of Karl Marx, as embodied in his remark that, "religion is the opiate of the people ...Religions often stifle human initiative. They teach us to have faith in, and rely on, supernatural powers. As a consequence, religion has an inherent danger of functioning more like a sedative than a stimulant."[333] Spiritual formation is the process in the local church that has the potential to move beyond blind and mindless obedience to a focus on one's relationship with Christ resulting in spiritual maturity, commonly referred to as 'Christlikeness.' (John 1:12, Ephesians 5:26-27)

The process of positive spiritual formation is based on some core values. It is a process that will be viewed as moving against the grain of self-gratification. It is 'being conformed,' which may also seem to be the antithesis of the human desire to be in control of one's life and destiny and replaced by a

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[331] Ibid.
[332] Dallas Willard, Renovation p. 23.
[333] Robert C. Fuller, Spiritual p. 166.

process of being conformed to the image of Christ.[334] A very simple

methodology for spiritual formation is:

> ...reverence toward God, listening to God...Christian spirituality is grounded in Jesus Christ. Christian spirituality is formed by Christ's life, teaching, death, resurrection, and presence in the heart of the believer and in the body of Christ, the church. Christian spirituality is concerned that people are formed in Christ. [335]

Spiritual formation implies spiritual growth.[336] (Galatians 4:19) As in

nature, an organism is either progressing or regressing. Paul encouraged the

Ephesians to "become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of

Christ." (Ephesians 4:13) "It is especially true in the realm of the spirit that to

experience spiritual power, we must discover our authentic self"[337] while being

firmly rooted in relationship with God. Jesus said (Luke 10:27) that we are to

love God with our heart (emotions), spirit (soul), strength (body), and mind

(intellect), a holistic model of spirituality. In this journey of spiritual

development, the Christian is able to discover who they are in the economy of

God.

> This has not always been the accepted approach.
>
> The tension between mind and emotions has been evident across the Christian centuries. The purely rationalistic approach to religious experience has stood in stark contrast to the primarily emotional approach. So both philosophers and theologians have often been classified either by their intellectual or their emotional approach to the validity of personal experience.[338]

While a spiritual life without an understanding or integration of biblical truths is

destined to being marginal, Pentecostals have tended to value emotional

experience as the optimum in spirituality while neglecting character or cognitive

development. On the other hand, without emotion, spirituality is simply an

intellectual exercise, devoid of passion and fruitfulness.

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[334] M. Robert Mulholland, Jr., Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993, p. 16. Mulholland uses the term "being conformed" as opposed to "conforming" to differentiate the issue of control. He believes that a Christian disciple willingly bows to the will of God.

[335] John Ackerman. Listening to God Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2001. p. 19.

[336] Ibid.

[337] Frank Bateman Stranger, Formation p. 40.

[338] Ibid. p. 42.

Although Paul is encouraging a young pastor in his work, his admonition regarding the principle associated with role of the scriptures in one's life are applicable to every believer. (1 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Timothy 2:15) Spiritual transformation is a journey of discovering balance. Solomon's Porch Community Church states their premise for congregational spiritual formation:

> We are working with a view of spiritual formation in which we forget about working on a part of a person's life, and instead work with people as if there is no distinction between the spiritual, emotional, physical, social, professional, and private aspects of life ... to live in the way of Jesus in every relationship, every situation, every moment.[339]

As one is engaged in maturing spiritually, this process becomes instrumental in the development of personal core values. "Spiritual formation is imperative for the Christian to achieve a balance between the material and the spiritual. The material cannot be ignored or bypassed, but it must never become primary or take precedence over the spiritual."[340]

Christians daily live and work in the world and face real challenges. While Christians believe that God will not allow one to experience a trial or temptation beyond that which they are able to bear, (1 Corinthian 10:13) spiritual growth increases the ability to withstand. Simultaneously, through the development and exercise of the spiritual disciplines and expression of spiritual gifts, the maturing Christ-follower can begin to accomplish things of eternal significance. (Philippians 4:13) Repeated practice of these activities leads to a life of servitude. True spiritual formation results in internal life change and empowers one to impact his or her environment.

> Widespread transformation of character through wisely disciplined discipleship to Christ can transform our world. It can disarm the structured evils that have always dominated humankind and now threaten to destroy the world.[341]

The Church and Spiritual Formation

Throughout history the local church has played a significant role in spiritual formation. The early church introduced a process of spiritual formation

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[339] Doug Pagitt, Reimaging Spiritual Formation Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 2003. p. 22.

[340] Frank Bateman Stranger, Formation p. 50.

[341] Dallas Willard, The Spirit of the Disciplines San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row Publishers, 1988, p. xi.

while preparing candidates for water baptism. Scriptures, creeds and catechisms were studied and "knowledgeable faith [was] united to the practice of Christian conduct."[342] It was comprehensive, systematic and challenging and provided a principled example for today.

In some settings, the local church has lost its spiritual formation focus. The contrast between current activity of evangelical Protestants and the biblical patterns for a maturing faith, appear to be the major challenge of the church.

> [They] are largely secularized by their politics, their obsessions with growth, and their interests in administration and parachurch activities. The loss of the practice of prayer, the ignorance of the rich traditions of spirituality, and the need to develop a cultural framework for the practice of devotion are challenges worthy of the most serious consideration.[343]

To reverse the trend, church leadership may consider the Christian life as formation in four arenas; the community, which is developed by a body of believers,[344] the activities of the church (The Day with Others), the spiritual disciplines (The Day Alone), and ministry.[345] The promotion and facilitation of these varied activities by the local church will provide the Christian a comprehensive picture for spiritual formation.

The responsibility of church leadership is to develop a "recognized, reasonable, theologically and psychologically sound approach to spiritual growth."[346] In terms of spiritual formation, "the church is the reality of God made present, (and therefore) the church itself is a womb for disciple-making. The church can act as a community of faith illustrating the "living reality with which the classical spiritual disciplines nurture us and provide the support structure for our personal disciplines."[347]

In practical terms, the work of the church is forming the spiritual life of the new disciple and training them in the practice of living in the pattern of the

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[342] Kenneth O. Gangel and James C. Wilhoit, eds., Handbook p. 24.
[343] James M. Houston, Evangelical Dictionary of Theology Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984, p. 1050.
[344] This topic will receive more extensive treatment in the next section. (p. 116)
[345] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Life Together New York, NY: Harper and Row Publishers, 1954, p. 5.
[346] Dallas Willard, Spirit p. 16.
[347] M. Robert Mulholland, Invitation p. 146.

death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.[348] This should be reflected in activities associated with a local congregation including small group meetings, leadership meetings, committees, in worship, and in the congregation as a whole.[349] Ultimately, every meeting of the church, even congregational business meetings, should be a time of spiritual formation. How the members of the church behave with each other and toward new disciples makes a lasting impact.[350] "In worship we are the gathered people of God. We come together as the community of faith, as the assembled body of believers, as the corporate members of Christ's body"[351] for the purpose of edifying one another. "What the church urgently needs to do is establish the biblical mission of seeing Christ formed in individuals as the foundation mission of biblical community."[352]

Church leadership must recognize the major shift in the way people develop their spiritual lives.

> There has been a sea of change in the past 50 years in the nature and character of Christian spirituality. In the 1950s spirituality was centred in churches. That is where one found God. Churches were organized with top-down authority. Scholars had more authority than laypeople, and the ordinary person in the pew found comfort in an institution. The tectonic shift has moved us from spirituality found in a place of dwelling to spirituality experienced in a group of seekers.[353]

This transition characterized as a movement from 'habitation spirituality' to a 'seeking spirituality.' In this positive development, the believer no longer views the church as a fortress inhabited by like-minded people, but a meeting place for a diverse group of people who are "pilgrimaging together through a barren land."[354]

Leadership must become intentional in relation to the life and activities of the local congregation. To facilitate an atmosphere which motivates the

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[348] Robert E. Webber, Ancient-Future p. 89.

[349] John Ackerman, Listening p. 6.

[350] Robert E. Webber, Ancient p. 74.

[351]Norma Cook Everist and Nelvin Vos, Where in the World Are You? Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 1996, p. 111.

[352] Randy Frazee, The Connecting Church Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 2001, p. 66.

[353] John Ackerman, Listening p. 13.

[354] Ibid. p. 14.

parishioner to spiritual formation takes thought and strategic planning. This includes changing existing expectations for church activity as informed by oral tradition, liturgy or the personal preference of parishioners, thereby accomplishing little in the realm of spiritual formation. The principle of engaging the heart, spirit, strength and mind of each congregant is imperative. For example, the worship experience must be meaningful eliciting an awareness that acknowledges God and prompts a sense of awe and wonder.

With a modern view of programming, to meet the needs of maturing Christians, churches have focused on the Christian education of parishioners by demographic. In 1983 Gabriel Moran published *Religious Education Development* and lauded the benefits of systematically educating a congregation. The measure of spiritual growth was in direct correlation to the amount of time spent in the church classroom or sanctuary. Although modern and linear in his outlook, he makes some valid points applicable to today's church. Religious education must open one's capacity to reason to some greater intelligence and points to the affirmation of the way people live and work in families and communities with a view to accomplishing 'something greater' or a higher purpose beyond oneself.[355]

This addresses the problem of the challenge of fusing Christian values with business life.

> For regular churchgoers and unchurched, non-practicing believers alike, career maturity has not necessarily brought equivalent spiritual maturity. They express feelings of radical disconnection between Sunday services and Monday morning activities, describing a sense of living in two worlds that never touch each other.[356]

Each religious leader and educator should strategically plan the Christian education structure accordingly creating an environment that insures a steady

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[355] Gabriel Moran, Religious Education Development: Images for the Future Minneapolis, MN: Winston Press, 1983, pp. 192-195.
[356] Laura Nash and Scotty McLennan, Church on Sunday, Work on Monday San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass Publishers, 2001, pp. 6-7.

movement through the stages of spiritual formation while addressing 'real life' issues such as applying spiritual principles in the marketplace.[357]

While the church has an important role to play in the spiritual growth of its adherents, the questionable assumption is that church programming should be the primary source for spiritual development. In a church that optimizes the role of Christian education, it may come at the expense of little or no emphasis on the personal responsibility for the exercise of spiritual disciplines in private life. If leadership views the church as 'equipping' then teaching components must be directed toward facilitation of an engaging and motivating process of spiritual formation as opposed to a traditionally knowledge-based spiritual education. This may be facilitated by a differentiation between 'teaching' and 'training.' "Teaching requires the transmission of ideas and concepts. Training requires the transmission of learned skills."[358] The former refers to the need for cognitive transmission while the latter refers to application and practice of the spiritual disciplines in one's life.

While the personal spiritual disciplines are most often practiced in solitude, it is important to understand that certain facets of spiritual formation must take place in community. The elements of each church gathering, whether it is the entire congregation or in small groups, must be intentional. If the Christian life can be likened to that of an Olympic athlete, as intimated when Paul told Timothy to "train yourself to be godly," (1 Timothy 4:7) then equipping members of the local church (Ephesians 4:12) implies that they are to be instructed in the area of spiritual formation. This process will increase the believer's Christlikeness and subsequently their effectiveness in the body and missionally through preaching and teaching.

Church preaching and teaching not only needs to focus on the various facets of the Christian life; it must include instructional guidelines for personal

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[357] Craig Dykstra and Sharon Parks, eds., Faith Development and Fowler Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1986, pp. 253-260.

[358] Billie Hanks Jr. and William A. Shell, Discipleship: Great Insights from the Most Experienced Disciplemakers Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1993, p. 94.

spiritual transformation. "The tools for soul-shaping have not changed since the apostolic age. *Preaching and teaching* [emphasis in original] grant us entry into people's lives at the core of their being – where decisions are made, values are shaped, ideas are borne, passions are ignited, wounds are soothed [and] hardness is broken."[359] Prayer times must be the opportunity for modeling praise, thanksgiving, supplication, and confession.[360]

To achieve a growing faith, it is mandatory for the church to declare sound doctrine, create meaningful liturgy and organize dynamic fellowship.[361] Spiritual maturity happens when believers meet together to listen to God, obey God, and are transformed by him.[362] Although it must never be the sum total of an individual's spiritual formation, congregational worship does contribute significantly to one's growth. An important way

> we become formed into Christ is in worship. It is in the ordinary congregation, warts and all, that most Christians most of the time have found God and become transformed. It is finally through singing unsingable hymns, loving irritating neighbours, listening to boring sermons and receiving clumsily administered sacraments that we are formed into the body of Christ and Christ is formed in us. It is in praising God in community that we become ourselves. It is in the family of God that we are remade. Sermons that are preached from the centre, experience, the heart and head, that are passionate with God's love, speak to our minds and hearts. The sacraments move past our minds to a deeper kind of knowing. We enter into the reality of God, the Trinity.[363]

This enables the participant to be moved by the presence of God to seek forgiveness and restore God to his rightful place in one's life while experiencing the benefits of corporate activity. A service can be a "perpetual series of transformational moments" [364] which provide multiple opportunities for genuinely changed lives. Liturgical worship is meant to take us beyond the experience of the service itself, whatever shape that may be, and be a catalyst in the process of spiritual formation.[365]

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[359] Mel Lawrenz, Dynamics p. 44.
[360] Ibid. p. 79.
[361] Thomas P. Williamsen, Attending Parishioners' Spiritual Growth Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 1997, p. 9.
[362] John Ackerman, Listening p. 18.
[363] Ibid. p. 25.
[364] Ibid. p. 95.
[365] Kenneth O. Gangel and James C. Wilhoit, eds., Handbook p. 101

Early Christians "were for the most part, Jews, familiar with the formal worship (or liturgy) of the synagogue service, as well as temple worship at Jerusalem. They did not start out to create Christian worship afresh ... they simply adapted and built upon the forms of Jewish worship they already knew."[366] In the Christian church, The Passover meal is employed as

> a perpetual experience of connection and participation. We cannot help but be shaped by this remarkable act in which we rehearse and experience the taking in of Christ as he taught is John 6. One loaf and one cup provides a focused experience with Christ and a unified experience between believers.[367]

Communion provides the opportunity to weave together Christ-instituted symbols which, as the congregation repeats the ritual again and again, reminds participants of the event that called the church, local and universal, into being.[368]

> The church is a place to gather. It is a
>
> people coming to worship [who] are in need, in need of confession, in need of being forgiven, in need of praise and thanksgiving, in need of encouragement and support. Therefore, supplication, petition, and intercession permeate worship. Having been nourished by the Word, by the sacraments, and the fellowship of the believing community, we are inspired to continue.[369]

The challenge for church leadership is to bring the balance to the process of spiritual formation. Worship gatherings may be the

> high point of ... community life ... but they are not the sum total of what we are or what we strive to be ... Sunday gatherings [should be thought of] as a microcosm of what we are trying to become. It is in the gathering ... where we regroup to practice the particular habits and patterns of the faith we're trying to live.[370]

While the church of modernity welcomed a highly structured process of personal discipleship, including the basic 'read the Bible and prayer everyday' methodology, the advent of postmodern society has prompted Christendom to consider spiritual formation as an individual expression. The church's re-

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[366] Ibid. p. 100.

[367] Mel Lawrenz, Dynamics p. 101.

[368] Urban T. Holmes III, Spirituality for Ministry New York, NY: Harper and Row Publishers, 1982, p. 120.

[369] Norma Cook Everist and Nelvin Vos, World p. 115.

[370] Doug Pagitt, Reimaging p. 50.

emphasis on spiritual formation is causing churches to reconsider doing 'business as usual.'

> Spiritual formation (of which nurture and discipleship are integral parts) is not just a new piece of cloth place on old and worn-out garments of Christian education. Spiritual formation represents a radical paradigm shift, a new way of looking at the church's ministry ... Three elements mark the approach ... it involves the whole church's ministry; knowledge is viewed as a mean to Christian growth and never as an end in itself; and there is a distinct accent on the work of God's grace in the process of formation.[371]

The challenge for the contemporary church is to meet the broad spectrum of appetites in relation to the process of spiritual maturity. This is not something to be feared. In *Sacred Pathways*, Gary Thomas identifies nine distinct styles of spiritual formation.[372] Instead of stressing an onerous form of devotional life, conforming to a prescribed ritualistic form, the local church should emphasize the principle of spiritual formation. This would include instruction concerning the role of the Bible as the basis for truth and communication with God through personal prayer. With an understanding of these foundational elements, the Christian can pursue a personalized pathway for spiritual transformation.

As the believer prepares himself or herself, he or she becomes more effective in the lives of others. Through one's engagement in solitude, silence, meditation, prayer, and intercession, he or she is spiritually equipped to share in community[373] or local church ministry.[374] The church leader, while seeking to create a structured plan for spiritual formation, both personally and corporately, must keep in mind the necessity of a wholesome balance between spiritual life development and outward ministry activity.[375] One does not insure the other. Service draws the Christian closer to Christ as he or she senses the privilege of acting on his behalf. Service produces a sense of purpose that is eternal, even

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[371] Kenneth O. Gangel and James C. Wilhoit, eds., Handbook p. 11.
[372] Gary Thomas, Sacred Pathways Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 2000, pp. 35ff. They are naturalists, sensates, traditionalists, ascetics, activists, caregivers, enthusiasts, contemplatives, intellectualists.
[373] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Together p. 76-88.
[374] Thomas P. Williamsen, Attending Parishioners' Spiritual Growth Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 1997, p. 116.
[375] Frank Bateman Stranger, Formation p. 62.

while grounded in the earthly and physical needs of those being served."[376]   The converse may be the norm.[377]   Spiritual formation must be a structured activity with an implied and/or explicit accountability. The local church must provide the setting in which corporate spiritual disciplines are consistently modelled and the development of personal spiritual disciplines is expected.

Conclusion

Spiritual formation is both a personal and corporate discipline. However, there are certain aspects of spiritual formation unique to the gathering of the local church. It is the place members of the body can be encouraged in their own personal process of spiritual formation. The challenge for the church is to develop and promote a vision for activities that will facilitate a person's deep spiritual connectedness to God and a sense of oneness with one's brothers and sisters in the faith. Local church settings provide contact with God and his people, ultimately resulting in spiritual formation.

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[376] Mel Lawrenz, Dynamics p. 133.

[377] In a recent informal survey it was estimated that over 70 per cent of Portico's congregation, while attending regularly, were not active in an area of service. This survey, undertaken by the Ministry Resource department at Portico, noted the lack of ongoing participation or the willingness for congregational members to be involved only in short term commitments.

Authentic Relationships (Community)

Introduction

> Makin' your way in the world today takes everything you've got
> Takin' a break from all your worries sure would help a lot
> Wouldn't you like to get away?
>
> Sometimes you want to go
> Where everybody knows your name
> And they're always glad you came
> You wanna go where people know
> Our troubles are all the same
> You wanna go where everybody knows your name
> You wanna go where people know
> People are all the same
> You wanna go where everybody knows your name[378]

There is a universal cry to 'belong.' "Listen carefully, and you will hear the muffled cry and sigh for community today."[379] Secular society may express its longing for relationships in the neighbourhood bar. This counterfeit community is a permissive, accepting, and inclusive fellowship. "The bar flourishes not because most people are alcoholics, but because God has put into the human heart the desire to know and to be known, to love and be loved, and so many seek a counterfeit at the price of a few beers."[380]

There has been a loss of opportunity for community due to modernity's emphasis on the individual at the expense of relationships.[381] These 'advances' have left a relational vacuum while human life has been restructured, focusing on maximum effectiveness concerning the assigned task.[382] Meanwhile, members of society hunger for connectedness as the forces seek to undermine the formation of community.[383] Canadians have sacrificed community in favour of technological advancement as evidenced in the transition from a traditional

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[378] Gary Portnay, Cheers http://users.cis.net/sammy/cheers.htm, p. 1, March 3, 2005.
[379] Howard A. Snyder, Liberating the Church Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1983, p. 112.
[380] Bruce Larson, Dare to Live Now Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1965, p. 110.
[381] Ibid.
[382] Peter S. Williamson as cited in John C. Blattner, ed., Leading Christians to Maturity Alamonte Springs, FL: Creation House, 1987, p. 178.
[383] Kenneth O. Gangel and James C. Wilhoit, eds., The Christian Educator's Handbook on Spiritual Formation Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1994, p. 271.

agrarian society to an impersonalized, urbanized and technological world. Even the traditional community, where people live, work and worship in one place, is disintegrating. The ultimate outcome of a functionalised approach to human relationship is the atomization of society. As people's lives are partitioned off into as many worlds as possible[384] society becomes an aggregate of individuals rather than a network of groups[385] resulting in a loss of opportunity for community due to modernity's corresponding emphasis on the individual at the expense of relationships.[386] During the course of everyday life finding the time for the development of community is elusive but an anomaly may occur during times of crisis when people act in communal ways. [387]

Postmodernism seems to have had little effect. If anything the demands for community have intensified.

> No scientist could deny the importance of working within the conviviality and tradition of a community, from which he or she has learned the tacit skills of research through an implicit apprenticeship and to whose judgement the mature work is to be submitted for approbation or correction ... Those who speak of our being in a 'post-modern' era frequently cite as one of its characteristics the recognition that community plays an important role in constituting our being ... These considerations provide a contemporary setting hospitable to the idea that ... the Church ... should find a place ...[388]

The church is not immune to societal influence. The concept of community is in tension in society and the church. Humanity has an innate desire for community and the structures and values of society inhibit its development. Simultaneously, one of the highest values of the church of Jesus Church is the interaction between its members, and congregational leadership must give major consideration to this need. The basis for community is found in the scriptures. Malcolm Gladwell summarizes the beliefs of John Wesley regarding the imperative nature of community, "If you want to bring fundamental change to people's lives and behaviour, a change that will persist

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[384] Howard A. Snyder, Liberating p. 113.
[385] John C. Blattner, ed., Maturity p. 180.
[386] Ibid.
[387] John H. Westerhoff, III, Living the Faith Community San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row Publishers, 1985, p. 17.
[388] John Polkinghorne, The Faith of a Physicist as cited by Brian D. McLaren, Finding Faith Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1999, p. 211.

and influence others, you need to create a community around them where those new beliefs can be practiced, expressed and nurtured."[389] Lest it be misunderstood, community implies relationship as will be illustrated in the relationship of the Trinity.

While there continues to be a call for the fulfilment of this human need in the local church setting, it remains an ideal. Most Christians want it but few experience it because the church has not discovered how to offer it.[390] "Christians attend church with a sense of responsibility and with the hope of receiving certain benefits. They rarely regard the people in the church as people with whom they share their lives."[391] In 2001, George Barna published his findings in regard to Christians and their interactive community. He discovered that a mere 17% of Christians met weekly in a group that was growth and accountability oriented.[392] "Churches have done a good job of promoting the importance of spiritual maturity, but they have failed to provide an environment in which spiritual growth is a lifestyle."[393]

The theology of community will be examined with the intention of determining the purpose and dimensions of biblical community. As the priority of authentic relationships is established, and practical steps are taken to create opportunities for interaction and connecting, settings for biblical community will develop. In this chapter, a universal model will be proposed for implementation in the contemporary church.

The Theology of Community

Understanding that God resides in 'holy community' as Holy Trinity, it would follow that men and women, created in the image of God, would be

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[389] Malcolm Gladwell, The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference Boston, MA: Little, Brown & Co., 2002, p. 173.
[390] John H. Westerhoff, III, Community p. 14
[391] Ibid. p. 181.
[392] George Barna, Growing the Disciples Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Publishers, 2001, p. 49.
[393] Ibid. p. 55.

destined to establish mutually beneficial communities.[394] The pattern of the Godhead is distinct, yet unified.

> The three divine persons are not there simply for themselves. They are there in that they are there for one another. They are persons in social relationship. The Father can be called Father only in relationship with the Son; the Son can only be called Son in relationship with the Father. The Spirit is the breath of the one who speaks. Being-a-person means "being in relationship."[395]

When considering community, a number of writers have referred to the Andrei Rublev painting which depicts three divine figures around a common table, each with a staff in their hands, and heads gently inclined toward one another.[396] The term *perichoresis*[397] refers to,

> The community of Father, Son and Holy Spirit [which] becomes the prototype of the human community by those who wish to improve society and build it in such a way as to make it into the image and likeness of the Trinity.[398]

Throughout the ministry of Jesus, including revealing the Father, (John 17:6) pleasing the Father, (John 5:30; John 8:29) or being dependant on the Father for his teaching, (John 14:4) Jesus relied on constant dialogue with his Father. This communication demonstrated mutual love and identifiable roles[399] of the members of the Godhead.

> The Father is at the forefront of the work of creation, but both the Word and the Spirit are present and involved with the Father in creation. The Son is at the forefront of the work of redemption, but both the Father and the Spirit are present and involved with the Son in redemption. The Spirit is at the forefront of the work of sanctification, but both the Father and the Son are present and involved in the work of sanctification.[400]

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[394] Donald M. Joy, <u>Bonding: Relationships in the Image of God</u> Napanee, IN: Evangel Publishing House, 1999, p. 15.

[395] Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel and Jurgen Jürgen Moltmann, <u>Humanity in God</u> New York, NY: Pilgrim Books, 1983, p. 97.

[396] Tod E. Bolsinger, <u>It Takes a Church to Raise a Christian</u> Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2004, p. 58. This painting can be viewed at http://www.wellsprings.org.uk/rublevs_icon/rublev.htm p. 1, February 21, 2005.

[397] This is the term given by theologians to describe the delicate Trinitarian 'dance.'

[398] Leonardo Boff, <u>Trinity and Society</u> Translation Paul Burns, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988, p. 2.

[399] While fulfilling these roles, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit remain in perfect unity.

[400] Gilbert Bilezikian, <u>Community 101</u> Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1997, p. 18.

This interaction is characteristic of the ideal for which the membership of the local church should strive.[401]

Relationship has its benefits. God is not a lonely god, but rather an interactive community of three persons. Similarly, Christian faith leads human beings into the divine *communio* which is two-fold; communion with God and communion with others who have similarly entrusted themselves in faith to the same God. A person who has relationship with God simultaneously has relationship with those with whom they share faith.[402] This community "is not a human invention or a survival device, but it is a gift of God to humans, an essential component of his image grounded in his triune being."[403]

> Community is deeply grounded in the nature of God. It flows from who God is. Because he is community, he creates community. It is his gift of himself to humans. Therefore the making of community may not be regarded as an optional decision for Christians. It is a compelling and irrevocable necessity, a binding divine mandate for all believers at all times.[404]

When one studies the theme of community in Genesis 1:26-27, he or she can argue that humans are created for relationships.

> A careful reading of the Genesis text indicates that the 'helper' was not provided for the man's use, to make his life easier or more pleasant. God made 'a helper suitable for him' in relation to the specific situation where 'it was not good for man to be alone. (Genesis 2:18)[405]

While creation was filled with male and female of every animal,[406] (Genesis 1:22) Adam was alone and God created a partner to fulfill his longing for communion. The deep hunger for relationship between humans, matches the hunger of God for community.[407]

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[401] Matt Friedeman, <u>Accountability Connection</u> Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1992, p. 15.
[402] Miroslav Volf, <u>After Our Likeness</u> Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997, p. 173.
[403] Gilbert Bilezikian, <u>Community</u> p. 174.
[404] Ibid. p. 26.
[405] Ibid. p. 20.
[406] This implies animal reproduction, only possible through the reproductive activity of a male and female.
[407] Donald Joy, <u>Bonding</u> p. 15.

Through the fall Adam and Eve chose to damage their relationship with God by moving from dependency on him to independence,[408] and because community is integrally built upon dependence and trust, this is the surest way to destroy relationships.

> It is possible for humans to reject or alter God's commission for them to build community and to be in community. But this may happen only at the cost of forsaking the Creator of community and betraying his image in us; this cost is enormous, since his image in us in the essential attribute that defines our own humanity.[409]

The Old Testament illustrates that the formation of community is God's central act.[410] Examination of 'covenant' reveals the establishment or reinforcement of formalized relationships. The Abrahamic covenant was between Abraham and Yahweh, and what was to become the Jewish nation on earth. (Genesis 12:2-3; Genesis 15:1,5; Genesis 17:4, 7-8) On Mount Sinai a covenant renewing relationship between God and the Israelites, marked by a community of priests and members of a holy nation, was re-established. (Exodus 19:4-6.) As Judaism continued to develop as a culture, it became characterized by an intensity of interrelatedness and community. It gave rise to what might be called a "corporate personality."[411] Whether it was in avengement when one's sibling was harmed (II Samuel 14:7) or accepting punishment for a sibling's sin, (II Samuel 21:1-14) the Israelite community stood together.

Discipleship in the time of Jesus was closely patterned after the process of the rabbinical schools of the day. A rabbi led each school and applications were accepted from those wishing to enter into a pupil-teacher relationship. Upon acceptance into the school, the Judaic pupils learned everything from their teacher as taught through stories and his life. Eventually the student would become a teacher and call his own disciples, usually naming the school after himself. At any point a student could be rejected and he would return to an

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[408] Julie A. Gorman, Community that is Christian Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1993, p. 31.
[409] Gilbert Bilezikian, Community p. 27.
[410] G. Ernest Wright, The Biblical Doctrine of Man in Society Philadelphia, PA: Trinity Press, 1954, p. 19.
[411] Paul M. Miller, Group Dynamics in Evangelism Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1958, pp. 34-35.

occupation, one that probably had been part of his family for generations. It is with the employment of this model that Jesus began to call and teach a group of men in life change and leadership.[412]

As Jesus trained his followers for the establishment of the New Testament church, he optimized the value of community. His public ministry often spoke to the value of community.

> Jesus' whole preaching may be seen as an effort to awaken the strength of these community aspects. In the horizontal dimension Jesus called human beings to mutual respect, generosity, a communion of sisters and brothers, and simplicity in relationships. Vertically he sought to open the human being to a sincere filial relationship with God...[413]

The community that he modelled and established during his earthly ministry, and patterned after the interaction between him and His Father,

> has at its heart the remembering and rehearsing of his words and deeds, and the sacraments given by him through which it is enabled both to engraft new members into its life and to renew this life again and again through sharing in his risen life through the body broken and the lifeblood poured out.[414]

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus deals with such relational issues as anger between brothers, (Matthew 5:22) how to deal with those that persecute Christ-followers (Matthew 5:44-45) and, in a latter address, forgiving the offender. (Matthew 6:14-15) As he demonstrated, successful ministry is based on relationships. Because believers have experienced purification from sin, and the resultant oneness with God, this provides the basis for relationships with one another. (1 John 1:3-7) While praying, Jesus requested that, "all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you." (John 17:20-23)

> [Jesus] spent most of His time – reserved most of His instruction for the Twelve. Their fellowship during those three years involved a growing commitment to Christ and a growing commitment to one another. Devotion to Christ was not enough ... They had to

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[412] Bill Hull, Choose the Life: Exploring a Faith that Embraces Discipleship Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2004, pp. 32-33. It is assumed that Jesus had called men of profession, in other words, those who had been rejected by the rabbinical schools prior to the age of their Bar Mitzvah.

[413] Leonardo Boff, Ecclesiogenesis: The Base Communities Reinvent the Church Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986, p. 7. Although much of Boff's theology is Liberation in orientation, his observations concerning biblical community are helpful.

[414] Lesslie Newbigin, The Gospel in Pluralistic Society Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989, 227.

learn to live together, to love one another, to serve one another [and] to work in harmony.[415]

The 'glue' of church community is the shared understanding and experience of salvation made possible by the passion and death of Jesus. The basis for community with others is a vertical relationship with God. John wrote, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin." (1 John 1:3-7) Deep, quality relationships with other believers are made possible because we have the Light in common. Christians are drawn together through a common forgiveness.

Paul refers to the "fellowship of the Holy Spirit." (2 Corinthians 13:14) The Holy Spirit and his role in the life of the Christian was the basis for community. This was evident from the inception of the New Testament Church. There was a sense of 'togetherness' as they met and studied together, fellowshipped together and had everything in common. (Acts 2:42-44) Christians are responsible for one another and sacrifice on behalf of each other. (1 John 3:16-18; John 15:12-13; 2 Corinthians 8:13-15) These activities facilitated in a small group may take different forms. The New Testament writers point to the communal acts of confessing of sins, (James 5:16) forgiving one another, (Colossians 3:13) loving one another, (Romans 12:10, 16; 13:8; 15:5,7) encouraging one another, (1 Thessalonians 4:18; 5:11) and bearing the burdens of those with whom one is in relationship. (Galatians 6:2)

The Church reflects, as part of the creation, the being of God in its κοιωονια, restored people in relationship with each other.[416] Because of their faith, the natural outgrowth of believers coming together in relationship is a sense of Christian community. "In its concrete, everyday actualization, εκκλεσια involves interpersonal relationships and reciprocities which occur in conjunction

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[415] Richard C. Halverson, <u>Somehow Inside of Eternity</u> Sisters, OR: Multnomah Press, 1981, p. 73.
[416] Colin Gunton, <u>On Being the Church</u> Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1989, pp. 67-68. Gunton suggests this New Testament Greek word should be translated as 'community' or 'sociality.'

with its characteristic activities such as worship."[417] The church claims a distinct

advantage when two or three members come together in Jesus' name. Not only

is his divine presence a part of the gathering, but there is an added spiritual

enablement available for the activities. (Matthew 18:20)

> The church transcends mere human community when the horizontal, human dimension
> is married to the vertical dimension through Jesus Christ. This dimension of
> transcendence constitutes the church and builds the church into a true community of the
> Spirit. It causes the Christian community to look not just inward or outward but also
> upward to God and ahead to God's future ... [418]

Small groups are not without biblical precedent. The church met in small

groups in the home of Priscilla and Aquila, Nympha, and John Mark's mother,

(Romans 16:5; Colossians 4:15; Acts 12:12) an example that gives impetus for

their formation in the current church context. One might wonder about the

functions and forms in which community was optimized in the New Testament

church. They met daily fellowshipped and broke bread. (Acts 2:42-47) Luke's

references to the size of the Jerusalem church number from one hundred and

twenty (Acts 1:13-15) to in the thousands. (Acts 2:41) There is some suggestion

that the church existed and functioned on two levels,[419] the large group

gathering (Acts 2:46, 5:42; 20:20) and the house church. (Acts 2:46; 12:12-17;

Romans 16:3-5, 14-15) There is a strong possibility that some of the early

believers, who had large homes with courtyards, may have either hosted the

house churches or even given up their homes for these meetings.[420]

As is the natural tendency, due to humanity's character and relational

imperfections, the Corinthian church began to experience a breakdown of

community. Paul reminded them that they were a fellowship. (1 Corinthians

10:16) In the same vein, he called the Roman church to a Christian community

where the standard is for the strong to give assistance to the weak. (Romans

14:1- 15:13) In his writings are liberally distributed instructions, which refer to

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[417] Edward Farley, Ecclesial Man: A Social Phenomenology of Faith and Reality Philadelphia, PA:
Fortress Press, 1975, p. 152.
[418] Howard A. Snyder, Liberating p. 128.
[419] Rex A. Koivisto, One Lord, One Faith Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1993, pp. 27-28.
[420] Ibid.

the "one another" (Romans 12:10, 16) and "each other" (1 Thessalonians 4:18; 5:11, 15) relationships. "The church is marginalized because of estranged relationships and a lack of commitment to follow Jesus. To love as Christ loved is the way to break down the walls that separate us and bring healing to broken lives."[421]

The discipling and equipping church makes this aspect of congregational life a very high priority. There are distinct benefits of the community found in the church; "The fellowship of the church is that most remarkable phenomenon where all of our talk about the importance of the Christian community becomes a practical reality for transformation."[422] As relationships are formed, community is built and members of the church can begin to benefit from the strengths of each other as they share their needs.[423] The process of accountability is marked by "discipline, corrections, advice, consultation, discernment, instruction, sharpening, confession and rebuke ..."[424] As one submits his or her life to the scrutiny of another believer, God works through the other person's voice to move each person toward an increasing assimilation of the character of God. "We show not only that we have become members one of another, but also that we as restored community...have become a remarkable image of God."[425]

When asked to summarize scriptural directives into a succinct statement Jesus divided God's will for holy living into two categories; love for God and love for others. (Luke 10:27) These principles highlight the vertical and horizontal dimensions of community and the direct correlation between loving God and loving others.[426]

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[421] Bill Hull, Choose the Life: Exploring a Faith that Embraces Discipleship Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2004, p. 20.

[422] Mel Lawrenz, The Dynamics of Spiritual Formation Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2000, p. 96.

[423] Bill Hull, The Disciple-Making Church Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1990, p. 33.

[424] Matt Freideman, Accountability p. 18.

[425] Cornelius Plantinga, "The Perfect Family" Christianity Today March 4, 1988, p. 27.

[426] Randy Frazee, The Connecting Church Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 2001, p. 73.

The Purpose of Community

Although solitude is useful at times for spiritual formation, optimal faith development is marginalized when a person consistently chooses isolation. Fowler likens faith formation to an equilateral triangle with points representing self, others and shared centre(s) of value and power.[427] As interaction takes place, one has the opportunity to experience symbolically the building of personal faith and the faith of others.[428] "Faith is a relational enterprise, triadic...in shape."[429]

This illustrated an inherent weakness in society as we experience a disconnected, disintegrated, depersonalized society of autonomous individuals living competitively within a violent, estranged world. We are physically and emotionally detached from each other as revealed in one survey that suggests that seven in ten do not know their neighbours and as many as one-third admit to ongoing periods of loneliness.[430] In an effort to survive, members of western society have compartmentalized their lives. Work life, home life and church life have become segments of the whole, which have to be kept in balance. "Church leadership therefore must image the church as an intimate, closely-knit, and homogeneous familial community"[431] but not as a retreat or escape from community at large. This can be accomplished by extracting a deeper sense of belonging by consolidating the believer's personal and church worlds into one.[432]

> Spiritual formation grows deeper and stronger through the community of a small group. The healthy environment created in such groups allows lives to change and develop. As you seek spiritual growth and formation for your own life and others, do not undervalue the deep hunger for community and use small groups to anchor that process.[433]

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[427] James W. Fowler, Stages of Faith San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins Publishers, 1983, p. 17.
[428] Urban T. Holmes, Spirituality for Ministry San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row Publishers, 1982, p. 120. These spiritually formative activities could include any combination of worship, study, and prayer. Holmes stresses the importance of ritual in the gathering of community. He refers to the, "weaving together of those symbols ... [which] makes us present in that event that called our community into being."
[429] Ibid. p. 18.
[430] George Gallup Jr., "Weekly Church Attendance Dips to Lowest Level in Six Decades" Emerging Trends Vol. 19, no. 3, March 1997. p. 1
[431] John H. Westerhoff III, Community p. 21.
[432] Randy Frazee, Connecting p. 34-35.
[433] Gangel, Handbook p. 278.

The role of the church is to form a community, not as a separate parallel place of existence where the Christian spends his or her time in an insulated environment, but as community that will integrate and impact others in the rest of their society. "God wants the church to reflect community; to show the world what relationships are to be, to demonstrate that His work is to be relational, not solo, and to consider others not just self."[434] People who live in and contribute to community are unable to live independent lives. "Mankind's [sic] sin is not the assertion of individuality in community, but the assertion of individual independence and self-sufficiency from God and his fellows."[435] This was demonstrated in such instances as the Tower of Babel. (Genesis 11)

Being a member of a Christian community mitigates independence and provides the atmosphere to optimize one's dependence on God and others while simultaneously allowing for contribution to the lives of others.

> For a Christian, the term 'community' implies the finest quality of fellowship that is possible for men to achieve. It is the type of fellowship which provides for all of its participants every opportunity to become the kind of persons which God intended each should become. In a true community then, each member is concerned for the creation of conditions under which each individual may develop to the fullest of his capacities. Community in its finest sense involves the delicate but inescapable balance between rights and duties, the privilege of self-fulfilment under God, and the obligation to enable others to achieve the same.[436]

In true community, individualism dies as trust builds between members and together they confront the realities of life as they sacrifice for one another. It provides a place for protection and healing. When a member is in crisis, there is need for a sanctuary, a safe place, and a refuge. It allows one to become transparent while anticipating God's restorative power. The congregation or small group, while offering to be a 'house of mourning," provides a safe environment for people bound by the covenant of God and committed to the

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[434] Julie A. Gorman, Community that is Christian Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1993, p. 285.
[435] C. Norman Krause, The Authentic Witness Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979, p. 85.
[436] T. T. Swearingin, The Community and Christian Education Bloomington, MN: Bethany Press, 1950, p. 41.

patient ministry of "just being there."[437] It is in community where the spiritually formative process of discipleship can take place. "Discipleship and community go together ... in fact, they are inseparably linked. Without other believers to grow with, the process of passing the Christian faith from person to person is impossible."[438]

While the church may think that it has the market cornered in the small group concept, broad elements in North American society have recognized the valuable contribution support groups have made to the well being of its members.[439] Whether it is for networking for business purposes or working out a personal problem with the help of a community, small groups are gaining popularity. In industry, the major influence has been the Japanese style of management. Proponents of mental health suggest Western society is increasingly recognizing the validity of small social groups, whether project oriented or for purposes of personal growth as they foster emotional, social and spiritual development.[440]

Small groups have come to play an increasingly important role in the life of many churches and communities. In the ecclesiastical world, the Korean Cho Church in Seoul has led the way.[441] Their versatility makes them useful for everything from evangelism to leadership training, and their informality makes them a helpful bridge between the individual and the larger body.[442] Practically speaking, these small groups are not without their 'rules.' Each participant should be committed to the values of all members of the group and their

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[437] Mel Lawrenz, Dynamics p. 44.

[438] Jeffrey Arnold, The Big Book on Small Groups Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992, p. 76.

[439] Jeffery T. Polzer et. al., Capitalizing on Diversity: Interpersonal Congruence in Small Workgroups http://www.breastcancer.org/group_support.html, p. 1, April 13, 2006. http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m4035/is_2_47/ai_93463213/pg_6, p. 1, April 9, 2006. http://www.tifaq.com/information/supportgroups.html, p. 1, April 13, 2006.

[440] Robert C. Leslie, Sharing Groups in the Church: Resource for Positive Mental Health http://www.religion-online.org/showchapter.asp?title=798&C=1002 p. 1, July 31, 2006.

[441] Julie A. Gorman, Community p. 284.

[442] Peter S. Williamson, Maturity p. 148.

nurturing, while focusing on what is important and helpful to each other in an accepting manner.[443]

The North American lifestyle is marked by rootlessness, mobility and achievement orientation and the successful church will address the need for fellowship by establishing small groups.

> These are support groups, some of them traditional ... (and) bold new ventures designed to communicate the peace of Christ during frightening situations... Persons in such situations, who in the past were met by judgemental and further isolating action, are now drawn into a fellowship with the same restorative gestures of peace used by Jesus to bring together the isolated disciples."[444]

Christian Community is the body of Christ living out the life and message of Christ to build up one another and missionally impact the world for God's glory.[445]

The Dimensions of Community

Throughout history small group settings have functioned as constructive contexts for spiritual formation and accountability. Jesus spent most of his time with groups of people. In addition to the many social groupings with which he interacted, his primary contact was with the Twelve. Following this pattern, such groups as early monastic communities and John Wesley's class meetings were formed to optimize spiritual growth in a communal setting. Today retreat centres, prayer groups and house churches function in a similar fashion.[446]

In these settings the time constraints of everyday life are put aside to facilitate personal interaction for purposes of spiritual companionship. Such companions

> are persons of faith willing to enter into a helping relationship with others on their spiritual journey. Companions are not teachers or persons who have answers but

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[443] Guidelines for Small Group Participants
www.pastors.com/mt/37/default.asp?id=37&artid=1514&expand=1, p. 1, January 31, 2002.
[444] Larry A. Hoffis cited in Wayne Stumme, ed., Bible and Mission Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1986, pp. 188-189.
[445] Bill Donahue, Leading Life-Changing Small Groups Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1996, p. 27.
[446] Suzanne Johnson, Christian Spiritual Formation in the Church and Classroom Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1989, p. 126.

> partners who take seriously the concerns and experiences of those with whom they journey.[447]

As such, God meets them as they journey together and gives them community in fellowship founded solely upon Jesus Christ ..."[448] The believer's basis for community is founded in one's redeemed relationship with God which equips him or her for relationships with others--for both edification with other believers, and to engage non-believers. The advantage of members of a church meeting together is found in the activities which cannot be facilitated alone, such as corporate worship, praise, thanksgiving and encouragement to the spirit of each participant. Flowing out of relationship with God is a horizontal relationship with other believers as fostered and facilitated by the local assembly.[449]

One theory in the elucidation of human needs is Maslow's Holistic Dynamic Needs Hierarchy, which includes physiological needs as well as the needs for safety, belongingness and love, esteem, self-actualization. Similar principles are articulated in the biblical record. As a Christ-follower gets firmly rooted in a small group they experience the benefits of inner strength, collective wisdom, accountability, acceptance and the fulfilment of sociological needs which continue to intensify in Western culture.[450] People have a desire for community--to live in trust and cooperation, for engagement--to solve social and interpersonal problems cooperatively and for dependence--the wish to share responsibility for our lives and the lives of others.[451] The physical presence of other Christians is an opportunity to rejoice and infuse strength into the lives of other believers.[452]

[447] Barbara A. Sheehan, Partners in Covenant Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1999, p. vii.
[448] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Life Together New York, NY: Harper and Row Publishers, 1954, p. 23.
[449] Lesslie Newbigin, Pluralist p. 227-228.
[450] Bill Donahue and Russ Robinson, Building a Church of Small Groups Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 2001, pp. 33-43.
[451] John H. Westerhoff III, Community p. 17.
[452] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Life p. 19.

People do not normally leave the church " because people in the church [are not] religious enough, they [cannot] find a sense of true community."[453] As these relationships grow, trust begins to build and members of the small group will begin to open up the places in their lives where wisdom and input are needed. "An important implication for the church, and for all of us as individuals, is that we must begin to give up our hard-won independence and become interdependent; we must become people who depend on each other"[454] by being tuned to the needs of others.[455] Solomon's Porch, a church in Minneapolis, has responded by defining itself in communal terms.

> We are a community of people who not only meet on Sundays, but become deeply connected to one another ... community is where real spiritual formation happens [as they] are deeply connected living out the disciplines of prayer, worship, and service.[456]

Although community in small groups is a highly desired value, it is also important for Christians to develop one-on-one relationships. This may take the form of mutual study, prayer and accountability.[457] Usually a church fellowship has members who have been Christians for a significant amount of time. These men and women have the potential to mentor or disciple someone who is younger in the faith, as illustrated in Paul's interaction with Silas, Barnabus and Timothy. The mature believer models and instructs the newer believer in matters of spiritual formation through discussions centered on biblical principles.[458]

For a Christian to develop horizontal relationships exclusively with those who are of like faith leads to myopic thinking contrary missional values. The church is a community where members are taught not to live for oneself, but be

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[453] William D. Hendricks, Exit Interviews Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1993, p. 250.
[454] Stephen B. Clark in John C. Blattner eds., Leading Christians to Maturity Alamonte Springs, FL: Creation House, 1987, p. 178.
[455] Wayne Jacobsen and Clay Jacobsen, Authentic Relationships Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2003, pp. 71-72.
[456] Doug Pagitt, Reimaging Spiritual Formation Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 2003, p. 27.
[457] Mel Lawrenz, Dynamics p. 97.
[458] Larry Krieder, The Cry for Spiritual Fathers and Mothers Ephrata, PA: House to House Publications, 2000, p. 5.

deeply involved in redemptive acts being "prepared for and sustained in the exercise of priesthood in the world."[459] Missional instruction should be more than mere indoctrination; it should include an enabling of the church's members to apply biblical principles to the problems they face in the secular world.[460] The missional Christian should shift his or her outlook concerning the people of his or her society. Where the tendency is to define members of one's community by the group of which he or she is a member, people should be constructively viewed as 'individuals with unfolding stories' who need to be loved one at a time.[461] Contributions to the poor are a part of horizontal community as in the pattern of the churches of Macedonia and Achaia who gave to the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. (Romans 15:26) "Christian community can and should be the context for evangelism and discipleship, a place where faith is professed and lived."[462]

Challenges of Small Group Ministry

Some challenge the biblical nature of small groups. Paul Proctor states emphatically that small groups originate in the field of psychology and are more therapeutic than edifying because people are more inclined to be transparent and share their feelings in a small group gathering. This leads to feelings and opinions rather than learning and integrating scriptural principles taught in the local church.[463] While the warning is a valid one, the role of relationships in spiritual formation must not be minimized.

In the same vein, a small group based on an incorrect operational basis will not produce optimal spiritual formation. The church has been great at developing small groups or leadership gatherings with the primary purpose of

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[459] Lesslie Newbigin, Pluralistic p. 229.
[460] Ibid. p. 230.
[461] Wayne Jacobsen and Clay Jacobsen, Authentic p. 27.
[462] Doug Pagitt, Reimaging p. 27.
[463] Paul Proctor, Changing Society http://www.newswithviews.com/PaulProctor/proctor52.htm, p. 8, April 13, 2006.

skill development.[464]   The thinking has been, "If we can teach them how to do it better, the church will be more successful." Participants in such small groups usually feel 'used.' Optimally, small group meetings present the opportunity for Christians to edify one another by building up one another to spur on toward constructive ministry.

At times, the makeup of the membership of a small group has been its downfall. When the gathering consists of people 'just like us,' or is based on socio-economic factors or affinities, as opposed to a holistic approach to life, these settings become comfortable and a justification for the status quo. Even groups seemingly based on an acceptable foundation may have inherent weaknesses. Those solely focused on truth seeking may meet together and diligently study the scriptures. Each person returns home with a greater understanding of scriptural principles, but often there is little or no personal interaction with other members in the group.[465] On the other hand, life-focused groups are characterized by a high degree of interaction between members. They compassionately share each other's burdens and provide support to each person in the group.[466] Both truth seeking and life-focused small groups fall short of a transformation-focused group. When these people meet in an unhurried setting, while thriving on the study of the scriptures and worshiping together, they personally interact and spiritual formation occurs.[467]

At times the church has attempted to develop community through standing against a common enemy, perhaps 'worldliness.' In these churches a fortress mentality emerges as the people bolster their defences against 'the forces of darkness' often minimizing any missional impact.   People, who meet

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[464] Bill Hull, The Disciple Making Pastor Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1988. In accordance with Ephesians 4:12, the thesis of Hull's book is that skill development is one of the main purposes of a small group.

[465] This form of community leans toward the acquisition of biblical knowledge leading to a well-informed student of the scriptures.

[466] These groups collectively solve the personal problems of its members and focus on acceptance and a well-understood self.

[467] Bill Donahue, Building p. 77. These are groups that know the truth about God and focus on authenticity leading to a well-ordered heart.

and share their positive and negative experiences, study the scriptures and consider their missional roles, will contribute to the common causes of spiritual growth and serving one another.[468]

Some small groups may form and fail due to the neglect of key formational principles such as the practice of meaningful prayer time, a mark of Christian communities. "Regular prayer needs to be the basis of the common life. The reason some experiments in community living have failed – sometimes disastrously so – is often due to the failure to realize that it is only the life of Christ among us that can keep us together."[469] The key difference between a small group that convenes for the sole purpose of playing pool on Tuesday nights, and a faith-based small group, is the influence and communion with the One who is the basis for their gathering. A prayer of surrender, the means into relationship with Jesus Christ, is the common element. The quality of vertical and horizontal relationships is maintained through prayer. Neglecting other key principles will bring similar results.

Dysfunctional people present challenges in the development of a church network of small groups. Behaviours such as non-compliance, passivity, aggression, narcissism or spiritualization may be manifested.[470] For example, a member with an emotional issue may become dependant on other group members. Further, a small group may become the venue for disgruntled church members to air their dissatisfaction with pastors or church leadership, even to the point of becoming political or abandoning the congregation.[471] Without proper boundaries or established expectations, an interest group may form with little or no spiritually formative activity.

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[468] Lyle Schaller, "Every Part Is an I: How Will the Body Function in an Age of Rising Individualism?" Leadership Journal, Fall 1999, p. 29.
[469] David Watson, I Believe in the Church London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1978, pp. 88-89.
[470] Henry Cloud and John Townsend, Making Small Groups Work Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 2004, Part 6, pp. 253-276.
[471] David B. Curtis, The Victor's Triad
http://www.bereanbiblechurch.org/transcripts/topical/series/the_victor's_triad_2.htm, p.1, April 13, 2006.

Small group leadership is an important criterion for success. Although video-based curriculum has been developed minimizing the need for strong leadership, a group is unlikely to experience longevity without a person who assumes a type of pastoral leadership. This person should exhibit spiritual gifts such as leadership, compassion and mercy.

The 'How' of Developing Community

With the understanding that small groups, formally or informally structured, contribute to community by serving as the seat of relationship building, church leadership must recognize their potential. Small groups create a setting that allows people to know each other on a personal level and engage in a transparent growth process through all types of life situations. Spiritual and character formation takes place as interactive and mutually beneficial relationships are formed.[472]

The purpose of a small group community is the strengthening of its members. "If the church is viewed as a community, its ministry will be person-oriented, focused on building structures of human interaction."[473] While one may assume that Christian fellowship is defined by the social gathering of the entire congregation, close examination will reveal that these events, whether weekly or more sporadically, do not produce true community. The church of Acts 2:42-47 is described as a group of people who ate together, prayed together, worshiped together, and ministered to the material and spiritual needs of others. The challenge for the leadership of small groups is to move beyond the mere conducting of a meeting to the formation of a group of people who are seeking to mature in their faith and are vitally interested in each other. This is a biblical community that has potential to lead to spiritual growth.[474] The

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[472] Gilbert Bilezikian, Community p. 54.
[473] Howard A. Snyder, Liberating p. 129.
[474] Julie A. Gorman, Community p. 111.

development of Christian community goes beyond sitting together in the same building, or participating in the same activities. It is by "doing life together."[475]

Others would concur with similar definitions of a small group. It is "a small collection of people who interact with each other, usually face to face, over time in order to reach goals."[476] In the church context, "a Christian small group is an intentional face-to-face encounter of no more than twelve people who meet on a regular basis with the purpose of growing in the knowledge and likeness of Jesus Christ."[477] These are helpful in that they emulate the intentional activity of the early church as they met in the homes of believers, as families first and also through *koinonia* groups. It is in these groups that an atmosphere of affirmation, openness, confidentiality, honesty, sensitivity, accountability and prayer are developed.[478]

Each model examined thus far has been carefully constructed in such a way as to consider the varying stages of people in their spiritual journey while maximizing spiritual formation. In addition to breaking down isolation, the community found in small groups inspire, strengthen, and protect individuals and families.[479] Should the congregation grow to a size mitigating personal interaction, a small group infrastructure should be seriously considered with an emphasis on facilitation of community as opposed to a legislative or control function. As a church grows numerically, leadership attention is directed increasingly to the large-group events and the need for intentional community building becomes imperative. Smaller churches may find that these groupings take place naturally but there may also be a tendency to default to a superficial level of community. For this reason local church leadership must continually evaluate congregational life to insure that the core value of community is active.

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[475] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Life Taken from the title.
[476] Ronald Adler and George Rodman, Understanding Human Communication: 4th ed. Fort Worth, TX: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1991, p. 224.
[477] Julie A. Gorman, Community p. 121.
[478] Em Griffin, Getting Together: A Guide for Good Groups Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988, p. 35-37.
[479] Gilbert Bilezikian, Community p. 177.

Generally speaking, models of small group ministry do not significantly differ. Similar basic concepts are applied in a variety of ways. Like any other church ministry, small groups may develop through trial and error. Donahue and Robinson recall the evolution of small groups at Willow Creek Community Church. Initially the church focused on training believers to share their faith separate from the small group system. Realizing that spiritual formation was not complementary to missional thinking, activity and focus, they integrated their small groups structure into the fabric of the entire church while also creating seeker small groups that would eventually yield believers who would continue to journey together in spiritual formation.[480] This resulted in a church of healthy small groups.

For the most part, the nature of the group's activity defines its type or model. They come together with different foci varying from evangelism, ministry tasks, fellowship, and pastoral care and are reflected in the labels used to describe them: covenant, discipleship ministry, special needs, or affinity groups.[481] If a church wishes to develop a pathway of spiritual formation, a model can be established around such categories as pre-evangelism, evangelism, enfolding, educating, enriching, empowering, enabling and equipping.[482]

The use of labels for the types of small groups is helpful. Pantego Bible Church in Arlington, Texas, uses function oriented terms; spiritual formation, evangelism, reproduction, volunteerism, international missions, care and extending compassion.[483] Willow Creek Community Church in Barrington, Illinois uses labels that indicate the type of people in their membership: disciple-making, community, service, seeker or support groups.[484] For some churches a thematic orientation is inherent in the description of their small group structure. At Fellowship Bible Church in Little Rock, Arkansas small groups are simplified

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[480] Bill Donahue, Building p. 167.
[481] Jeffrey Arnold, Big pp. 193-198.
[482] Julie A. Gorman, Community p. 303.
[483] Randy Frazee, Connecting pp. 82-83.
[484] Bill Donahue, Building p. 183.

around the common cause of 'serving needs' in the church, in the community and around the world.[485] An outgrowth of people serving together is the strengthening of members of the church's family and their relationships such as their marriages.

A comparison of models is of assistance when a local church leadership develops its small group ministry. Julie Gorman's model focuses on the believer and strives to direct their spiritual journey. Randy Frazee emphasizes the mobilization and deployment of the believer with an inherent expectation concerning service within the church and missionality outside the walls of the church. Willow Creek's model is a reflection of reality recognizing that people are at different stages in life and have different needs.[486] Willow Creek Community Church has experienced movement between the different types of groups. A person may begin in a support group, move into a service group and ultimately join a discipleship group.[487] The Fellowship Bible Church model, although strong in expectations concerning serving, does not explicitly provide structure for spiritual formation.[488]

Once church mission and vision have been established, the structure and type of local church small groups should be complementary.   Within the individual group, church leadership needs to declare, promote and educate around basic foundational similarities. For example, to be a valid functioning small group the following components should be evident in their activity in the categories of spiritual formation:[489] authentic and accountable relationships and missional activity. If a church is seeking greater missionality, and strategizing

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[485] Robert Lewis, The Church of Irresistible Influence Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 2001, p. 82.

[486] Various support groups identify and minister to specific needs such as alcohol abuse or marriage issues.

[487] Because the church services and ministries are based on a small group structure, it is conceivable that a person may be a member of more than one small group; one for discipleship, one for service or ministry.

[488] Robert Lewis, Irresistible, p. 82.

[489] Urban T. Holmes, Spirituality p. 120.

around such a value, the strengths of the proposed model should reflect this emphasis.

Although a large church may seek to diversify the purposes of its small group structure using a variety of criteria, Portico has chosen to create a model similar to Willow Creek's that is equally welcomes each person irrespective of where they are in their spiritual journey.[490] Diversity is encouraged for two reasons; to reflect the demographics of the congregation and community as a whole and to allow the multiplicity of backgrounds and levels of Christian faith and experience to impact all who attend.

To insure that members of small groups have optimal access to the benefits afforded in these settings, Portico has characterized all small group gatherings in one of two categories: primary and secondary. Primary groups are those where genuine, authentic discipleship through relationship is the aim. Secondary groups are those which may be convened around task or a non-discipleship type of affinity. For example, the hospitality team, consisting of ushers and welcomers would be considered secondary while the grade six boys' small group would be categorized as primary.

Church ministry may have more impact and be more effective as people serve in a group. If the church, by nature, is a servant community, members of that community may find that the serving aspect of Christian life is best expressed communally in small group[491] with not only a view of serving the body of believers as a whole but also those with whom one serves in cross-cultural settings. Consider a recorded conversation between a pastor and his son who said, "I understand team community now. I understand it's more than just working with other people, it's doing life deeply with one another as we serve

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[490] This will be discussed in length in Chapter VII, p. 316.

[491] Melvin E. Dieter and Daniel N. Berg. eds., The Church: An Inquiry into Ecclesiology from an Biblical Theological Perspective Anderson, IN: Warner Press, 1984, p. 487. _Adding the "M" to Teams,_ http://perimeter-community.followers.net/Small_Group_Serving_Oppts_.Adding_the__M__to_T_E_A_M_S_, p. 1, April 13, 2006.

together. And there's a huge difference between the two."[492] To be successful, ministry teams must function together as a small group.

Organizing and designing a small group model does have its challenges concerning orientation. Churches firmly rooted in modernity may view small groups as 'just another program.' Taken to its logical conclusion, due to the busy schedules of church participants, the addition of small groups to a previously existing menu of programming options will not result in the formation of congregational community. Small group involvement will simply be 'one more church responsibility.'

This highlights the discussion of the difference between a church 'with small groups,' a church 'of small groups' and 'the church is' small groups.[493] In a church 'with small groups,' this ministry is just another disciple making activity which functions independently of other programs and is not viewed as integrally important to the direction and development of the church. The monitoring and accountability of these small groups is minimal and they tend toward a closed inward focus. The church 'of small groups' encourages every person to be part of this essential congregational aspect. A leadership structure is put into place which installs coaches who equip and empower small group leaders.[494] These groups believe in evangelism and employ the 'empty chair' mindset.[495] The church 'is small groups' views the small group gathering as the primary activity of the church. The small group leader is the primary pastor of its members and church leadership and staff exist to support them. The primary purpose of a group is to grow and birth new groups.[496] The choice of orientation has impact on the development of 'group mentality.' For biblical community to take place local church leadership must intentionally design settings for relationship building

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[492] Bill Hybels, Courageous Leadership Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 2002, p. 74.
[493] See Appendix 1, p. 147.
[494] Portico is at this stage in their small group development.
[495] An empty chair is placed in the group reminding the members to pray for those who do not have faith and asking God to use them to convey the message of Christ to a non-believer who will become a part of a group as time goes on.
[496] Dan Lentz, Small Group Dynamics from Small Group Discipleship Models www.SmallGroups.com., p. 1, March 2001.

through the promotion of a small group network.[497] Continual articulation of this vision is necessary for the health and growth of individuals and local church.

The size of small groups is an important consideration and bears some inherent challenges. Even though people have an innate social need to belong and interact with others, North American societal values are in opposition. Even though there is a rise in the number of small groups, people still tend to gravitate toward larger gatherings.[498] To be effective the local church should minimize all-church gatherings and seek continually to 'plant' new small groups. These gatherings will grow, but to retain effectiveness they need to grow to a maximum of ten to twelve people. In this size, and in an unstructured principle-driven format, cohesion, transparency and spiritual interaction take a minimum of fifteen to twenty hours to initiate. [499]

Meaningful personal sharing in the group, with action beyond the group, should be encouraged with due consideration as to whom to invite. To use the criterion of affinity, people gathering around a common interest (all motorcycle *aficionados* within a ten-mile radius) may be the target group. If a neighbourhood is the target area it may refer to homes in a four-block radius.[500] However, affinity groups scattered throughout a twenty-mile radius do not work very well in creating true community. Over a period of several years, some churches have shifted their church to a confined geographic model based on smaller communities.[501] The benefits of these small groups are that,

> we see each other frequently ... we meet spontaneously at the park ... Home Group meetings have become the highlight of our week ... Our experiences have not happened because we have set out to find a need; they have happened because of the availability of our group to be used in our neighbourhood as God opened up needs to us. We were

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[497] This is in stark contrast to a church which introduces another program (small groups) in addition to all that it is doing programmatically.

[498] This is in transition. As discussed in the culture section of this thesis, the postmodern is reacting against an individualistic society and seeking to fulfill their craving for relationship. This may be the church's finest hour for the development of community.

[499] Robert Leslie, Sharing Groups in the Church Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1979, pp. 29-30.

[500] Randy Frazee, Connecting p. 161.

[501] Ibid.

able to respond because of our level of commitment to each other, which is fostered by the frequency and closeness of our contact with each other.[502]

To highlight the neighbourhood aspect of small groups, some churches, including Portico, have experimented with 'zone seating.'[503] Members of the congregation are asked to sit in an area of the church representing the zone in which they live. This becomes a living illustration of the number of people who live in each particular region of the city and gives the 'I'm not alone in reaching my neighbourhood' feeling. Without ignoring affinity, small groups can be established that can have an impact on people and organizations in the neighbourhoods where they live and meet.[504] Ideally this will take place within generational demographics, from kindergarten to seniors. It appears that teens and 'twenty-somethings' may wish to maintain their congregational identity while continuing to be committed to small group membership.

Small groups are not intended solely to meet the needs of those within the groups. If Christians are to be missional people, they should capitalize on any opportunity to 'touch' those with whom they are in relationship. However, it appears that when members of a small group begin collectively to focus on the neighbourhood, the effort is more effective through the combined resources as represented in a small organized group of people.

Churches may administratively develop one of two types of small group structures; centrally-motivated or centrally-controlled as determined by the coordinator's expectations, leadership style and approach to choice of curriculum. If the leader chooses a controlling model there is little allowance for freedom in the development or expression of small groups. A centrally-motivated model may be marked by a small group network leader who is *laissez faire,* and any

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[502] Ibid. pp. 162-163.

[503] This is based on two conversations between Sandro Di Sabatino, Small Groups Director at Portico and Dan Linrud, pastor of Living Word Christian Fellowship in Hamilton, ON, on December 12, 2003 and Rex Minor of Willow Creek Community Church, Barrington, IL on October 22, 2004.

[504] A resource that is helpful in aligning the church around the theme of community, including evangelism, is Rick Warren ed., Better Together: 40 Days of Community Lake Forest, CA: Purpose Driven Publishing, 2004.

form of coaching may be undermined by a permissive atmosphere.[505] Small groups, and their leadership, will benefit from a structure that is supportive, empowering, instructive, resourcing and allows for freedom of developmental expression. A constructive compromise can be found by the choice of small group curriculum. Upon an assessment of the spiritual needs of a congregation, some churches have chosen to align around a central theme such as *The Purpose-Driven Life* or *The Forty Days of Purpose* campaign.[506] Such a curriculum gives a structure of study around which a small group may meet without losing their identity.

Conclusion

When God created humanity in his image, he designed men and women not to be alone, physically, emotionally or spiritually. The thread of community and relationship winds its way through the entire scriptural record. Arising out of the rabbinical model. Jesus formed a small discipleship group which he trained to be the early leaders of a rapidly expanding New Testament church. Luke records the communal nature of church members in the Book of Acts.

Although spiritual formation has a personal component, and certain aspects are best exercised in solitude, other aspects such as collective prayer, teaching and worship can only be expressed in relationship with others. There is something to be said for gathering in one place and worshipping together and hearing the weekly sermon.

However, there is also a need for the believer to meet in a smaller, more informal and transparency-friendly settings for interaction. This small community of believers is recognized as a corporate and individual response to God. In these settings relationships have the potential to develop into an increased degree. These settings, apart from the corporate church gatherings, can provide opportunity for interaction, giving opportunity for believers and non-believers to spiritually impact the lives of others. Additionally, members of a

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[505] Julie A. Gorman, <u>Community</u> p. 301-302.
[506] Rick Warren, <u>Purpose Driven Life</u> http://www.purposedrivenlife.com/, p. 1, February 19, 2005.

small group have the potential for increased effectiveness when working together missionally or serving the local church. The challenge is for the local church to reshape its ministries so that any group can advance from being a group of independent believers to member interdependence. This is one of a number of challenges when changing the culture of a local church.

Appendix 1

Small Group Models

	CHURCH WITH GROUPS	CHURCH OF GROUPS	CHURCH IS GROUPS
Purpose	Help People find a Place in the Church	A Means of Building the Church as Community	The Primary Expression of the Church
Organizing Principle	Someone Wants to Start a Group	Strategy using Affinity with Geography considered	Strategy using Geography with Affinity considered
Getting in a Group	Placement System (Centralized)	Group Invitation or Assimilation Event (Decentralized)	Assigned by Geography (Group responsible)
Group Membership	Optional for Growth Not Required for Church Membership	Essential for Growth Required for Church Membership	Essential for Growth Required for Church Membership
Role of Group Leaders	Mostly Reactive Leader	Proactive Shepherd-Leader	Pastoral Shepherd-Authority
Use of Curriculum	Chosen by Leader	Recommended by Staff or Chosen by Leader	Designated by Staff
Group Meeting Format	Designed by Leader or Curriculum	Designed by Leader + Ministry Strategy	Designed by Leader + Designated Pattern
Church Authority over Group	Low	Low	High
Church Monitoring of Groups	Low	High	High
Group-based Evangelistic Activity	Possible	Encouraged	Expected

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[507] Russ Robinson and Bill Donahue, <u>The Seven Deadly Sins of Small Group Ministry</u> Zondervan Publishing Co., 2002. p. 22.

The Missional Church

Introduction

It is unwise for the Christian or local church leadership to ignore the missional statements of Jesus as found in the gospel writings. In this chapter the missional activities of Jesus and the missional practices of New Testament churches will be examined with a view to giving direction for missional renewal at Portico. This will be followed by the proposal of potential missional practices to enable Portico to engage the context in which it is located. Finally, suggestions concerning the role of cross-cultural involvement[508] in the missional church will be outlined.

There has been an evolution concerning congregational activities and their evangelistic significance. In the 1960s, the Sunday evening service of Pentecostal churches was oriented toward evangelism. Witnessing was a term used to describe the Christian's personal interaction with a seeker. Although the term 'missional,' coined by the contributing members of The Gospel in our Culture Network,[509] is relatively new to evangelical churches,[510] the renewal of missional emphasis has increasingly intensified over the last decade or so. This word is deployed in the description of a congregation actively engaged, personally and corporately, in all aspects of Great Commission activity. The advantage of the usage of this nomenclature is that existing church leadership does not attach historical meaning.

During 2003 and 2004 a consortium of Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada missiologists and pastors led by James Craig and Irving Whitt met to define, theoretically and practically, the missional church. They established a working definition:

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[508] Traditionally referred to as 'missions.'

[509] Empirical Indicators http://www.gocn.org/news103.htm#empiricalindicators, p. 1, December 28, 2004.

[510] It should be noted that, because the focus of this thesis concerns changing the culture of the local assembly, for the purposes of this chapter the term "church" refers to congregations. While recognizing the importance of the Church universal and catholic, and its role in missionality, some quotes which refer to the Church, have been applied to the local congregational setting.

> The missional church recognizes that mission is the DNA of the church. It embraces the truth that mission is not something the Church does, it is fundamental to what the church is as the herald, agent and embodiment of the reign of God on earth.[511]

Reference was also made to the relationship between the Great Commission and the missional church.

> The missional church embraced a more holistic sense of the church's calling, not simply to proclaim a message, as if the Great Commission was the only thing Jesus asked of the church, but also to live out that message in compassionate service to the needs of humankind, recognizing that the Great Commandment also defines the church's nature and calling.[512]

Missionality is not confined to one type of activity of the church. It is integral to the character of the local assembly. "The church exists by mission as fire exists by burning."[513] This extrapolation of a biblical metaphor indicates "the sole purpose of our the visible fellowship - to be the fuel upon which the fire is kindled in the earth."[514]

For purposes of this study, outward expressions and patterns of New Testament missionality will be examined in order to develop a contemporary model of a missional church. While recent evangelical church history illustrates that most churches have separated mission[515] and missions, it will be suggested that missions[516] flows out of the local church as a natural extension and expression of mission.

The Missionality of the New Testament Church

While it was left to the early church leaders to organize the local church, they understood that Jesus intended for "mission [to be] the essence of the church."[517] "The church is that body of men [sic] through which it is the will of

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[511] James D. Craig and Irving A. Whitt, <u>Theology and Philosophy of Missions</u> Unpublished CD-Rom, February 2004. pp. 97-98.

[512] Ibid. p. 98.

[513] Emil Brunner as cited by John V. Taylor, <u>The Go Between God</u> Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1972, p. 133.

[514] John V. Taylor, <u>Between</u> p. 133.

[515] In this instance mission could be defined as witness to the surrounding community, as both personal (believer) and corporate (congregational) functions.

[516] The traditional use of the word missions refers solely to evangelistic activity on foreign soil.

[517] J. J. Kritzinger, <u>You Will Be My Witnesses</u> Pretoria, S.A.: NG Kerkboekhandel Transvaal, 1984, p. 4.

God that the Gospel of everlasting salvation through Christ would be proclaimed to all ... everywhere, to the ends of the earth and the end of time."[518]

A biblical ecclesiology informs us that the Church operates in three relationships or directions. Worship offered to God has an upward focus; the inward or person directed focus is for edification, purification, education and discipline while the outward focus concerns world evangelization and service ministries.[519] While each of the dimensions (upward, inward and outward) should be present in the local church, it appears that they are viewed as separate, and often non-integrated activities creating an inherent weakness in the congregation. "Often we have stripped ourselves of this dynamic by artificially separating our worship with the church and our witness outside."[520]

In some instances church leadership often mistakenly assumes that the local church is in existence only for those who attend services. Contrary to developing a missional agenda, the "Western church [has] tended to shape and fit the gospel into its cultural context and made the church's institutional extension its priority... the [local] church ... is not the purpose or goal of the gospel, but rather its instrument and witness."[521] This may be referred to as 'introverted churchliness' rising from "the identification of the Church with the Kingdom of God, which results in the loss of sight with respect to the world and the Kingdom of God."[522] For the purpose of study or effective implementation it must be recognized that all three dimensions are necessary, complementary, and inseparable. "The essential link between the Church and the Kingdom, and the fact that the Church stands as a witness of the Kingdom, restores to the Church its sense of mission."[523]

The development of community in the local church family can potentially impact those who observe its members from outside the family of faith. Non-

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[518] Stephen Neill as quoted by J. J. Kritzinger, Witnesses p. 4.
[519] George W. Peters, A Biblical Theology of Missions Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1972, p. 208.
[520] Ken Ganankan, Kingdom Concerns Bangalore, India: Theological Book Trust, 1989, p. 119.
[521] Darrell L. Guder, Missional p. 5. Darrell L. Guder, Continuing p. 49.
[522] G. C. Berkouwer, The Church Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976, p. 418.
[523] Ken Ganankan, Kingdom p. 118.

participants will be intrigued and attracted to Christian faith through the influence of the close and inviting relationships between the people of God in spite of human foibles and weaknesses. "The mission of the church is to establish relationships--not simply between individuals and God, but among individuals whom God has called into a family."[524] The term 'God's people' describes the influence of community upon its context. "Only if the church desires in all things to be God's people, and thereby also the church of Jesus Christ, will she be able to develop the strongest impact on the world."[525] This type of church can be referred to as a mission community.

It would be more accurate to describe the Christian life as a process which includes the time period leading up to one's faith decision and the subsequent exercise of spiritual disciplines[526] leading to spiritual formation. For three years Jesus had modelled a process of discipleship marked by relationship, teaching and practical application. He "intended the mission of the apostolic faith community as the necessary consequence of God's redemptive work for all creation."[527] Commanding his disciples to make disciples of all nations, (Matthew 28:19) Jesus was instructing them to facilitate people on a spiritual journey as opposed to taking the approach that by making a faith decision they had arrived at a destination.

At times, the evangelical church has interpreted missionality as the conversion aspect of spiritual life and de-emphasized subsequent engagement in a process of discipleship. Practices which lead to spiritual maturation are a function of community and are ultimately designed for Kingdom growth. "Paul's ecclesiology is one that reminds the Church of the prime purpose of being

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[524] Donald H. Jewell as cited in Wayne Stumme, ed., Bible and Mission Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1986, p. 78.

[525] Georg F. Vicedom, The Mission of God St. Louis, MS: Concordia Publishing House, 1965, p. 94.

[526] Dallas Willard, The Spirit of the Disciplines New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1991. p. xi. The word 'discipline' comes from the same root as 'disciple' which would intimate that a disciple matures as they engage in spiritual disciplines..

[527] Darrell L. Guder, The Continuing Conversion of the Church Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000, p. 49.

involved in God's ultimate plan through his redemptive mission."[528] If the incarnation of Jesus served as God's presence in the world, it would follow that his ministry would become a model for the establishment of a missional church.[529] Once a local body of believers understands God's holistic missional design for their presence in a local community or society, they can strategize in such a way as to bring maximum impact.

The early church recognized the role of the Holy Spirit in the evangelization-discipleship process. Acts 1:8 does not state 'you shall witness' with an emphasis on missional activity. Rather the Holy Spirit empowers the Church 'to be.'[530] Members of a missional church recognize the role of The Holy Spirit, individually and corporately, as the One who empowers Christians to a higher level of living, enabling them to be witnesses by presence and proclamation. While there may be an attempt to perform missional activities by relying on one's own strengths and abilities, "This pointing to Christ can only be done by the Holy Spirit, but he may use both the words by which we tell of him and the style we live in him."[531] This enables the Christian to partner with,

> the Spirit of God to make men [sic] profoundly aware of Jesus Christ, of what he is in himself and of what he makes available for the whole world, so that in him they may be confronted by the question and call of God and make their free choice.[532]

This is accomplished by committing all present and future missional activity to God in prayer. Such was the case when the leadership of the New Testament churches gathered, prayed, discussed and aligned their thinking with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 15:25-28) Such an openness to the Spirit's direction led to the outpouring of the Spirit. This served as a transition for Jesus' followers from disciples who were inwardly focused to outreach-oriented apostles who were instrumental in the establishment of the New Testament church under the

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[528] Ken Ganankan, Kingdom p. 137.
[529] Darrell L. Guder, Conversion p.148.
[530] Ken Ganankan, Kingdom p.173.
[531] John V. Taylor, Between p. 136.
[532] Ibid.

guidance of the Holy Spirit.[533] Such 'walking in the Spirit' (Romans 8:1-4; Galatians 5:25) refers to an ongoing relationship and reliance on the Holy Spirit in everyday life for missional activities and serves as a pattern for today's church leadership. God uses human initiatives and activities submitted to the Holy Spirit's direction to facilitate the entire timeline of spiritual formation. The missional church should include instruction concerning this dimension as part of the regular teaching menu and operational methodology.

Near the end of Jesus' ministry, he commissioned all of his followers to make disciples of all nations. (Matthew 28:18-20) As time progressed, the leadership of the New Testament church was preoccupied with *missio Dei.* They viewed themselves as full participants in the task of spreading the good news of the gospel to the then-known world. Paul endorsed the intent of the Great Commission when he stated his obligation to Greeks and non-Greeks in a letter written to Romans. (Romans 1:14-15) The founder and prominent leader of the early church set forth principles that prompted its members to be active participants in missional activity, including evangelistic activities such as presence, proclamation and persuasion.[534]

The church in Jerusalem engaged in worshipful, relational and missional activities such as selling their possessions and giving to the poor (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37) in their own setting and experienced exponential growth.[535] (Acts 2:41) As the church in Jerusalem grew, they commissioned Paul, Barnabus and others to other regions of the then-known world with a mandate to establish churches in the same form as the one in Jerusalem. What at first appeared to be a disaster (the persecution of the Christians and the death of Stephen) resulted in establishment of a church in Antioch, and later became a significant missionary base. (Acts 13:2-4; 14:26-28) Christians spread to Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, initially evangelizing only the Jews. Men from Cyprus and Cyrene

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[533] Darrell Guder, Conversion p. 50.
[534]Wilbert R. Shenk, Transfiguration of Mission Waterloo, ON: Herald Press, 1993, p. 155.
[535] Three thousand were added to the church on the Day of Pentecost.

expanded the missional effort by traveling to Antioch and declaring the gospel to the Greeks. (Acts 11:19-21) In Ephesus, Paul found a group of John the Baptist's disciples and a nucleus of about twelve became the "nucleus of a budding church."[536] From this, church missional activity spread throughout the entire province. (Acts 19:8-10)

A closer examination of the New Testament reveals that there were at least three types of local missional congregations that interacted with each other.[537] In Acts 2-6 the first believers gathered at the temple to listen to the teaching of the apostles while reconciling their Jewish heritage with their Christian faith. Conflicts arose and drove the early church members to smaller local congregations that met in homes. As Paul travelled with his missionary companions, they planted local churches in a similar fashion to the Jewish synagogues. In his writings he also referred to congregations that met in homes such as Lydia's, (Acts 16:14-16) Acquilla and Priscilla's (1 Corinthians 16:19) and Gaius'. (Romans 16:23) While the actual congregational form and meeting setting is unknown, it appears that in cities such as Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth and Rome, there were collective city congregations. In each case, these groups, regardless of size or culture, were inherently missional as they locally, regionally and internationally expressed God's redemptive reign in their worship, care, witness, visioning and stewardship. The picture of the early church is a group of passionate people who, while concerned about evangelizing their own culture in their own cities and villages, equally supported those who traveled to other cities and cultures to declare the gospel.

Toward a Missional Church Model

Crusade evangelism of the last half of the twentieth century, such as was conducted by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association,[538] set the tone for much

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[536] Wilbert R. Shenk, Transfiguration p. 159.

[537] Craig Van Gelder, The Essence of the Church Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2000, p. 167.

[538] Billy Graham and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association http://www.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/bio.html, p. 1, April 14, 2006.

evangelical activity. Canadian evangelicals followed suit and organized crusades in major cities.[539] As a result, missional expression in the local church or among a cooperative of a group of churches, became project or event oriented.

The overriding concern in the lives of many Christians is what is in the church for them. One should not be surprised that, in contrast to a Christological focus on those without faith, the local church has become a social gathering of self-interested people who understand the church as a vendor of religious goods and services and are constantly shopping and trading up for churches that can more effectively meet their needs.[540] Church leadership designed ongoing weekly activities focused on the health of the congregation. "In the ecclesiocentric approach of Christendom, mission [at best] became only one of the many programs of the church."[541]

Little or no emphasis was placed upon the responsibility of the believer to establish relationships with those who had not yet responded to Christ's offer of redemption. In fact, pastors in churches with a holiness heritage would spend inordinate amounts of time preaching separation from the world all the while wondering why people were not responding to the gospel message. [542] Simultaneously, evangelical Christians found it difficult to live out prescribed legalistic values which undermined the church's authenticity and relevance.[543] These were in sharp contrast to biblically designed life activities which integrated faith and,

> ... activities [such as] earning a living, bringing up a family, making friends...[the difference is] Christians will try to do these things to the glory of God, which is to say

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[539] Evangelism and Evangelicals
http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0002671, p. 1, April 14, 2006.
[540] Ibid. Gary E. Gilley, The Market-Driven Church: A Look Behind the Scenes
http://www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/Psychology/cgrowth/mkt.htm, p. 1, August 6, 2006. This has been an espoused church growth principle since the 1970s when the mantra was "find a need and fulfil it." Such an orientation has given credibility to this expectation on the part of parishioners in North American evangelical churches.
[541] Darrell L. Guder, The Missional Church Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998, p. 6.
[542] This preaching was based on texts such as 2 Corinthians 6:17 (KJV).
[543] James Craig Philosophy p. 103.

> that they will try to perceive what God is up to in each of these manifold activities and will seek to do it with him by bearing responsibility for themselves or other men.[544]

By being inwardly focused, the purpose of the local church becomes counterproductive to the missionality Christ intended when he said, "You shall be my witnesses." (Acts 1:8) While it is important that Christians attend services and small group activities for personal edification and spiritual growth, one needs to be warned against this as the sole purpose for church involvement.

> When the [pastoral] office merely endeavors to edify the congregation and to achieve the salvation of individual members, it is questionable whether the goal of mission is attained because this does not provide the members with the change to find joy in their faith through service and sacrifice.[545]

These events must be differentiated by categorizing them as either evangelistic or nurturing, toward those with faith or those without. Ultimately the goal is the successful facilitation of mission.[546] Missional church leadership must come to the awareness that a "passion for lost people must rest upon a foundation of spiritual maturity in each member."[547] The local church is to be the setting where believers are encouraged and equipped, through the process of Christian discipleship, for missional activity.[548] Simultaneously, as an organization, the local church may provide opportunity for members to be engaged in missional activities.

Missional thinking, individual or corporate, does not permit activity without a focus on those who are without faith. While the purposes of the church may be multi-faceted,[549] and there are those functions and activities that are inwardly directed, it was not created to be an exclusive organization with a closed

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[544] John V. Taylor, <u>Between</u> p. 135.

[545] Georg F. Vicedom, <u>Mission</u> p. 91.

[546] Joe S. Ellis, <u>The Church on Purpose</u> Cincinnati, OH: Standard Publishing, 1982 pp. 34-35.

[547] James D. Craig and Irving A. Whitt, <u>Philosophy</u> p. 105.

[548] The term discipleship summarizes in one word the journey of the Christian post faith decision and includes a wide variety of personal and corporate faith-based activities.

[549] For purposes of this discussion, they have been reduced to three; spiritual formation, community and missional activity.

membership. "The Church is the Church only when it exists for others."[550] The local congregation is a place where people can find hope and faith. Every aspect of congregational culture of missional churches is rooted in God's mission. "Missional churches feel the urgency of winning people to personal faith in Jesus Christ...to preach the Good News to everyone and to make disciples of all people remains the active commission given to every church."[551]

With this in mind, leadership must determine the role or model that can fulfill the missional nature of the church. The missional church is a community that joins God in his mission of saving the world, and this is accomplished by expressing love for fallen humanity. As existing churches become more focused on a missional purpose, those who are consumers will be challenged regarding their personal missionality. The core value of reaching the lost must be inherent in every activity of the local church; "the gospel is the evangel...then everything the church is and does and says should be evangelistic"[552] while being seeded into the life of every believer.

This is a change from previous ways of thinking. "The missional church movement realizes that we are no longer chaplains to a Christian culture. We must be a missionary people in our own land."[553] This is accomplished by the establishment of "a distinct community to participle in [Jesus'] life for the sake of the world. The mission work of God ... includes the formation of a visible community demonstrating the reign of God."[554]

> The Gospel is communicated to the world not only through ideas, beliefs, or ideals, but through reconciled and reconciling communities of people – communities formed and transformed by their "indwelling" of God's new reality. In other words the gospel is not only that by which the church lives, the gospel itself lives through the life and witness of the church.[555]

[550] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers from Prison New York, NY: Macmillan Publishers, 1953, p. 203.

[551] Howard A. Snyder and Daniel V. Runyon, Decoding p. 51.

[552] Darrell L. Guder, Be My Witnesses Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdman's Publishing Co., 1985, p. 135.

[553] Clark D. Cowden, The Missional Church Project http://www.sjpresbytery.org/Missional.pdf, p. 2, December 31, 2004.

[554] www.acu.edu/academics/cbs/newletter/2003-04.html p. 1, January 3, 2005,.

[555] Space Between My Ears Blog http://spacebetweenmyears/blogspot.com/2004, p. 1, December 31, 2004,

Connecting ethereal purposes and earthly practices can be challenging. Recognizing that God may have transcendent rationale that we may or may not perceive, such as bringing glory to himself, a leader may question how this is practically expressed. Since the church has been called to the task of missional activity, successful leadership recognizes the Church (and the church) as the agent to fulfill his mission in the world. [556]

If the fundamental character is rooted in the perspective of God's mission to the world, there will be an intrinsic, inseparable relation between the church and her calling. The church leadership's definition of a church and its task will determine the congregation's level of missionality. "Because the church is God's unique creation and not the result of historical and natural processes, and because she is God's unique possession through Jesus Christ, it is to be expected that she has been designed for a unique purpose and mission."[557] From its inception a local church congregation is called to be the Spirit's instrument in the activity out of which it was born.[558]

As a redemptive community the local church is the product of God's redemptive action to the world. For those who are part of a local church community, there is an obligation to contribute to the carrying out of the church's ultimate purpose, the evangelization of the world and the transforming of society meaning that, "missionary congregations live out their spiritual life not only as the church, but also as God's people in the world, as a force to transform society to more closely resemble the kingdom of God."[559]

To be missionally successful the congregation may adopt a ministry philosophy "based on the idea that the essential nature of the church is missionary, rather than mission being a task give to the church"[560] This shifts

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[556] Joe S. Ellis, Purpose p. 34.
[557] George W. Peters, Missions p. 209.
[558] Orlando E. Costas, The Church and its Mission Wheaton, IL: Tyndale Publishers, 1974, p. 8.
[559] Charles Van Engen, God's Missionary People Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991, p. 115.
[560] Lesslie Newbigin as cited by Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, An Introduction to Ecclesiology Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002, p. 151.

mission from being a mere function to describing its essential nature.[561] "Mission is not an addendum to the doctrine of the church. It is the calling of the church in the world. If it is neglected or abandoned, the life of the church, not just its work, is threatened."[562] The efforts of missional churches are centered in missional activity. "If evangelization is the heart of mission, then evangelization must be the heart of ministry."[563] Church leaders, often being results-oriented, attempt to answer the question of what would make this church missional by resorting to the establishment of a "series of ministry functions such as worship, education, service and witness [which results in] a patterned set of human behaviors to be structured and managed."[564] This preoccupies church leadership's involvement in organizational functions to the exclusion of developing the church as a functioning missional community.[565]

Each generation of church leadership must re-examine God's expectations and purposes for the Church. There is a renaissance in missional thinking as people rediscover that God is interested in the spiritual well being of others and desires that the church reach them.

> The ecclesiocentric understanding of mission has been replaced during this century by a profoundly theocentric re-conceptualization of Christian mission. We have come to see that mission is not merely an activity of the church. Rather mission is the result of God's initiative, rooted in God's purposes to restore and heal creation.[566]

Missionality must be foremost in the mind of church leadership as they envision and strategize for the future. The church, motivated by its calling in the world though mission, finds its essential purpose in its participation in *missio Dei* and engages in programs and activities which fulfill the missional mandate.[567] Such

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[561] Craig Van Gelder, Essence p. 31.
[562] D. A. Carson. ed., The Church in the Bible and the World Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1987, p. 45.
[563] Darrell L. Guder, Continuing p. 150.
[564] Craig Van Gelder, Essence p. 23.
[565] It should be noted that this describes one of the major culture shifts for Portico. Deeper consideration is being given to "What do we have to *be* to become a missional church?" instead of "What do we have to *do* to become a missional church?"
[566] Darrell L. Guder, Missional p. 4.
[567] Charles Van Engen, Missionary p. 30.

an understanding impacts the way in which pastors and ministry leaders view the church and the design of its ministries.

The task of articulating a congregational missional strategy remains. On one extreme, the church could passively impact its context as a positive presence. (Matthew 5:13-16) However, it appears that active intentionality is more in line with scriptural principles. The church exists for "the purpose of serving the world by bearing witness to Jesus Christ and to the reconciliation of the world with God through Him."[568] The church is more than a passive presence; it is an agency of proclamation.

When Jesus came to earth, his reputation and actions were beyond reproach, but it was in his activity of preaching, teaching, mentoring and other public ministry that listeners were able to respond to a call to faith. Similarly, there is a unity between Church and mission which should prompt every church to reflect on the conditions and manner and extent of the service of the church to its context.[569] The missional church must establish an entire congregational culture in which philosophy, activity, events and tasks focus and engage the value of missionality.

One danger of making mission central to the structure and ministry of the contemporary church may be in the modern tendency to institutionalize redemptive activities.[570] The new apostolic era became institutionalized during the Byzantine era, to the point of amalgamation of church and state. If one was Roman, one was also a Christian. Through questionable methodology, the Byzantines evangelized Western Europe and the Islamic frontier.[571] While the church today is in the process of renewal in the area of missionality, it must refrain from reducing the propagation of the gospel to a mere program instead

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[568] Dietrich Bonhoeffer as cited by John V. Taylor, Between p. 135.
[569] Johannes Blauw, The Missionary Nature of the Church Toronto, ON: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1962, p. 121.
[570] Darrell L. Guder, Conversion p. 187.
[571] Fighting Terrorism http://virtual pulpit.virtualseminary.net/Fighting_Terrorism.htm, p. 1, April 14, 2006.

of an inherent life value of the church and believers. [572]For churches which have strategically developed a theology and ecclesiology centred on mission there may be a tendency to label everything as mission. "If everything is mission, nothing is mission."[573] Although this is certainly more acceptable than an absence of any vestige of missionality, the challenge is to establish balance between, "mission describes ...everything the church is sent into the world to do"[574] and creating a self-propagating culture of missionality. The missional church will rise to the task of pressing on toward missionality by evaluating, prioritizing and pruning existing church activities while initiating a holistic church environment marked by new endeavors based on their potential for missionality.

At times, the scope of the task of the missional church seems to become more complicated than it needs to be. Various theologies, including Liberation[575] and Feminist[576] schools of thought, create a missional focus of salvation that neglects personal redemption in favour of an impact on a society. Although such theologies positively affect the lives of people, the task of the church, simply stated, is to make disciples.

> We are not sent to preach sociology, but salvation; not economics but evangelism; not reform but redemption; not culture but conversion; not progress but pardon; not a new social order but a new birth; not revolution but regeneration; not renovation but revival; not resuscitation, but resurrection; not a new organization but a new creation; not democracy but the gospel; not civilization but Christ..."[577]

Mission, however, does not exclude social action. On one occasion, Jesus explained the attention he was giving to the disenfranchised by telling his disciples he was anointed by the Spirit, "to preach good news to the poor." (Luke 4:18) The missional church has an obligation to reach all segments of society whether 'upwardly mobile' or 'down and out.'

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[572] Darrell L. Guder, Continuing p. 188-189.Guder refers to Bosch who calls this Reductionism.
[573] Bishop Stephen Neill as cited by Johannes Blauw, Nature p. 121.
[574] John R. W. Stott, Christian Mission in the Modern World Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975, p. 30.
[575] For example, Robert McAfee Brown, Liberation Theology Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993, p. 51, 61.
[576] Rosemary Radford Ruether, Womanguides: Readings Toward a Feminist Theology Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1985, p. 157.
[577] Hugh Thomson Kerr as cited in George W. Peters, Missions p. 209.

> Preach the gospel to the poor, however, does not mean preaching at the poor, but incarnating the Good News among the poor as Jesus Christ did, through healing, teaching, touching, preaching, and forming kingdom communities.[578]

The missional church does not define mission in terms of evangelistic activities beyond certain geographical boundaries.

> "The missional church, because it is tuned into global realities, will continually strive for a balanced approach to the stewardship of its missions resources recognizing that the need of Canada's 30 millions is great, but the needs of the world's 1.5 billion unreached people is vastly greater."[579]

Mission, or missional activity, is defined by intentional ministry to lost people wherever they are found.[580] This includes those who attend church,[581] those who are part of the immediate community, those who are part of national society[582] and in all 192 countries of the world.[583]

While different methodologies may be utilized to reach differing cultures and peoples, it is imperative that missional church leadership constantly reminds its congregation of their obligation toward the lost. This includes personal and corporate acts of compassion[584] with the spiritual welfare of the recipient as the focal point. One missionary has said, "Empty bellies have no ears."[585] Social

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[578] Howard A. Snyder and Daniel V. Runyon, <u>Decoding the Church</u> Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2002, p. 51.

[579] James D. Craig and Irving A. Whitt, <u>Philosophy</u> p. 106.

[580] Ibid.

[581] <u>www.intra-evangelism.org</u> p. 1, December 18, 2004,. "In the mid 1990's [sic] George Barna startled the church when he said that 'half of all adults who attend Protestant churches on a typical Sunday morning are not Christian.' Churches are filled with individuals who by reason of tradition, misinformation, demonic deception or something else have never come to a grace-based relationship with Jesus Christ. They are 'lost in church.'" This has been referred to as the 7:21 Window derived from the passage in Matthew 7:21 which records the words of Jesus, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven..."

[582] Canadian society, and particularly that of Toronto, is the most multi-cultural in the world. Traditionally, church missions has focused on the cultures in foreign countries. In recent years missional churches have also developed a significant focus on the non-Western cultures resident in their own communities.

[583] <u>How Many Countries in the World</u> http://www.worldatlas.com/nations.htm, p. 1, December 18, 2004. There is some discussion as to the actual number of countries in the world but most would agree to 192.

[584] Traditionally this has been referred to as social action.

[585] I am indebted to Deborah Sirjoosingh, Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada medical missionary to Northern Kenya in an address at the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada General Conference in

action "is possible and really only in, with and under the proclamation of Christ."[586] Just as Jesus cared for the physical needs of the five thousand (John 6:9-11) the church needs to be engaged in similar ministries as a means to an end so that all may come to faith. The church's socially oriented missional activity creates an open invitation for those without faith to see and hear the communication of the good news of God to man.

Church leadership must establish a complementary relationship between the missionality of every Christ-follower to be missional and the Pauline motive to plant churches. The Great Commission is fulfilled as each believer develops a personal definition of mission that folds into the local church mission such as, "To be and make disciples of Jesus Christ in authentic community for the good of the world."[587] An overemphasis on the planting of churches, to the exclusion of personal witness to individuals of a community, will lead to the institutionalization of church, loss of missional focus and ultimately its demise. The church's role is to make a difference in the lives of people by "insert[ing] the values of the Gospel into human relationships..."[588] and drawing individuals into faith and Church endeavors, a process which will be repeated as it is incorporated into the missionality of the local assembly.[589]

For instance, in the post-modern culture prevalent in Canada today, the effective missional church will allow people to belong before they believe,[590] thereby providing opportunities to investigate the person and claims of Christ. Not so long ago the church had its entrance protocols, outlining how one would

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Calgary, 1994. This statement has become a rallying cry for the social arm of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, Emergency Relief and Development Overseas.

[586] J. G. Davies as cited by Taylor, Between p. 140.

[587] Brian D. McLaren, A Generous Or+hodoxy Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 2004, p. 107.

[588] Roger E. Hedlund, The Mission of the Church in the World Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985, p. 16.

[589] G. C. Berkouwer, Church p. 409.

[590] The term 'belong' refers only to the relationships that are established with believers, in small groups or the various ministries of the church, that assist a person inquiring about issues regarding the faith journey as opposed to pursuing formal membership in the church as outlined by constitution and bylaws.

become like those who were already members. The contemporary missional church is more open and accepting toward all those who are serious about the Christian journey. What was a 'believe before belong' culture, has evolved to a 'belong before believe' openness.[591] Through relationship with believers, a seeker can become part of the congregational life of a church while sorting through personal faith issues.

While some would argue, "few have taken the necessary steps to redefine themselves as missionary by their very nature,"[592] there are certain suppositions that can be established, and actions taken, to transition existing non-missional churches into full-fledged missional entities.[593] The effective missional church should be involved in three related activities

1.   The public declaration of the hope of the gospel in a "vividly, intelligibly, attractively, effectively and persuasively"[594] form to humanity, giving opportunity for a Christian faith-based decision.

2.   Equipping of members of the congregation for personal missional activity.

3.   Developing a process for Christian discipleship.[595]

The local church is responsible to provide corporate missional preaching and subsequent opportunities to work out one's faith with fear and trembling. Programs such as ALPHA[596] and other small group Bible studies, led by those who have the gifts of teaching and evangelism, can be instrumental in leading people to faith in Jesus Christ. Contrary to the emotional pleading of preachers of the last 200 years,[597] it is imperative that the missional church allows men and

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[591] Rick Bartlett, Belong Before Believing
http://www.fyt.org.uk/perspect/perspdf/6bartlett.pdf#search=%22Belong%20before%20believing%22, p. 1. September 13, 2005.
[592] Darrell L. Guder, Missional p. 6.
[593] These suppositions and actions must be directed at both the corporate positioning of the church and the teaching of the individual.
[594] George W. Peters, Theology p. 213.
[595] Ibid.
[596] The ALPHA Course http://alphacourse.org/ p. 1, December 17, 2004.
[597] Kim Hammond, Characteristics of Missional Church http://jmm.aaa.net.au/articles/567.htm, January 16, 2006, p. 1. Hammond says that the 'altar call' is a western phenomena and was

women freedom to choose "with no other pressure than the appeal of the person of Christ. This is a development from the perspective of respect for personhood"[598] and will result in authentic conversions.

Leadership in the missional church will consider the culture(s) to which it is called[599] and employ relevant methodologies to reach the lost. A missional church in suburbia has its own challenges, including a church membership which displays the characteristics of the cold society in which it exists. One pastor has observed that a suburban society is characterized by the garage door opener. Homeowners drive up to their houses and open their garage doors and are only seen outside when they mow their lawns.[600]

Portico is located in the suburb of Mississauga, a city that has the dual role of being a self-sufficient community[601] and a bedroom community of Toronto. This means challenging parishioners to look beyond those things such as mortgages, 'getting ahead,' and busy schedules which constantly seem to keep people off balance and fearful.[602] The leadership of a local church, desiring to be optimally missional, must consider the 'conversion' that needs to take place in the thinking of those within its walls. An engaging course of biblical discipleship encourages, enables and empowers Christians to be missional in their world.

In some churches the challenge of developing missionality is further complicated by the multi-ethnic nature of the congregation. It appears that the challenge in this setting is two-fold as the understanding of what a missional church is varies greatly among the members of a multi-cultural church. First, the

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perfected by D. L, Moody subsequent to the U.S. Civil War. Charles Finney and Billy Graham both developed a type of altar call. (www.surfsidechurch.editthispage.com
[598] John V. Taylor, Between p. 137.
[599] More extensive treatment will be given in Chapter IV (p. 182) regarding what culture is and the current culture in which Portico is located.
[600] Gene Appel, Change Your Church Conference address, Las Vegas, NV, February 2003, personal notes.
[601] By definition, this means people who live, work and recreate within the confines of the city's boundaries.
[602] Larry A. Hoffsis cited in Stumme, Mission p. 190.

Jamaican may suggest that the missional church deploys people to the street corner with a handful of tracts while the person who hails from Newfoundland leans toward a church that emphasizes open air services and a separateness from the rest of society arising from a prescribed holiness for the members of a local congregation.[603] Second, the tolerance for other cultures has led to a tolerance of their religions and the passion for missional activity has waned. The leadership of a missional church is obligated to engage its people in celebrating cultural differences while continuing to declare Jesus Christ as the way, the truth and the life. (John 14:6)

To the casual outside observer, the proliferation of churches and denominations may cause him or her to wonder about the perceived lack of unity around missional purpose. From its inception, leadership in The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada has minimally cooperated with other organizations. Based on its perceived need to retain its distinctive[604] the majority of its missional expression in Canada, and abroad, has been confined within Pentecostal circles. This is contrary to Jesus' prayer, "that they may all be one...so that the world may believe that thou has sent me" (John 17:21) desiring that division would not mar the missionality of believers. While doctrinal differences do exist, "Churches and missionary organizations have learned the important lesson that when people begin to co-operate in the name of Christ, they discover that their mutual differences fade into relative insignificance beside the vital issues,"[605] particularly the worldwide missional endeavor.

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[603] This is born out of pastoral experience at Evangel Pentecostal Church in Montreal, Quebec from 1990 to 1994.

[604] Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths http://www.paoc.org/pdf/StmtofFaith%20doc.pdf, p. 2, April 14, 2006. Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada doctrine states that the initial physical evidence of Spirit Baptism is speaking in another language, previously unknown to the believer, and other than public utterances (associated with an interpreted word of exhortation) is for use in devotional prayer.

[605] J. J. Kritzinger, Witnesses p. 5

The Role of Missions in the Missional Church

There has been some debate regarding the mission of the church and the practice of cross-cultural missions.[606] Many churches separate mission and missions by establishing a missions department, operated and controlled by a small missions committee and narrow its focus to missional activity 'across the sea.' The responsibility of the church member is to support something that takes place somewhere else through the work of "specially training professionals known as missionaries."[607] This is not associated with evangelistic activity, which is usually viewed and organized as a local initiative. The danger is, "if missionary outreach is regarded as an appendage, the church will be less than missionary in its life and outlook."[608]

There seems to be no biblical mandate for the separation of mission and missions. While McLaren endorses the term missional, as it relates to the Church, he spurns terms like missionary, missions and mission field, "since now every Christian is a missionary and every place a mission field."[609] This is not a new idea. William Carey, a pioneer missionary in post-Reformation times, said missions[610] was grounded primarily in the biblical mandate that Christians are personally responsible to obey the Great Commission.[611] Jesus established an ever-widening rippling effect to describe the church's geographical influence; Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth as noted by Holy Spirit empowerment for the church's witnessing mandate. (Acts 1:8) A holistic definition of church mission does not make any differentiation between 'missions at home' and 'foreign missions.'

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[606] James D. Craig and Irving A. Whitt, Philosophy p. 17. While agreeing that the church must be missional, James D. Craig and Irving Whitt have outlined eleven principles that characterize the missional church in missions including cross-cultural engagement, intentionality, and the sending of missionaries while employing an incarnational model.

[607] Craig Van Gelder, Essence p. 28.

[608] Roger E. Hedlund, Mission p. 201.

[609] Brian McLaren, Generous p. 109.

[610] As has been seen before, older writings use the term 'missions' as opposed to 'mission' when referring to missional activity. William Carey, the Father of modern missions, was compelled to a missionary career and referred to his cross-cultural activity as 'missions.'

[611] Craig Van Gelder, Essence p. 29.

> Mission is the intentional crossing of barriers from Church to non-church, faith to non-faith to proclaim by word and deed in concrete situations the coming of the Kingdom of God in Jesus Christ. The Church participates in God's mission of reconciling people to God, to themselves, to each other and to the world. This involves gathering and incorporating them into the fellowship of the Church by repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, and through the power and work of the Holy Spirit.[612]

"The primary mission of the church-world evangelization, and church growth, involves both cross-cultural and monocultural evangelism."[613] Missional activity in another vastly different culture necessitates specialized anthropological training while one is more aware of anthropological characteristics of the members of one's own culture. While cultural barriers[614] exist from the church door outward, including those regions that would fall into the 'uttermost parts of the world' category, the local church should find it easier to relate to those who are part of their own community.

In recent years a tension regarding the missions role of the local church has developed in the leadership of evangelical churches, including those belonging to the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. Up until the late 1980s the cross-cultural missional expression of the church could be summed up in the word 'sending.' Since then, a shift has been taking place. Leadership now understands the church as missional in character and instead of a 'sending' church, the church is viewed as 'sent.' This has resulted in a "diminishing significance of regional and national church structures"[615] as each church seeks

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[612] Thomas William Miller, Canadian Pentecostals Mississauga, ON: Full Gospel Publishing House, 1994, p. 219-223. While the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada was established as a missionary society, it has lost its way as a missional church. In 2003, the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada commissioned James D. Craig and Irving Whitt to write a positional paper on the missional church. In it they adopted Charles Van Engen's definition of mission.

[613] Arthur F. Glasser, Contemporary Theologies of Mission Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1983, p. 106.

[614] Cultural barriers will be treated in a later chapter. For purposes of this chapter, in the expression of mission the church and its members cross cultural barriers in its own setting as well as those which are described biblically as Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the world.

[615] Darrell L. Guder, Continuing p. 49. This has been a source of tension for the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada for the last ten years. Leadership changed in the mid 1990s from a group of men who believed that foreign missions and the missional activities of the church were distinct from each other to leadership which believed they were one and the same. While a case can be made for "εθνη" missions, that is missions being cross-cultural, there remains the current

to develop it missional identity and destiny. This understanding has come about as a result of a greater understanding of 1 Peter 2:9. The church's "mission (its 'being sent') is not secondary to its being; the church exists in being sent and building itself up for the sake of mission."[616]

The difference between missionary dimension and missionary intention lies in the distinction of a missional church as simply a forceful presence or an active missional community.[617] One may conclude that these two views of the missional church are mutually exclusive, but Bosch opens the door to a blending of these two viewpoints.

> "The missionary [missional] dimension of a local church's life manifests itself, among other ways, when it is truly a worshipping community; it is able to welcome outsiders and make them feel at home; it is a church in which the pastor does not have the monopoly and the members are not merely objects of pastoral care; its members are equipped for their calling in society..."[618]

Missional churches define their vision around the Great Commission and engage in related tasks locally, regionally and internationally. "Either we are defined by mission or we reduce the scope of the gospel and the mandate of the church. Thus our challenge today is to move from church with a mission to missional church."[619]

While the expression of mission does include a 'call' to an individual, the church serves as the seat of equipping and facilitation for local, regional and international missional activity. "From the pages of the New Testament we deduce that the church, the local congregation becomes the mediating sending authority."[620] Understanding that the entire local assembly cannot give their lives to cross-cultural ministry in some foreign land, the church is responsible to

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denominational challenge of leading churches that have become more missional and therefore see the entirety of the church missional activity more holistic. As a result these churches do not subscribe to the purview of the national office but develop their missional strategy solely as a function of the local church. While Portico cooperates with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, as this thesis would suggest, it is becoming more missionally focused and strategizing for its own missional destiny.

[616] David J. Bosch, Transforming Mission Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994, p. 372
[617] David J. Bosch, "Transforming." p. 381.
[618] Ibid. p. 373.
[619] Darrell L. Guder, Missional p. 6.
[620] George W. Peters, Theology p. 218.

recognize God's gift of the apostle for pioneering what will eventually be indigenous local churches, regionally and internationally.[621] In the New Testament church, congregational agreement on recognizing those gifted as an apostle, and therefore whom should be sent, was indicated by the commissional act of laying on of hands. (Acts 15:24-26) "It presents the church as the responsible missionary body assuming her position and place in missions under the authority of Christ."[622]

In relation to cross-cultural and geographic missional activity, there is need for a balanced approach. Churches have concentrated on the poor in their locale, an unbiblical activity only insofar as its focus becomes solely social action and excludes any other redemptive activity in the far-off regions of the world. Other theories of missions, which would suggest that mission is witness only and therefore non-active and non-aggressive, are also a violation of the pattern of missions in the New Testament.[623] The primary purpose of missional activity is the salvation of souls and the establishment of indigenous, disciple-making, missional churches.[624] Like the early church, the local church's role is to be actively engaged in the equipping of its congregation for local, regional and international missional activity while simultaneously releasing, commissioning and supporting those with the apostolic gift to travel to other settings, not merely to conduct missional activity, but to lead people to faith with a subsequent goal of intentionally and strategically planting more missional congregations.[625]

Conclusion

At the core of this chapter is the missional mandate of the Church. The pattern of New Testament churches is helpful in developing missional strategy

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[621] One such example is Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:25) who Paul refers to as "their" messenger, suggesting that he was the one who pioneered the church in Philippi.
[622] George W. Peters, Theology p. 221.
[622] David Bosch, Transforming p. 379.
[623] Ibid.
[624] Donald Anderson McGavran, How Churches Grow: The New Frontiers of Mission London, UK: World Dominion Press, 1959, p. 70.
[625] David Bosch, Transforming p. 379.

for the local assembly. For some congregations that have been inwardly focused, the task of creating a missional church may be daunting. Success will be realized only as the membership becomes missional in both corporate gatherings and personal lifestyle, thereby not leaving it solely as the responsibility of one or the other. The leadership of a congregation, intent on creating a missional church, will consider the necessary changes to prepare for a renewal in evangelistic commitment on the part of both parties as they realign the church and its activities to God's missional purposes.

CHAPTER IV - THE STUDY OF CULTURE

Introduction

One observes that while humanity shares many similarities,[626] one's membership in a main culture[627] and a subculture(s) explain lifestyle differences.[628] The way one internalizes these observable or espoused values will impact how he or she evaluate others and their way of life.

> It is as though we – or the people of any other society – grow up perceiving the world through glasses with distorting lenses. The things, events, and relationships we assume to be 'out there' are in fact filtered through this perceptual screen.[629]

Throughout the centuries, Christendom has wrestled with the impact culture has had on faith, and vice versa.

> For centuries, Christians have assumed that their job is to reinforce the Christian character of Western civilization by promoting biblical principles as the basis for law and social policy. But in the post-Christendom, postmodern situation, this strategy has become problematic. Postliberal thinkers ... call the Church to focus on being the Church and to function as an alternative society. Both Liberal and Conservative Protestants criticize them for making the Church irrelevant, yet they themselves often seem to end up conforming to the world, rather than changing it. The question we ask... is "How can Christians be faithful to Scripture and also speak redemptively into our culture.[630]

Today's church faces the dilemma of how to respond to the culture in which it finds itself. Churches, both young and old, are feeling the impact of our changing culture as ministry paradigms evolve and church leaders strive to reach the post-modern world.[631]

The effectiveness of the contemporary church depends on its response to its culture. The church can design its ministry to be culturally engaging,

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[626] Human needs are outlined in Maslow's Hierarchy. (p. 35) Members of the human race also possess the human ability to communicate verbally and through written symbols.

[627] In the case of Portico, it could be said that the majority of its members and adherents are part of the multi-ethnic suburban (Mississauga) culture of Toronto, ON, Canada.

[628] People who call Portico their church home, by virtue of their attendance, are part of the Portico subculture. These same people may also be part of an ethnic or special interest (i.e. sailing) subculture.

[629] R. M. Keesing and F. M Kessing, New Perspectives in Cultural Anthropology New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971, p. 21.

[630] Craig A. Carter, Christ and Culture Hamilton, ON: MacDiv School of Bible and Theology Pamphlet, Winter 2005, p. 7.

[631] Jason Evans, Voices of the Next Generation
http://www.theooze.com/articles/article.cfm?id=353, p. 1, February 28, 2005.

counter-cultural or remain complacent by maintaining and reflecting the church or contextual culture of yesteryear. Church leadership, understanding their cultural context, may choose to reinvent their church. This call to relevance "is using what is cultural to say what is timeless."[632] For example, the need for community is universal. The way in which the local church expresses and designs for community will be culturally informed.[633]

This chapter proposes a working definition of culture followed by a theological response that includes an exploration regarding appropriate boundaries associated with the contextualization of the gospel message and complimenting the values of a particular local assembly. Because such an examination usually uncovers the need for change and identifies cultural change points regarding values, this chapter will propose renewal in ministry and organizational structures.

What is Culture?

There is much discussion in academic circles concerning the definition of culture. Some definitions broadly focus on society's non-biological characteristics while others focus on the human transmission of cultural elements.[634] For purposes of this discussion the focus will be on the latter.

As early as 1948, anthropologists proposed that culture refers to the human-made part of society[635] and followed with a more extensive definition four years later.

> Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artefacts. The essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached

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[632] Reggie Joiner, <u>An Inside Look at Kidstuff, A Shared Family Experience Breakout Session B,</u> March 10, 2005, Festival: Promiseland Children's Ministry Conference, Willow Creek Community Church, Barrington, IL, March 9-11, 2005.

[633] Bill Donahue and Russ Robinson, <u>Building a Church of Small Groups</u> Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., p. 24-25.

[634] <u>Cultural Anthropology</u>
http://www.tiscali.co.uk/reference/encyclopaedia/hutchinson/m0032315.html p. 1, June 3, 2006.

[635] Melville Herskovits as cited by Susan Goldstein, <u>Cross-cultural Explorations</u> Allyn and Bacon: Needham Heights, MA. 2000, p. 5.

values; culture systems may, on one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action.[636]

A more concise definition of culture is, "the product of human acts of concretization undertaken in the developmental transformation of the earth according to the commandment of God"[637] or "the total nonbiologically transmitted heritage of man. [sic]"[638] An anthropological expansion defines culture as "the integrated system of learned behaviour patterns which are characteristic of a society and which are not the result of biological inheritance."[639]

The etymology of 'culture' arises from the Latin *cultura,* which refers to human efforts such as ploughing or tilling in association with the cultivation of animals and crops with a view to improving one's standard of living.[640] Scholars integrated other activities, such as religious worship and improving the human condition through community learning, into the idea of culture. This created a tension between changing and being changed and calculated expectations regarding behavioural outcomes and spontaneous response. "The cultural is what we can change, but the stuff to be altered has its own autonomous existence ..."[641] Members of such societies (sixteenth to nineteenth centuries) were said to be 'cultured' because they were able to shed the evidence of a life ordered by simple survival and better themselves through a process of contemplation, thought and study.[642] This idea has advanced to the point where society refers to the person who is appreciative of the arts as 'cultured.' This illustrates the distinction between a culture as the patterns of social interaction,

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[636] Alfred Kroeber and C. Kluckholn, Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1952, p. 357.
[637] David Bruce Hegeman, Plowing in Hope: Toward a Biblical Theology of Culture Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 1999, p. 15.
[638] E. B. Taylor as cited by Charles Kraft, Christianity in Culture Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1979, p. 46.
[639] E. Adamson Hoebel, Anthropology: The Study of Man New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1972, p. 6.
[640] David Bruce Hegeman, Plowing p. 13.
[641]Terry Eagelton, The Idea of Culture Blackwell Publishing: Malden, MA, 2000, p. 4.
[642] Philip Smith, Cultural Theory Blackwell Publishers: Malden, MA, 2001, p. 1.

and 'high culture' as the levels of sophistication in upper and middle classes within a broad culture.[643]

Prior to the nineteenth century the word 'culture' had strong association with imperialistic civilizations. With the mounting of a major backlash against imperialistic ideology, resisters began to use 'culture' as an evaluative word to describe what was normative as opposed to what was prescriptive. "Culture is not some vague fantasy of fulfillment, but a set of potentials bred by history and subversively at work within it."[644] Those critical of previously acceptable cultural values used, engage these same values as a critique on world civilizations. As knowledge of the world's populations began to increase, students of culture understood that to describe an entire nation as one culture was presumptuous and inaccurate.[645]

During the Industrial Revolution, the meaning of the term 'culture' began to move from its agrarian roots to an exclusive reference to humanity's non-physical characteristics.[646] In this discussion it was inferred that culture should produce better people, individually and socially, through a refined moral order, better social structures or greater artistic expression; catalysts in a group's social order. This principle remains true. Organizations should provide a context for positive development. Contrast this with some cultures such as those of 'addictive organizations,' which foster a 'negative culture' or negative culture change.

> Addictive behavior in organizations prevents mindfulness, blocks authenticity, and separates people from their values and beliefs. Addictive behavior obstructs the formation of relationships with others, represses emotions and intuition, and blinds people from processes and patterns that embarrass and/or threaten. Addicted leaders are irresponsible and unaware of their impact on others.[647]

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[643] C. Mark Steinacher Personal Notes from a Conversation concerning 'culture' and 'cultured,' p. 1, March 4, 2005.

[644] Terry Eagleton, The Idea of Culture Blackwell Publishing: Malden, MA: 2000, p. 23.

[645] Ibid. p. 10-13.

[646] Spiritual and intellectual.

[647] Tom Heureman, Addictive Organizations
http://www.selfhelpmagazine.com/articles/wf/addorg.html, p. 1, March 14, 2005.
For a more extensive treatment, Anne Wilson Shaef and Dianne Fassel, The Addictive Organization New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2000.

In the early 1900s anthropologists moved toward a view suggesting culture was value-neutral and primarily useful for the analytical study of social groups. In 1952 anthropologists Kroeber and Kluckhohn identified six understandings associated with culture:

1. Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, laws, morals, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.
2. The culture of a group is their heritage as passed on over time through generations.
3. Culture is a rule or way of life that shapes patterns of concrete behaviour and action.
4. Culture may assume the role of a problem-solving device allowing people to communicate, learn, and fulfil physical and non-physical needs.
5. Culture refers to the organized interrelation of the isolable aspects of culture; the beliefs that are held and the behaviour exhibited.
6. Culture develops from human interaction over generations.[648]

In 1972 there was a revival of the dual entity discussion facilitated by delineating two categories of human culture, the physical components that are humanly constructed (artefacts) and the subjective non-physical components (ideas) such as roles, attitudes and values. Most recently the term culture has been refined to refer to common values, beliefs and behaviours within groups who share a nationality, ethnic heritage, religion, disability, socio-economic class, sexual orientation, occupation, sport or living arrangements.[649] In each setting there are a number of shared perspectives, norms, values or assumptions that direct the behaviour of the members as transmitted by oral and written tradition.

Culture theory has developed to the point where current anthropological literature agrees on the following themes:

1. Agreement that although physical surroundings, technology and social structures impact culture, it (culture) is distinct.
2. Culture is viewed as the expression of the ideal in non-material and spiritual matters; beliefs, values, symbols.
3. Culture, although related to, is distinct from underlying forces such as economic, political, and social.
4. Culture is not confined to the Arts, but pervades all levels and aspects of social life.[650]

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[648] Philip Smith, <u>Theory</u> p 3
[649] Susan Goldstein, <u>Explorations</u> p. 5.
[650] Philip Smith, <u>Cultural</u> p. 4.

Three core cultural benchmarks assist in the development of methodology for thematic continuity.[651] The first is content as defined by values, codes, narratives, ideologies, pathologies, discourses and common sense understandings. Second, is the study of social implications inherent in the elements of influence of a culture upon social life and structures. In some cases a culture will maintain stability while others seem to produce conflict, struggles for power, and inequality. Leadership may channel these positive or negative influences through an institution. Third, one must give consideration to the relationship between the culture and the individual including the ways in which a particular culture shapes human behaviour. In some cases a culture can be constraining while for others it may be empowering.[652]

Culture refers to both the individual and his or her social structures. One is suspended in these significant systems including one's primary social grouping. An individual's life is "communicated, reproduced, experienced, and explored"[653] and communicates "implicit knowledge of the world by which people negotiate appropriate ways of acting in specific contexts."[654] For example, in most church settings it is advisable to attend functions wearing clothes. However, leadership in a particular church culture may suggest the type of clothes which are deemed appropriate.

Inherent in some of these definitions is an inferred instability. While it is true that a study of a particular culture at a particular moment in time may be accurate, contemporary society is changing with such rapidity that today's snapshot may be considered passé in a very short order. This is a challenge for the establishment or restructuring of any organization. In 1994, Martin J. Gannon proposed the use of 'cultural metaphors' as the method of comparing one group's cultural mindset with that of another.[655] This addresses the

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[651] Ibid. p. 5.
[652] Ibid.
[653] Terry Eagleton, Idea p. 33.
[654] Ibid. p. 34,35.
[655] Ibid. p. 23.

problems of rapid change as these observable metaphors can change over time. Prior to mass immigration, society identified Canada's religious culture by the proliferation of church buildings and people attending weekend services or mass. The rapid growth of non-Christian religious organizations, and evidence of their impact on Canadian society, challenges this identifier.

One needs only to examine Russian culture prior to the ending of the Cold War to realize that the prevalent political climate shapes the culture.

> Every individual human being, one may say, carried within him, potentially and prescriptively, an ideal man [sic], the archetype of a human being, and it is his life's task to be, through all his changing manifestations, in harmony with the unchanging unity of this ideal. This archetype, which is to be discerned more or less clearly in every individual, is represented by the State, the objective and, as it were, canonical form in which all the diversity of individual subjects strives to unite.[656]

For culture to be constructive it must be elevated over politics, "...to be men [sic] first and citizens later."[657] Personal change in an individual comes as he or she internalizes a set of ideals that prompt political action and the formation of complementary social constructs.

Members of the human race propagate culture through a variety of methods. The use of language, both oral and written, and one's cognitive processing significantly contribute to the development and maintaining of a culture. Marshall Singer introduced the term 'identity group' to narrow the field of investigation to groups of people who perceive some aspect of human existence in common and subsequently communicate about that common value. [658] Social relationships, daily routine and regimen and religious beliefs as expressed through rituals, inform one's culture along with one's personal preferences and political and economic systems.[659]

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[656] Fredrich Schiller, "Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man" as cited in Terry Eagleton, Idea p. 8.
[657] Terry Eagleton, Idea p. 7.
[658] Philip Smith, Cultural p. 9.
[659] Michael Pocock and Joseph Henriques, Cultural Change and Your Church Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2002, pp. 109-110.

The current study of church missionality has resulted in arguments in favour of giving consideration to cultural factors. The association between culture and religion is described as having,

> to do with making sense out of life and formulating strategies for action; and the ideas and symbols that people draw on in these fundamental undertakings are, implicitly if not explicitly, saturated with religious meaning. Religion itself is a set of cultural symbols.[660]

One missional church proponent suggests that because culture is, "the sum total of ways of living built up by a human community and transmitted from one generation to another,"[661] churches can strategize accordingly. Those activities, traditions, strategies and religious expressions, associated with a faith community, are the cultural expressions that will enable Christians to model their faith to subsequent generations while simultaneously attracting or repelling those who are investigating a faith relationship with God. For example, knowing that one's feelings can contribute to culture, and one develops their worldview through a response (beliefs and values) to an accumulation of experiences, church leadership can impact future decisions and behaviour through the implementation of an appropriate learning environment.[662]

Anthropologists refer to churches as religious sub-cultures.[663] Such things as church values, hierarchal structures and personal behaviour, whether intentional or by default, define their religious context. Congregational activities reflect the subgroup's ways of thinking and their world-view.[664] The church observer may utilize qualitative considerations and principles while comparing the primary group or congregational life to church's societal context.[665]

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[660] Wade Clark Roof, A Generation of Seekers: The Spiritual Journey of the Baby Boomer Generation San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 1993, p. 5.

[661] Darrell L. Guder, The Missional Church Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998. p. 9. Lesslie Newbigin, Foolishness to the Greeks Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986, p.3.

[662] Paul G. Hiebert, Cultural Differences and the Communication of the Gospel as cited in Ralph Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, eds., Perspectives on the World Christian Movement, Third Edition. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1999, pp. 375-376.

[663] Thomas Headland, Subcultures http://www.sil.org/~headlandt/students.htm#rel, p. 1, November 4, 2006.

[664] David de Vaus as cited in Peter Beilharz and Trevor Hogan, eds., Social Self, Global Culture South Melbourne, Australia: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 93.

[665] In the case of Portico, the Canadian culture of Mississauga, ON.

The promotion of certain cultural expectations may result in its own set of challenges. When two cultures with differing values come in contact with each other, a culture war often ensues. Montreal's Evangel Pentecostal Church is home to at least fifty-four nationalities. What one considers to be normal and acceptable other members of the congregation find the same behaviour unacceptable. According to Jamaicans, a pastor is never to take off his jacket while preaching unless he publicly asks permission from the congregation. Pastors who were born and raised in the Canadian church usually dismiss this without much thought and a minor cultural skirmish breaks out. Although some may consider this a trivial matter, an all-out culture war is more likely to break out over ethnic differences as opposed to ministerial philosophy and practice or congregational priorities.[666]

While it may be a leader's intent to form an ideal church culture, according to his or her definition, a tension, referred to as 'cultural dissonance,' develops. "Culture [and its] sense of religion ... is a field of ferocious contention; so the more practical a culture becomes, the less able it is to fulfil a conciliatory role, and the more conciliatory it is, the more ineffectual it grows."[667] This takes place when the expectations have either no understandable rationale or are not reflective of the surrounding culture. For instance, the 1950s dress code for church was a suit and tie for men and a dress for women, commonly referred to as 'Sunday best' and reflected the business dress code of the day. Current church attire continues to be reflective of culture, which has adopted a more casual approach. To enter a church and see an entire congregation dressed in semi-formal clothing would seemingly indicate no rationale, other than tradition, and lacking in the ability to reflect surrounding culture.

The architect(s) of a church culture must be able to design functional structures and practices that can be supported by the Scriptures while continuing

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[666] This discussion took place at an Evangel Pentecostal Church board meeting in Montreal in 1993. It was not recorded.
[667] Terry Eagleton, Idea p. 41

to engage the society in which it is located, while refusing to compromise to the ideals that would undermine its effectiveness. In the case of the local church, leaders must develop a personal understanding or picture of the ideals associated with a developing Christ-follower and create a culture that is complementary.

Theology of Culture

Culture has the potential to impact theology, positively or negatively.

> In so far as theology is influenced by culture it will, wittingly or unwittingly, reflect culture and use it as a medium or sounding board for its message. Of course if it merely reflects a culture, the cultural medium takes over and the medium becomes the message, and theology in any proper sense becomes submerged.[668]

In relation to the interplay between one's culture and one's faith, it is important to rely on theology as the basis for engaging one's context and establishing the organizational culture of the local church. As the Word of God, the scriptures provides, "the perfect standard by which all cultures are to be judged and evaluated ... [they] flow out of the cultural language, perspective, customs, idioms, and literary forms of the society from which they emerge."[669]

> As far as anthropology can tell, there is not now, nor ever has been a human being who is not totally immersed in and pervasively affected by some culture. Neither anthropology nor theology can speak conclusively about when culture began ... Some would contend that the production of culture did not start until after humans fell into sin and were banished from Eden.[670]

Although the word 'culture' is never used in scripture, much attention is given to the religious customs of the Jews (Luke 1:9, 2:42, John 19:42, Acts 6:14, 15:1, 26:3, 28:17) and those outside Judaism. (Acts 25:12) The word εθνος refers to the normal way of doing things and often implies a moralistic tone. (the ways things ought to be done)[671] Another term used in the Greek language, that has strong similarities to the word 'culture,' is παιδεια. This refers to the parental responsibility to increase their children's knowledge as it

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[668] Thomas F. Torrence, <u>Christian Theology and Scientific Culture</u> New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1981, p. 13.
[669] David Bruce Hegeman, <u>Plowing</u> p. 16.
[670] Charles Kraft, <u>Christianity in Culture</u> Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1979, p. 103.
[671] Ibid.

pertained to the maturing process.[672] This is contrary to the current idea that responsibility for the spiritual formation of children is in the church, not the home. According to the biblical pattern, parents should be involved in the spiritual instruction of their children and indirectly preserve the culture of their religious community.

Culture, as described in the biblical narratives, contains certain thematic elements evident in human history. J. Richard Middleton and Brian J. Walsh compare the culture of modernity to the impetus behind the construction of the Tower of Babel. These builders desired fame, distinction, and glory and dreamed of doing something no one else had ever done. In their view this is typical of "the primordial cultural aspirations of the human race"[673] and over time mirrors the quest for progress now evident in Western society.

There is a difference between a biblical theology that discovers the revelation of God's "character, purposes, actions, and revelations within history"[674] and a theology of culture that studies the historical process of the progression of culture within God's redemptive history or a provision, "of a loving God for human well-being."[675] A missional mindset understands that, "Culturative history is God's unfolding purpose for man [sic], in which mankind plays a chief role in the development and transformation of the earth from garden-paradise to the glorious city of God." [676] The local church may accomplish this by the concretization of redemptive values through humanly constructed structures, expressions or artefacts.

This is apparent in the Old Testament as the nation of Israel was in constant tension with surrounding cultures over the clash of life perspectives. At times, the philosophy and expression of pagan cultures found its way into the

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[672] Ibid. p. 17.
[673] J. Richard Middleton and Brian J. Walsh, Truth is Stranger Than it Used to Be Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995, pp. 15-17.
[674] David Bruce Hegeman, Plowing p. 21.
[675] Charles Kraft, Culture p. 104.
[676] David Bruce Hegeman, Plowing p. 31.

lives of the Israelites.[677] This was extremely displeasing to Yahweh as it was his desire to preserve Israel as an example of a nation that was growing toward being wholly devoted to him.

Tension within New Testament churches was evident in contrasting expectations held by converts from Judaism and paganism from the Jerusalem and Corinthian cultures. While inhabitants of Jerusalem had a working knowledge of the Old Testament and, to the best of their ability practiced an ethical lifestyle described therein, the Corinthians had little or no knowledge of the Old Testament and lived lives characterized by moral relativity. The citizens of Jerusalem were entrenched in a monotheistic culture, informed by strict family instruction and adherence to the Law, including such practices as circumcision. The Corinthian people were exposed to polytheism and engaged in a chaotic lifestyle and abhorred any thought of bodily defilement. This city, among others was, "the product of a political, social and cultural revolution begun by Alexander the Great ...They had a cosmopolitan culture, shared the Greek language and had their own system of government and education."[678] Paul and his colleagues responded by adapting their mission and establishing churches on all the major trade routes in the Roman Empire by developing appropriate ways of being the Church in relation to existing urban institutions and lifestyles.[679]

During this time period, cultural practices of the Jewish faith were re-evaluated. As Jews subscribed to the Christian faith, they were of the conviction that Gentiles, such as those who were living in Corinth, should become Jewish in conjunction with becoming Christian. Church leaders were able to come to an agreement as to how Christian faith would be lived out in Corinthian culture through a series of procedures, including discussing the issue openly and viewing

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[677] A prime example is the integration of pagan women into Solomon's harem. 1 Kings 11:1.
[678] David Ford, Faith in the Cities cited in On Being the Church: Essays on the Christian Community, Colin E. Gunton and Daniel W. Hardy, eds., Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1989, pp. 230-231.
[679] Ibid. p. 231.

what God was doing in the non-Jewish culture.[680] This process became the norm as they constructively dealt with the clash between new covenant belief and the local culture.

In the early church there was a cry to be counter-cultural, yet relevant. "The Epistles reveal a strong counter-cultural consciousness in the early church, a consciousness that developed and deepened as the church spread across the empire."[681] It is possible for the church to be a, "genuine alternative to the dominant culture"[682] as suggested by the teachings of Jesus. "If the church realistically accepted [Jesus'] standards and values as here set forth, and lived by them, it would be the alternative society he intended it to be, and would offer to the world an authentic counterculture."[683] The weakness of such an approach is the assumption that such a culture, as developed and propagated by a congregation, would be relevant or engaging to those without faith.

On the other hand, striving to be counter-cultural may inadvertently focus on visible differences causing one to question the relevance of the Christian message, the crux of which is redemption, relationship with God and life change. The challenge for the individual Christian and church leader is to create and express a subculture that is redemptive and impacts the larger culture as a whole. Such a church could be described as, "a community of mutual responsibility. If the church is to be effective in advocating and achieving a new social order in the nation, it must itself be a new social order."[684] If Western culture is rife with a lack of hope, the church can establish itself as a beacon of hope in a hopeless culture and draws people to the culture-changing message of the gospel.[685]

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[680] David W. Shenk and Ervin R. Stutzman, Creating Communities of the Kingdom Kitchener, ON: Herald Press, 1988, pp. 108-113.

[681] Howard A. Snyder, Liberating the Church Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1983, p. 119.

[682] Howard A. Snyder, Liberating p. 121.

[683] John R. W. Stott, Christian Counter-Culture: The Message of the Sermon on the Mount Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1978, p. 10.

[684] Lesslie Newbigin, The Gospel in a Pluralist Society Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989, p. 231.

[685] Ibid. p. 232.

The Culture in Which Portico Exists

The culture of North America is exceptionally difficult to define. It is not "one single culture; rather [Canada and the United States] are themselves a complex of diverse and interwoven cultural traditions that are constantly forming new and challenging expressions."[686] However, there are a number of characteristics that accurately describe the culture of the region where Portico is located. Some descriptors are applicable worldwide; others are common in the Western World and others uniquely North American, Canadian or Mississaugan. The church must discern the type of culture in which it exists and strategize a response.

The common denominator in Western culture is its propensity for change. The technological advances of a culture, as illustrated in the pastimes of its children, are indicative of an evolving culture. One author tells about his son who listens to music from a digital player while watching TV, plays a computer game that explores human anatomy and talks to a friend on the phone.[687] Since most of these things did not exist fifty years ago in North American culture, the local church has found it increasingly challenging to engage the technological culture.

Those who have experienced major paradigm shift in a culture, realize a significant unsettledness can occur. Albert Einstein reflected on his personal emotions upon his discovery that light was made up of particles. "It was as if the ground had been pulled out from under one's feet, with no firm foundation to be seen anywhere, upon which one could have built."[688] For those who are presently alive, the most apparent and recent paradigm shift in the world's culture has been from a modern mindset to the advent of postmodernism. The following table outlines the characteristics of this change in societal thinking:

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[686] Darrell L. Guder, The Missional Church Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998, p. 9.

[687] Gilbert R. Rendle, Leading Change in the Congregation Hermon, VA: Alban Institute, 1998, p. 12.

[688] Miraculous Visions http://www.economist.com/cities/displaystory.cfm?story_id=3518580, p. 1, February 24, 2005.

Modern	Postmodern
Conquest and Control	Conservation
Mechanistic	Ecosystems, Organisms, Social Systems
Analytical	Systems Thinking, Holism, Passion
Secular Scientific	Spiritual Scientific
Objective	Inter-subjective
Critical	Listening, Collaborative
Organization	Network, Alliance, Movement
Individualism	Community, Tribalism, Tradition
Consumerism	Stewardship

[689]

Even the definition of success has changed. The postmodern matrix determines the degree of success by measuring the participation in the process, the relativity of the matter in question to everything that is going on in the universe, and the interdependence of all systems, including thought and consciousness.[690]

The increasing level of immigration in Canadian society since the 1960s, has led to an acceptance, even a championing, of cultural diversity. The United States has been referred to as a melting pot while Canada is known as a cultural mosaic.[691] Canada is an increasingly immigrant society boasting a plurality of cultures. However, the term Pluralism does not solely refer to the large diversity of ethnic representation.[692] Pluralism approves and cherishes a multiplicity of

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[689] Brian D. McLaren, Emerging Models of Ministry in the 21st Century Personal notes from The Assemblies of God Theological Seminary Leadership Roundtable, Sacramento, CA, March 4-5, 2002. An additional treatment of modernity and post-modernity is found in Brian D. McLaren, A New Kind of Christian San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2001, p. 16-20.

[690] James W. Fowler, Faithful Change: The Personal and Public Challenges of Postmodern Life Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996, p. 180.

[691] Joel Millman, The Other Americans: How Immigrants Renew Our Country, Our Economy, and Our Values New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1997. Eva Mackey The House of Difference New York, NY: Routledge Books, 1999.

[692] Douglas W. Johnson, Managing Change in the Church New York, NY: Friendship Press, 1974. p. 10. He suggests the co-mingling of worldviews brought about by the mobility of the world's cultures may be a catalyst for pluralism.

ideas, philosophies, and worldviews. It is, "conceived to be a proper characteristic of the secular society, a society in which there is no officially approved pattern of belief or conduct."[693] It "manifests itself in part today as societal diversity. In the multiplicity of nation-states and blocs of nations, in the economic and political groups within nations and across national borders, in ethical and sexual consciousness, the plurality of society intrudes into the boundaries of our awareness."[694]

In a worldview characterized by pluralism there is a sharp distinction between facts and values. In this type of society any faith group, Christian or otherwise, is castigated if they do not offer their belief up as 'a' way to order one's life as opposed to 'the' way to live. As early as 1984, the changing climate in Western culture was anticipated as it was observed that North America was rapidly developing as a post-Christian society as indicated in the shrinking percentage of Christians and the lack of Christian consensus or ethos.[695] Some have labelled postmodern culture as anti-Christian in that, "we can expect increased hostility to Christianity in general, and even more so, to organized religion in particular."[696]

Pluralism is a closely associated cultural phenomenon that continues to have an increasingly significant impact on the Canadian church. As people arrive from a variety of world cultures, Canadian society affirms and celebrates their differences resulting in the challenge to bring unity and missionality to the local church. The challenge for today's Christian is to create an opportunity for those without faith to respond to the definitive message and sacrifice of Jesus without undermining it by a modern 'factual presentation.' When one shares their faith in a pluralist society it may be received with responding words of ambivalence, "I'm happy that works for you."

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[693] Lesslie Newbigin, Pluralist p. 1.

[694] Charles S. McCoy, When Gods Change: Hope for Theology Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1980, pp. 44-45.

[695] Francis Schaeffer, The Great Evangelical Disaster Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1984, p. 29.

[696] Leonard Sweet, Soul Tsunami Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1999, p. 47.

Members of Western culture are increasingly identifying themselves as 'spiritual, but not religious.' It is likely that perhaps over one half of the unchurched describe themselves in this way.[697] Although there may be some variation on what 'spiritual' and 'religious' mean, it is generally accepted that the former relates to a person's private realm of thought and experience while the latter is connected to an institution which facilitates rituals and promotes a doctrinal position.[698] This transition, in the way people form their opinions and conduct their lives, may reflect the meaninglessness that "is a major life issue for our culture today."[699]

> The pollsters affirm that Americans and Canadians believe in God, pray regularly, and consider themselves religious. But they find less and less reason to express their faith by joining a Christian church. North American religiosity is changing profoundly by becoming more pluralistic, more individualistic, and more private. Religion fits into North American secularism in a remarkable synthesis that the student of religious behaviour finds fascinating. But for the Christian who takes the gospel of Jesus Christ seriously, this religiosity is a weighty challenge.[700]

This has intensified since the dawning of the New Age which claims that humanity can only deal with what is wrong with it properly by dealing and unleashing that which is within.[701]

While members of North American society are shunning participation in organized religion there continues to be personal expressions of spiritual need. "A traditional spirituality of inhabiting sacred places has given way to a new spirituality of seeking...People now take pride in [that] fact."[702] Although seeking may be fashionable, it is problematic in that people believe in nothing more than a pluralistic religious belief system constructed from their own experiences, or those of others which results in a misinformed attitude toward

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[697] Wade Clark Roof, <u>Spiritual Market-place Baby Boomers and the Remaking of American Religion</u> Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999, p. 85.
[698] Robert C. Fuller, <u>Spiritual But Not Religious</u> New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 5.
[699] Barbara A. Sheehan, <u>Partners in Covenant</u> Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1999, p. 3.
[700] Darrell Guder, <u>The Missional Church</u> Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998. p. 1.
[701] Robert E. Webber, <u>Ancient</u> pp. 88-89. This is in direct contradiction to faith in God, which states that one's righteousness is as filthy rags, (Isaiah 64:6) implying that one can do nothing to restore relationship with God outside of divine intervention.
[702] Robert Wuthnow, <u>After Heaven: Spirituality in America Since the 1950s</u> Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1993, p. 3.

evil and its solution. Christianity emphasizes humanity's fallen nature, while pluralism views evil as a state out of which arises great consciousness and love.[703]

The decline of local church influence has accompanied the rise of relativism. This is the belief that individuals or culture determines what is morally right or wrong[704] and has also contributed to the rapidly waning of commitment to traditional church structures. The complexity of knowledge brought about by the information age, the globalization of communication and news gathering, the deterioration of infrastructures in cities around the world and the ensuing associated hopelessness, the breakdown of the family and the social ills of worldwide society such as drug abuse, gambling addictions, and sexual perversions, have caused people to withdraw into something they can believe in, themselves.[705] They refuse to believe in a God who has been shrunken to fit modern tastes[706] through a vast process of institutionalization[707] and institutions that have failed the masses by taking away freedom and individualism.

Simultaneously, everyday dialogue concerning spiritual fulfillment has become commonplace. As a result, the concept of Truth, instead of an absolute reality, has become relative and dependant on one's experiences and outlook.[708] Everything is relative and "the only truth that anyone has is the truth he has for himself [sic]. There is no universal truth."[709] Personally-held values, spiritual or otherwise, may clash with those which are fact-based. Instead of reading it and believing it, one relies on personal experience in the development of truth. "The

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[703] Robert C. Fuller, Spiritual pp. 156-160.
[704] Moral Relativism
http://www.google.ca/search?hl=en&lr=&defl=en&q=define:Moral+relativism&sa=X&oi=
glossary_definition&ct=title, p. 1, April 24, 2006.
[705] Robert E. Webber, Ancient-Future Evangelism Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2003, p. 125.
[706] Brian D. McLaren, More Ready Than You Realize Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 2002, p. 52.
[707] Gene A. Getz, Sharpening the Focus of the Church Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1974, p. 214.
[708] Michael Warden, The Missional Church: Being in Today's World Next 6, 2d quarter, 2000, p. 1.
[709] Robert E. Webber, Evangelism p. 124.

relativity of truth is not a theoretical insight but a moral postulate."[710] Theologian John Dominic Crossan captures this sentiment when he suggests that for the postmodern person, "There is no lighthouse keeper. There is no lighthouse. There is no dry land. There are only people living on rafts made from their own imaginations. And there is the sea."[711] In other words, "I am the centre of my own universe and I determine my own existence, my own future."[712] This leads to an egocentric worldview where the only thing that matters is 'my life, my interests and my sphere of influence.'

In the shift of modernism to postmodernism, there are significant changes that are making extensive common inroads into many of the world's cultures. Cultural distinctives blur into a form referred to as globalization, or Westernization by non-Western societies. For example, world youth culture is being shaped by music even in anti-American countries such as China.[713] Some would view this as a positive contribution of Western civilization to the world. For others, they bristle under Western dominance or imperialism and seek to minimize its influence.[714]

Secularism is one descriptor of the progression toward a world culture. The rise in this belief system has had major impact on the way the humanity views religion and spirituality. The deterioration of a link between church and state has gradually minimized the church's effect on society, to the point where today a politician is able to say publicly that he puts aside his moral views to

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[710] Allen Bloom, The Closing of the American Mind New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1987, p. 227.

[711] John Dominic Crossan as cited in David John Steele Jr., Radiohead: Soundtrack for Holes in the Soul http://www.ransomfellowship.org/MusicRadiohead.html, p. 1, February 24, 2005.

[712] David John Steele Jr., Radiohead p. 1, February 24, 2005.

[713] Jing Wang, Youth Culture, Music and Cell Phone Branding in China http://web.mit.edu/fll/www/people/global%20media.pdf April 22, 2006, p. 1-2.

[714] Amartya Sen, Does Globalization mean Westernization? http://www.theglobalist.com/DBWeb/StoryId.aspx?StoryId=2353, p. 1, February 3, 2005. A glaring example of this phenomena, is the use of contemporary Western rock music by short term missions team from Portico and its overwhelming acceptance by people of such countries as Estonia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan.

support a charter of rights.[715] This leads to the view that religious belief has no place in the discussion of society's morals.[716]

Technological advancement has had, and continues to have, significant impact on Western culture. The 'space age' in Canadian society evaluates its progress by the proliferation of labour-saving devices. Interestingly enough, the speed of a technological society becomes faster as the 'saved time' is filled with the increasing obligations at one's place of employment or through increasing family expectations.[717] In Mississauga, a large Canadian city in its own right, a large percentage of residents commute significant distances. This impacts the amount of time available for church members to volunteer in ministry positions or to connect socially with those who do not profess faith. The financial pressure, created by a 'need' for technological devices, has created a demand for two incomes within a family. Simultaneously, there is an increasing dissatisfaction with the quality of life as experienced in a lack of personal time, decreasing amounts of energy at the end of a week, always feeling rushed and lack of leisure time.[718]

> At the end of the twentieth century [in Western Culture], a sentiment of fatigue and despair prevails, as if all solutions have been tried and, instead of a new world order emerging, the problems are becoming more complex, the conflicts more inextricable, and the ideals of community more elusive than ever."[719]

In the context of a rapidly changing society, people have become disillusioned with religion. Dr. Clark D. Cowden likens the church to major league baseball. League leadership failed to consider the North American context and the baseball consumer reacted by pushing support to the sidelines of

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[715] Kieron Lang, <u>Same-Sex Marriage: Party Battle Lines</u>
http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/1108511470674_1, p. 1, April 22, 2006.
Prime Minister Paul Martin publicly declared that although he is a Catholic and holds personal views on same-sex marriage, he must uphold the rights of homosexuals.
[716] James E. Read, <u>Standing at the Crossroads</u> Horizons, (Christian Leadership Magazine, Salvation Army, Canada and Bermuda) January-February 2004, p. 11.
[717] Jim Peterson, <u>Church without Walls</u> Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1992, p. 24.
[718] Milward, Brown, Goldfarb Consultant Group, <u>Bridging the Generation Gap</u> Personal notes from presentation at Mississauga Business Leaders Council Meeting, Wednesday, October 23, 2003.
[719] Gilbert Belizekian, <u>Community 101</u> Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1997, p. 47.

North American life.[720] This may explain the increasing disillusionment regarding the church over recent times. He cites Canadian Pierre Berton's 1965 work, *The Comfortable Pew,* in which Berton accused the church of lagging behind culture. In 1987 the pendulum swung as churches sold out to culture by providing "fussy customers with religion a la carte."[721] "Our culture is pernicious in its capacity to twist the biblical, missional understanding of the gospel into a consumerist one"[722] as evidenced by the reticence of people to get involved in ministry in their church. Surveys conclude that, as a general rule, twenty percent of the people fulfill eighty percent of the church's ministry,[723] "because we have been schooled as consumers, finding fellowship where we get [a broad spectrum of our] needs met."[724]

Cynicism has become the negative energy in connection with religious and secular organizations. As the moral and financial scandals associated with the televangelists[725] and the Enron fiasco have come to light, or the failure of political leaders to live up to their promises, people have opted to 'shape their own world.' The outgrowth is a Western society consisting of uncommitted people in the realms of religion, marriage and employment, all the while failing to find the fulfillment of personal needs, goals and spirituality.[726] At the same members of North American society are very suspicious of institutions and yet champion similar causes such as community and diversity.[727] Simultaneously they marginalize the role of the church has as a relic of the past. While secular

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[720] Clark D. Cowden, Why the Church is Like Major League Baseball
http://www.sjpresbytery.org/Baseball.pdf, p. 1, January 1, 2005.
[721] Reginald Bibby, Restless Gods Toronto, ON: Stoddard Books, 2002, p. 56.
[722] www.gocn.org/news104.htm p. 2, January 1, 2005.
[723] The Pareto Principle http://www.gassner.co.il/pareto/, p. 1, April 22, 2006.
http://www.drurywriting.com/sharon/28.Pareto.Principle.htm, p. 1, April 22, 2006. This principle was first identified by Vilfredo Pareto and has been extrapolated across various types of organizational cultures including the local church.
[724]Wayne Jacobsen and Clay Jacobsen, Authentic Relationships Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2003, p. 54.
[725] Ibid. Overall confidence in church leadership fell from 51% in 1985 to 36% in 1990.
[726] Donald Posterski and Irwin Barker, Where's A God Church? Winfield, BC: Wood Lake Books, 1993, p. 50.
[727] www.thejunction.info/articles/strategic.htm p. 2, December 18, 2004.

commentators are happy to recognize the debt North American civilization owes to the Christian faith, Christianity has become, "a historical factor subservient to a secular culture rather than functioning as the creative power it once was."[728]

There are other shifts in culture, some of which are rooted in geography. The outer edges of cities (suburbs) have gradually expanded and church groups have sought to establish themselves in these locales. While commuting to a downtown location, suburbanites look to interact with others in local communities, similar to the rural villages and towns of yesteryear.[729] The distinct differences between rural and urban cultures have bearing on spiritual expression. Rural cultures are characterized by "a single human milieu that embraces work, leisure, family relationships, and religion ... In the city the individual is in the presence of multiple possibilities ... a variety of possible networks with which he [sic] can decide to connect or not to connect."[730] Rural simplicity characterizes life as simple and allows one to be part of an inclusive community-oriented village or town, while those living in urban settings choose whom they consider to be 'their community' as evidenced in the manifestation of people "taking a more active role in their search to belong."[731]

While understanding the trends in religion in Western culture, there are unique shifts on the Canadian social landscape. Canada's history began with two 'founding nations,' both of which were white and rural. Presently, one could describe urban and suburban Canada as a country of recent immigrants. Recent census figures show that thirty-eight percent of Torontonians qualify as first generation immigrants. This has impacted what is referred to as 'the colouring of congregations' although it must be pointed out that most immigrants do not have Christian religious backgrounds.[732] In a related statistic, the 2001 census

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[728] Louis Dupre, Seeking Christian Interiority Christian Century, July 16, 1997, p. 654.
[729] Eric Pooley, The Great Escape: Americans are fleeing suburbia for small towns. Do their lives equal their dreams? Time, December 8, 1997, p. 54.
[730] Lesslie Newbigin, Foolishness p. 32.
[731] Randy Frazee, The Connecting Church Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., p. 140.
[732] Donald Posterski and Irwin Barker, Good pp. 91-93.

shows that forty-three percent of 610,815 Mississaugans cited either a non-Christian religion or no religion as their preference.[733]

Many Canadians define their culture as 'not American.' There has been some movement to stand up for Canadian uniqueness in an "I AM Canadian" video,[734] and an increasing determination for Canadians to distance themselves from American influence.[735] This is applicable in the area of religion and spirituality.

> For Canadians, there is no moralistic universal drive imbedded in our national identity to move us through the next century. Canada has no 'civil religion.' The dominant strain of 'Canadianism' may evoke some echoes of our faithful forefathers in terms of tolerance, compassion and that much trumpeted, if elusive virtue of compromise. But on the whole, Canada is a much more secular society than the United States. Simply stated, God is not central to our national social and political dialogue. And, perhaps consequently, neither is God a major part of our personal dialogue.[736]

Overall Canadian church attendance is declining.[737] Declining numbers suggest the very real possibility that fewer and fewer Canadians are having their spiritual, personal and social needs met.[738] The shrinking congregational size relates to "a decline in social conformity and an increase in freedom of choice"

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[733] Census 2001: Statistics Canada
http://www12.statcan.ca/english/profil01/Details/details1rel.cfm?SEARCH=BEGINS&PSGC = 35&GC=3521005&A=&LANG=E&Province=35&PlaceName=Mississauga&CSDNAME=Mississauga &CMA=&SEARCH=BEGINS&DataType=1&TypeNameE=City%20%2D%20Cit%E9&ID=6840. p.1, March 14, 2005. Census 2001: Statistics Canada: Mississauga
http://www.mississauga.ca/ecity/download/;jsessionid=0JTMDNBVHYKBNTRPH3XSFE4OF25W2J VC?repositoryKey=Ecity&itemDesc=file&dataName=data&mimeTypeName=mimeType&id=23000 41, p. 1, April 27, 2006. No Religion 16.8%, Muslim 6.8%, Hindu 4.8%, Sikh 3.8%, Buddhist 1.9%, Jewish 1.7%, Other non-Christian religions 7%.
[734] Molson Canadian Marketing, I Am Canadian http://www.iam.ca/video/, March 22, 2005.
[735] Election Blog, http://www.electionblog.ctv.ca/default.asp?item=117004 p. 1, September 23, 2006. In 2004, the government of Canada chose not to join the Americans in sending troops to Iraq and decided in January 2005 not to participate in the construction of a missile defence system.
[736] Donald Posterski and Irwin Barker, Good p. 123.
[737] American and Canadian Churches Facing Major Decline
http://www.christiantoday.com/news/america/canadian.churches.facing.major.decline/477htm, p. 1, April 24, 2006. Membership in Anglican churches have declined 53% since 1961, the United Church 39%, Presbyterians 35%, Baptists 7%, Lutherans 4%.
http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2005/105/23.0.html April 24, 2006, p.1. The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada is growing by 2.5% per year, but this is mainly the result of the establishment of cultural churches attracting new immigrants. In non-cultural churches attendance is either remaining steady or declining.
[738] Reginald W. Bibby, There's Got to be More Winfield, BC: Wood Lake Books, 1995, pp. 23-35.

and emerging forms of social conformity, which simply do not include the church and customs, habits and traditions that worked well for previous cultures and generations are not effective in contemporary society.[739] Although church attendance is not the definitive arbiter in church effectiveness, leadership must consider the magnitude of congregational impact on society.

As gender equality has become the norm in Canadian society, more women are finding their way into the marketplace and hence free time is at a premium. This situation impacts the potential volunteer base for congregational life in two ways. While there are more women in church leadership, access to female volunteers has been reduced.

> In church life, women have been the primary 'doers of the work.' Men have been the board members and the primary 'decision makers for the work.' Women have been allowed to run the programs of the church and assume informal leadership, but they have often done so without being given the formal titles.[740]

Some churches consider gender equality and female involvement in congregational activities a doctrinal issue. The church or denomination that downplays the role of women in the local assembly will discover its impact is marginal to a culture that accepts gender equality.

The local church may wish to consider that current members of society have had some exposure to Christian religious expression. Although only twenty to twenty-five percent of Canadians attend church services regularly, most have psychological, emotional or cultural ties with one of the country's religious groups, feeling comfortable in certain religious cultures and dissonance in others.[741] This plays a significant part when one begins to search out one's spirituality through a methodology of adopting a belief here and a practice there. Ninety percent of people continue to choose a practice of faith, such as rites of passage, which would speak to certain transitions in their lives. This may

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[739] Kennon L. Callahan, The Future that Has Come San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2002, p. 83.

[740] Ibid. p. 96.

[741] Bibby, Restless p. 52. This phenomenon, which Bibby refers to as 'religious memory,' is rapidly fading due to immigration and aging and will not exist twenty years from the present.

describe such church participants as "not really coming, but not really leaving."[742] They are seekers, superficial in their commitment to a religious system. In the case of Roman Catholicism, they identify themselves as "cafeteria Catholics...openly admitting that they pick and choose from church teachings as they see fit."[743]

The phenomenon of a consumerist mentality is not confined to traditional or mainline churches. It has been estimated that at Portico, up to sixty percent of the congregation, who have been at the church between five and eleven years, are uninvolved in any religious activity other than church attendance, which is sporadic at best.[744] "Some evidence suggests that there is an increase of serious churchgoers. At the same time there is an increase in those who report being wholly uninvolved with the church. The two ends of the spectrum are moving apart."[745]

The challenge for the local church to engage a secular, pluralistic society, which has moved from moral absolutism to relativism, is daunting. To be successful the church will need to change its mindset concerning contemporary society.

> Historically, the church believed in absolutes. Assuming that truth exists and that it can be known, the church positioned itself to defend the idea that some things are categorically right and other things categorically wrong. Out of this bias, the church has often had a strong role in shaping the moral conscience of culture. Today, Canadians "have concluded that right and wrong is a matter of personal opinion ... [a] shift away from absolute assumptions to relativistic premises ..." Media influences such as television, movies and newspapers urge people to form opinions based on their bias in addition to modifying society's mode of communication and its perception of reality.[746]

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[742] Ibid.

[743] Robert C. Fuller, Spiritual p. 163.

[744] Jan Moir, The Five-Eleven Report Unpublished. The Ministry Resource Director at Portico, along with her ministry consultants, conducted an informal survey in early Fall, 2004 and reported at a MGT Family Church Directors meeting on October 20, 2004.

[745] Robert C. Fuller, Spiritual p. 163.

[746] Marva J. Dawn, Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995, pp. 19-24, 55.

MTV caters to the postmodern appetite with programming devoid of a plot by relying more on mood and emotion or the multitude of 'reality' shows to fulfill the appetite created in their viewers.[747]

On the other hand, receptivity to the examination of religious thought has risen to an all-time high of fifty-five percent.[748] Tom Harpur, religion editor for the Toronto Star and a quintessential pluralist, says, "There are more and more people outside the church who are deeply searching for a center to their life beyond shopping malls."[749]

> The real spiritual story today is not what particular religious group we belong to, which doctrine we profess or which system of philosophy we follow. It is about who we cobble together the meaning in our lives. What do we really believe when we suddenly wake up at 3 a.m.?[750]

The openness of contemporary society to spiritual dialogue, as opposed to evangelism, provides an opportunity for Christians who can see postmodernism from the inside. Lee Strobel, once a sceptical seeker himself, assists in this mindshift. In the book, *Inside the Mind of Unchurched Harry and Mary,*[751] he describes people without faith today as those who have rejected church, but not necessarily God. He or she is morally adrift, but genuinely desires a spiritual anchor in the context of reason, as opposed to rules. These people, without faith, do not understand Christianity and do not believe Christianity has workable answers to the dilemmas in their lives. Furthermore, they have little depth of knowledge in that which he or she claims to believe but will not consider spiritual input from anyone with whom they have no relationship.[752]

The church, though often viewed as irrelevant and dated, does have a unique opportunity to create non-threatening environments for those who are searching for answers to life's questions. The response to this post-modern

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[747] Christin Ditchfield, <u>Christians On Reality TV Shows?</u>
http://www.christianitytoday.com/tc/2005/002/8.12.html, p. 1,March 14, 2005.
[748] Bibby, <u>Restless</u> p. 50.
[749] Ibid. p. 93.
[750] Ibid.
[751] Lee Strobel, <u>Inside the Mind of Unchurched Harry and Mary</u> Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1993, p. 45ff.
[752] Ibid.

mood, with its relativism and claims to general truth, including engaging experiences of truth and meaning that arise, can only be effective through God who meets us in Jesus Christ who confronts all of these truth worlds with transforming grace.[753] An effective missional church will lead its membership to understand postmodern people as those who are sceptical of certainty, do not believe in absolute truth, and highly value experience while in community. Church leaders will equip congregational members to engage those without faith in 'their own language' and in their own world.

Organizational Culture

One can often explain the differences in organizations by the variations in their cultures. Organizational culture explains how "things are done around here. [It] sets the tone for how organizations operate and how individuals within the organization interact."[754] Organizational theorists have likened culture to the soul of an organization; the beliefs and values and how they are manifested. Culture holds an organization together and gives it life force.[755] The characteristics and organization variables that inform a corporate culture are the degree of openness to risk taking, attention to detail, the orientation of outcome, the value of people and team, the degree of aggressiveness and the stability of the organization. As with societal culture as a whole, subcultures exist inside an organization as defined by departments and/or geographical separation.[756]

If one understands that organizational culture is part of human life at all times, and is constantly enacted and created by one's interaction with others, core principles and values can be established for greater organizational effectiveness.[757] The process of corporate culture formation refers to the establishment of a pattern followed by integration into the life of the

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[753] www.gocn.org/news104.htm January 1, 2005, p. 1.
[754] Stephen P. Robbins and Nancy Langton, Organizational Behaviour Scarborough, ON. Prentice-Hall Canada, 1999, p. 614.
[755] Henry Mintzberg, cited in Stephen Robbins and Nancy Langton, Organizational p. 615.
[756] Stephen P. Robbins and Nancy Langton, Organizational pp. 615-616.
[757] Edgar H. Schein, Organizational Culture and Leadership San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992, p. 1.

organization.[758] Leadership can create or modify a corporate culture as they incorporate their values and assumptions into the organization through the management of, and sometimes even the destruction of, an undesirable culture.[759] With the realization that the atmosphere in a company or church will contribute significantly to its effectiveness,[760] leadership must concentrate on survival, growth and adaptation to their environment.

External controls and environments as defined by set rules, and the climate or physical atmosphere, contribute the development of organizational culture. As individuals, people add to the building of a corporate culture through the contribution of intangibles such as embedded skills, mental models and shared types of cognitive processing.[761] Customs and traditions, group norms, and espoused values express behavioural regularities. This is perpetuated by referencing the origin of culture and its development over its history, which has been formative in the development of the institution and the employee's attitude.[762]

To describe a particular corporate culture, one needs to analyze it from a number of vantage points. Although they are ambiguous witnesses, it is possible to interpret corporate culture by observing tangible artefacts, such as organizational charts, ceremonies, stories told about the organization and its members, description of the building, physical layout of office structures, art or awards hanging on office walls and dress code for employees. They are more effective when they work in tandem with espoused values as outlined by written strategies, goals, corporate philosophies and codes of behaviour. These evaluative understandings are expressive of 'what ought to be' and 'what will and won't work.' More difficult to discern are the unwritten underlying assumptions,

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[758] Edgar Schein, Organizational p. 11.

[759] Ibid. p. 2,11. This will be discussed at length in Chapter V, p. 222.

[760] At a church or in the non-profit sector, productivity is viewed in terms of qualitative and quantitative success in fulfilling the mission or producing fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

[761] Edgar Schein, pp. 8-10.

[762] Ibid. In the case of the church, employee and/or the congregational member will be impacted by organizational culture as it has developed over the years.

the taken-for-granted beliefs, thoughts and feelings of members of the organization[763] which may be expressed in members' behaviour or visible artefacts.

Culture Theory and The Local Church

Religion and culture are often indelibly tied together and give meaning to each other. "Religion is the substance of culture and culture the form of religion."[764] When one observes Canadian society there are threads of religious and cultural commonality that are readily identifiable necessitating the establishment of 'rules of engagement.' However, the church must not downplay the enormous challenge to reach Western society.

> The church finds itself sharing the gospel with a culture that, on the one hand, is permeated by the heritage of the Enlightenment and modernity and, on the other hand, by postmodern nihilism and hopelessness. People living amidst this tension tend to react to the message of the church in two seemingly opposing ways. Those whose roots are still in the project of modernism are usually very sceptical, whereas genuinely postmodern persons may welcome the narrative truth of the gospel, although only as a story among others. To be credible, the church has to respond to both of these reactions.[765]

In order to speak to other cultures and religions, or people whose culture has no tie to any religion, God calls the missional church to, "build its own culture, economy and lifestyle in the world and among all peoples"[766] without abandoning positive or value-neutral behaviours, allegiances, interests and relationships which are in common with the dominant culture.

The culture and history of a society will shape the form of a local assembly. "When we shape our ecclesiology for a particular culture, we must take into consideration the historical development of other ecclessiologies ... we

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[763] Neal M. Ashkanasy, Celeste P.M. Wilderom, Mark F. Peterson, <u>Handbook of Organizational Culture and Climate</u> Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA. 2000, p. 134.

[764] Paul Tillich as cited by Henry Van Til, <u>The Calvinist Concept of Culture</u> Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1959, p. 37.

[765] Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, <u>An Introduction to Ecclesiology</u> Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002, pp. 158-159.

[766] Howard A. Snyder, <u>Decoding the Church</u> Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2002, p. 51.

are guided by the Christian church in all its cultural expressions, those that precede us and those that are contemporary with us."[767]

The tension between counter-culturalism and the risk of being irrelevant emerges. Facilitators of a recent study of churches engaging their culture observed that a shift in organizational cultural values had taken place. With this in mind, the church must consciously determine its unique role in the culture in which it finds itself and strategize accordingly. Some churches have made a deliberate choice to shun the materialism of present-day culture in favour of being present with the poor and the marginalized. As new congregational values emerge, ministry previously focused on the individual is rejected in favour of fostering a commitment to establishing a healthy biblical community which contributes to the holistic development of all those who belong.[768]

The divine architect of the local congregation has distinctive expectations for the church's design. With the understanding that culture is temporal and pluralistic, and a congregation is established ultimately for spiritual and eternal purposes, the local church should seek to be a community that transcends culture while at the same time significantly impacting the region of its setting.[769] As a result there is a symbiotic relationship between the positive influence of an incarnational gospel upon a society, and the need for the ministries of the local church to express its message "in terms, styles and perspectives of its social context."[770]

Today's local church, possibly conceived in modernity, may be a stumbling block to faith by members of contemporary society. For some the "notions of

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[767] Darrell L. Guder, Missional p. 11.

[768] Lois Y. Barrett, Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 2004, pp. 76-83. She labels this shift as "taking a risk as a contrasting community."

[769] Everett E. Richey, The Church: Its Mission and Message cited in Melvin E. Dieter and Daniel N. Berg, eds., The Church: An Inquiry into Ecclesiology from a Biblical Theological Perspective Anderson, IN: Warner Press, Inc., 1984, p. 493.

[770] Darrell L. Guder, Missional p. 14.

evangelism and mission"[771] are deeply offensive and "a parochial vestige of past imperialism"[772] and viewed as almost the opposite of spirituality.[773] The postmodern assumes that all Christians are locked into a modern paradigm of Christianity, and if they should choose to investigate biblical faith they would be forced to conform to modernity as well as a Christian lifestyle which, in their mind, is characterized by close-mindedness, bigotry, brainwashing and conformity. The church must be cautious on how it responds to this reality. The seeker is more interested in the goodness of faith rather than the truth of faith, and the church must respond accordingly.[774]

In his classic work, *Christ and Culture,* H. Richard Niebuhr discusses the five typical ways in which Christians and the church may relate to the culture in which they reside or minister. The first category describes an Exclusivist Approach, which sees those who view Christ and his values as 'against' culture.[775] "The world is to be seen as a hostile environment for Christian belief and practice. The values of the Kingdom of God stand in contrast to those of the world."[776] When Constantine integrated Christian faith into the official practice of religion in the Roman Empire, rulers in the church began to assume the customs of secular leaders. This led to the rise of an 'against culture' monastic movement, which exhibited contempt for the world by establishing alternative Christian communities.[777] "This is a radical position which identifies cultures with 'the world' (1 John 2:15-16, 5:19) [and] where Christians are enjoined against loving 'the world' since the world is in the power of the evil one."[778]

[771] D. A. Carson, The Church in the Bible and the World Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1987, p. 213.
[772] Ibid.
[773] Karen Ward, The New Church in Jennifer Ashley, Mike Bickle, Mark Driscoll, Mike Howerton, eds., The Relevant Church Lake Mary, FL: Relevant Books, 2004, p. 84.
[774] Brian D. McLaren, Ready p. 65.
[775] Peter R. Gathje, A Contested Classic: Whose Christ, Which Culture? http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=2641 April 29, 2006, p. 3. This is referred to as a rejection of culture.
[776] Alister E. McGrath, Christian Spirituality Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1999, p. 20.
[777] Ibid.
[778] Charles Kraft, Culture p. 104.

This type of separatist worldview continues to be prevalent. Christian communes[779] or church leadership which emphasizes the need for Christians to position themselves against the world so that they can establish their own escapist subculture positioned against the world and ultimately win the world are extreme examples of this separatist worldview. In the past, this has met with measured success as can be illustrated by the inception of Pentecostal churches from 1919 to 1980.[780] It is questionable as to whether this ministry philosophy, in its purest form, would be evangelistically effective in today's society.

The second way in which believers may view and express their faith in its relation to culture is "The Christ 'of' Culture."[781] Some have referred to this as The Accomodationist Approach.[782]

> They interpret culture through Christ, regarding those elements in it as most important which are most accordant with his work and person; on the other hand they understand Christ through culture selecting from his teaching and action as well as from the Christian doctrine about him such points as seem to agree with what is best in civilization.[783]

In this approach, the difference between religion[784] and culture is indiscernible. Because one is integrated into the other, "Christian authenticity is to be found by affirmation of, and even immersion in, the culture of the day."[785]

Although the next three categories are more closely aligned, there are distinctions. The third category, referred to as the Synthesis Approach, means

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[779] Plowcreek Commune http://www.plowcreek.org/, p. 1February 1, 2005. One example is Plowcreek Commune.

[780] When one listens to the recounting of the stories of the early history of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, one hears terms like 'store-front church,' and references to poor and marginalized people who were mocked for their faith. Ongoing conversations with Robert John Black, Glenburnie, ON, who found faith in The Kingston Gospel Temple in the early 1940s and Lillian Esther Black who found faith in a United Church in 1947, and transitioned shortly thereafter to a The Kingston Gospel Temple, are indicative of this reality. They, and their contemporaries, took pride in the fact that they were a 'different,' 'separate' and a 'holy people.'

[781] Peter R. Gathje, Contested p. 3. The assimilation of culture.

[782] H. E. Cardin, McMaster Divinity College - DM 906 Leading Worship and Discipleship: Forming a People, Communicating the Word, May 12-16, 2003, ww.cupandcross.com/dmin/year2notes.doc, p. 5, July 14, 2006.

[783] H. Richard Niebuhr, Christ and Culture San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 2001. p. 83.

[784] Christian faith.

[785] Alister E. McGrath, Spirituality p. 22.

that Christ's relation to culture is best described as 'above.'[786] He is "unconcerned with human beings (and their affairs) in culture."[787] This "is grounded in the recognition that culture is neither perfect nor evil, but is something that can be elevated and transformed through Christian faith."[788] This approach "emphasizes the positive elements in human nature and culture, while recognizing that even these need to be purified and lifted."[789] It is in the proposed assumption that there is a relationship between Christ and culture that opens this view to challenge. "Human culture is good, but it is capable of transformation through the impact of the gospel."[790] Proponents of this view assume that nature, human and environmental, is inherently good and needs simply to experience improvement through an elevation to a higher plane as made possible by Christ's incarnation.

The fourth point in Niebuhr's outline is dualist in nature and is entitled "Christ and Culture in Paradox"[791] or The Traditionalist Approach.[792] This view "does not regard the world and human culture as fundamentally evil; nevertheless, it argues that the Christian must expect to struggle in the attempt to lead an authentic Christian life."[793] There is an expectation for the Christian to be an influence on the social environment in which he or she lives[794] while not allowing that same culture to corrupt one's Christian spirituality. Members of the Christian community must expect to live in dynamic tension with the world, as identified as the interplay between the 'kingdom of the world' and the 'kingdom

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[786] Peter R. Gathje, Contested p. 3. Peter R. Gathje calls this a synthesis of culture.
[787] Charles Kraft, Culture p. 109. H. E. Cardin, Notes p. 5.
[788] Charles Kraft. Culture p. 109.
[789] Geoffrey Wainwright, Types of Spirituality cited in C. Jones, G. Wainwright and E. Yarnold eds., The Study of Spirituality London, UK: SPCK, 1986, pp. 592-605.
[790] Alister E. McGrath, Spirituality p. 22.
[791] H. Richard Niebuhr, Christ pp. 149-188. Peter R. Gathje, Contested p. 3. Peter R. Gathje labels this dualism.
[792] H. E. Cardin, Notes p. 6.
[793] Alister E. McGrath, Spirituality p. 23.
[794] Craig Nelson, Incarnational Living http://www.next-wave.org/dec00/incarnational.htm, p. 1, February 1, 2005. This has been referred to as Incarnational Living.

of God."[795] Those who have not experienced Christian faith are oblivious to its values while the believer in transformation is constantly making value judgements on the culture of their context.

While this is an everyday experience for the individual believer, the church faces the same challenge as it designs its ministries. While Jesus ate with social and religious outcasts, (Matthew 9:10) he prepared the foundation of a separate organization called the church (Matthew 16:18) that would provide an organized alternative to the culture of 'the world.' A study of Jesus teaching and Paul's church planting instructs the church leader concerning basic church culture and the methodology leading to the establishment of benchmarks for biblical church culture.

The fifth model concerning Christ and culture offered by Niebuhr is The Transformationist Approach[796] which pictures Christ as the "transformer of culture ...the conversionist's answer to the problem of Christ and culture."[797] God chooses to work within a human cultural milieu.[798] As they respond to the message relevant to their cultural understanding, they continue on the journey of inner spiritual formation. Outward behaviour changes when one finds faith in God, through Jesus Christ. One's social context changes when a redeemed person impacts his or her culture.

While the fifth model may appear, at first glance, as Neibuhr's best offering for the missional church, the first four have some merit. They accurately outline the conflict between Christian faith and the expressed culture.   Christian faith will struggle against a culture that expresses values which are the antithesis of biblical principles.[799] Simultaneously each culture may express redeeming

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[795] Alister E. McGrath, Spirituality p. 23.
[796] H. E. Cardin, Notes p. 6.
[797] H. Richard Niebuhr, Christ p. 190. Peter R. Gathje, Contested p. 3. Peter R. Gathje calls this the conversion of culture.
[798] Charles Kraft, Culture p. 46.
[799] Civil Marriage and Recognition of Same-Sex Marriages
http://www.justice.gc.ca/en/news/fs/2004/doc_31244.html p. 1, April 29, 2006. Currently Canadian culture and government is debating the changing of the legal definition of marriage to accept homosexual relationships.

characteristics in line with Christian values[800] without negating the fact that non-redemptive aspects of a culture have the potential to negatively impact its members. Introduction of the transformative presence of Christ into the lives of people in a particular culture will be evident in the realization of their redemptive potential.

While Neibuhr used the interplay between Christ and culture to elucidate his model, the church practitioner may wish to explore "three views of church in culture; the church identified with culture, the church against culture, and the church transforms culture."[801] The temptation is for church leadership to adopt or lean heavily toward one of these three views without considering the merits or weaknesses of the others. The church may identify with culture by existing within it and relating to it, all the while maintaining biblical values in such a way as to offering an alternative to a culture of hopelessness. "The church will be most provocative and alluring when it is being itself, being who God has constituted it to be, that is being a mini-society that proclaims the person and work of Christ and imitates his sacrificial service."[802] Ultimately the transforming of individual lives will bring a redemptive aspect to culture as a whole. "The church becomes a transforming presence in culture when Christians live by Christian values in the various structures that rule over their lives."[803]

In relation to internal and external culture, congregational leadership must ascertain and define a specific approach for their church. For an assembly that wishes intentionally to optimize spiritual formation, community and missionality, a discriminating approach to Neibuhr's typologies is necessary. To assume an

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[800] CanadaHelps Press Kit http://www.canadahelps.org/AboutUs/CanadaHelps_Press_Kit.pdf, p. 4, April 29, 2006. When the Tsunami hit countries bordering the Indian Ocean and Bay of Bengal on December 26, 2004, Canadians (private donors and the Canadian government) pledged financial assistance in record amounts.
[801] Robert E. Webber, Ancient p. 127.
[802] Brian Kay, The Local Church, Sometimes Annoying, Never Optional Jennifer Ashley, Mike Bickle, Mark Driscoll, Mike Howerton, eds., The Relevant Church Lake Mary, FL: Relevant Books, 2004, p. 5.
[803] Ibid. p. 128.

exclusivist approach may lead to an inwardly focused church which fails to fulfill its missional mandate.

At the same time, it is important to maintain a biblical distinctiveness[804] as expressed in a Christian worldview. There are certain aspects of North American culture that are in direct opposition to biblical principles. However, one should not constantly assess culture as bad or good, but as a reality that must be evaluated and utilized where possible. While believers should not legitimize all cultural forms, there are those that may be useful to the church or believer. Some churches find the music of Pink Floyd speaks to the seeker better than that of Charles Wesley.[805] Simultaneously there are cultural norms and behaviours that should be transformed when one becomes a Christ-follower. [806] The intentional establishment of a designed church culture can be of great benefit to the formation, articulation and continuation of an environment which empowers members as they engage the culture in which they live, work and play.

Practically speaking, this means that people are searching for a church that optimizes spiritual formation and community, not a plethora of committees. People are looking for opportunities to experience mission, shepherding, discipleship, worship, fellowship, recreation and other holistic activities.[807] Church leadership should strategize for a corporate church culture that facilitates relationships as opposed to a mindset that is always looking for an impersonal programmed 'fix.'[808] Such a church will be engaging to the believer while relating those who are seekers.

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[804] While some have interpreted this as what a person does and wears, it is of greater benefit assume the approach that a healthy distinctiveness is accomplished by applying biblical principles, as opposed to Old or New Testament culture, to everyday living.
[805] One such church is WestEdge Community Church, Mississauga, ON. http://www.westedge.org/ July 14, 2006.
[806] Although widely accepted in Canadian culture, very few evangelical churches would view abortion, recreational drug use or sex outside marriage as acceptable behaviour.
[807] Kennon L. Callahan, Future p. 83.
[808] Ibid.

Contextualization

As early as 1926 Reinhold Niebuhr was decrying the ineffectiveness of the church on society.[809] Current thinking may be similar.

> What is vexing is that studies have shown that amid all the excitement of our culture's growing openness to spiritual things, there is a sobering and disturbing sense that Christianity appears increasingly irrelevant to the myriad of spiritual seekers.[810]

The Western culture has changed so radically that the church is in a quandary as to how to respond. Some churches make an attempt for stability by issuing 'Christian edicts and laws' or reaffirming existing methodologies. This relegates the church to the "last bastion of modernism in our culture." [811] There is a huge spiritual hunger, which remains unaddressed due to the large-scale rejection of Christianity because of its earned reputation as a religion of behavioural expectations. This has presented church-based missional activity with a new challenge. Congregations are viewed as part of the modern cultural establishment. Members of postmodern culture look to other cultures and worldviews giving explanation to the rise in New Age and other world religions. [812]

There are a number of corresponding factors that has led to this challenge. "The secularization of modern civilization is partly due to our inability to adjust the ethical and spiritual interests of mankind to the rapid advance of physical sciences."[813] The local congregation may have changed musical styles and adopted the use of computer technology, but the changes have been cosmetic in nature, contributing to an ever-widening chasm between church and society. This gap characterizes the extremes of first century authority and

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[809] C. Mark Steinacher, Personal Notes from a Conversation p. 1, July 10, 2006. There are a number of people whose observations concerning the church are insightful and accurate. Yet they fail to suggest solutions in line with biblical principles. Numbered among these is Niebuhr, who was a 'liberal' but was quick to sacrifice fidelity over 'relevance.'

[810] Tod E. Bolsinger, It Takes a Church to Raise a Christian Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2004, p. 30.

[811] Spencer Burke, Making Sense of Church Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 2003, p. 25.

[812] John Drane, Cultural Change and Biblical Faith Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 2000, pp. 112-116.

[813] www.religion-online.org/showartical.asp?title=472, p. 2, October 30, 2004. Scientific advancement was the characteristic of the changing modern culture of that day.

postmodern scepticism; a broad proclamation of God's love and unmet human needs, the selfless vision of Christ and the self-obsessed reality of our world, the truth of God's laws and the moral compromise of our culture, and those who believe and those who do not.[814] The task of the church is to discern the history and current prevalent human attitudes in society that has lead to church ineffectiveness and assess its culture critically, discerning and unmasking its philosophical foundations and values.[815] This will enable the church to contextualize the gospel and more effectively engage people at their point of need.

Subsequent to understanding their cultural context, church leadership can begin to contemplate the way in which the church can change to be relevant[816] and insure that God's message is declared in an unhindered manner to the world. A relevant church is one that is a distinctive community of faith and is passionate for Christ as well as culture and has bearing on that culture without losing its 'cutting edge.'[817] The missional church makes a distinction between those areas of cultural change that demand a counter-cultural response and those that primarily alter the social context in which the church does ministry.

If the mission of the church is to share the gospel to an unredeemed world, and humanity lives in common communities, it would make sense to adapt the communication of the message to present the good news without hindrance.[818] Practically speaking, one would not declare Christ's redemptive message in Mandarin to Latvians. If the gospel is,

> to 'make sense,' it has to be communicated in the language of those to whom it is addressed and has to be clothed in symbols which are meaningful to them. And since the gospel does not come as a disembodied message, but as the message of a community

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[814] Robert Lewis and Rob Wilkins, <u>The Church of Irresistible Influence</u> Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 2001, p. 23.

[815] Darrell L. Guder, <u>Missional</u> p. 18.

[816] Jennifer Ashley, <u>The Relevant Church</u> Lake Mary, FL: Relevant Books, 2004. p. ii. By relevant it is meant that the church would be able to engage members of its context because of being socially and culturally significant, aware of real-world issues, present day events and the current state of society.

[817] Jennifer Ashley <u>Relevant</u> p. iv.

[818] To do otherwise would lead to an ethnocentric presentation of the gospel.

which claims to live by it and which invites others to adhere to it, the community's life must be so ordered that it 'makes sense' to those who are so invited.[819]

Religious beliefs often permeate one's culture. As was the case in early Christianity, it is advantageous for Christ-followers to develop an apologia to meet the challenges of unbelief. For example, in certain aspects of culture, such as science, Christians should be able to engage in such a way as to give an account for one's faith.[820] On the other hand, Christians do not need to reject changes that do not affect the nature or impact of the church. Instead, the church may embrace or engage these shifts in culture.[821] Thoughtful Christians should evaluate such phenomena as technological advancements, the globalization of our world, and environmental causes on their own merit and address each of them accordingly.

The challenge comes as the church seeks to impact the people of a culture who have had little or no exposure to Christianity.[822] This being the case, the church is responsible to model a culture that is biblical and has redeeming impact on the surrounding society. Christian faith, no matter how depraved the society has become, has the potential to be a catalyst by assuming a new engaging cultural form which has the ability to speak to the needs manifested in today's society.[823] It must be recognized that every presentation of the gospel is, in some way, 'culturally conditioned.' To contextualize the Christian faith message to the listener's current setting, the communicator speaks to their reality in which they live and make their decisions.[824]

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[819] Lesslie Newbigin, Pluralist p. 141.

[820] D. Z. Philips, Belief, Change and Forms of Life Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, Inc. 1986, p. 88.

[821] Robert E. Webber, Ancient p. 132.

[822] Ergun Mehmet, Understanding Islam January 25, 2005. In some cases exposure to Christian faith has been limited to televangelism. In a Christian Communications Network Simulcast, Caner, a Turkish immigrant to America when he was a teenager, suggested that he thought all Christians, "had bad hair and yelled a lot."

[823] D. Z. Phillips, Through a Darkening Glass: Philosophy Literature and Cultural Change Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982, p. 93-94.

[824] Lesslie Newbigin, Pluralist p. 141.

An understanding of the difference between the goals of a missional church and its community will enable the congregation to realize its desire to engage its context by serving society's needs. This necessitates careful study leading to the development of an appropriate expression of church. "To say that church is necessary does not mean that any one given manifestation of church culture is necessary."[825] The task of the church in present-day culture is to define a missionary people whose witness will challenge precisely those dominant patterns as the church accepts it vocation to be an alternative community. Church leaders must augment leadership structures, community life,[826] the missional vision, and the activities of a congregation in such a way as to call members of society to a journey of spiritual formation and wholeness. [827]

There are distinct challenges associated with the contextualization of a church's message. As the church attempts to draw people into a life of faith and discipleship, it must "determine the meaning and application of the teaching for those who will receive the message in their particular circumstances"[828] without indiscriminately importing them from one context to another or exporting "theological formulations into foreign contexts or other cultures as if they were sacred scripture."[829] Each church needs to clearly identify its identity and the unique role the congregation can play in their community.[830]

It is imperative that the leadership of the local church, God's expression of community in that particular culture, becomes increasingly strategic in the matter of church culture and how the church relates to the culture in which it finds

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[825] Brian Kay, Local p. 3. In connection with the missional or evangelical church, it should be noted that the word 'relevant' has some negative connotations. In the name of relevance, the emerging church movement seems to advocate compromise concerning some biblical truths and practices. For purposes of this thesis, the word 'relevant' is more akin to 'engage'. That is, it will be argued that the missional church should seek to be relevant by understanding the secular mind with a view to presenting an uncompromised, yet engaging, invitational message of faith in Jesus Christ.

[826] This includes the various aspects that define culture.

[827] Darrell L. Guder, Missional p. 10.

[828] Donald Posterski and Irwin Barker, Good p. 139.

[829] Ibid.

[830] Jason Evans, Voices of the Next Generation
http://www.theooze.com/articles/article.cfm?id=353, p. 1, July 14, 2006.

itself. It is impossible to extrapolate one humanly initiated church culture into a multiplicity of cultures. Church leaders must strategize by studying the scriptures to inform their congregational culture and ultimately impact the members of the society in which they live and work. The church "must constantly examine how it has been shaped by its context and ask God to convert and transform it."[831] One church, which has considered this matter, has created a vision statement.

> We see our culture as a mission field and ourselves as missionaries. The key is we see Christ redeeming culture and the church's role is to engage culture. Rather than being afraid of it, which leads to building our own inward self-absorbed culture that is distant, irrelevant and protected from it, we love and embrace culture.[832]

Missionally minded leaders must sound a warning concerning the maintaining of a balance between cultural engagement through relevant methodology and adherence to the biblical pattern for a local church. On one hand church leadership should desire to create a church community which honours Jesus Christ while being relevant to culture which may be described as plural, urban, violent and spiritual.[833] One may articulate concerns in the form of the operative question, "What makes the church relevant? This line of questioning is a worthy one - one that has to be addressed as the institutional church seems to be moving more and more to the margins of society."[834]

To engage one's culture, a deconstruction, 'unpackaging' or 'unwrapping' of the church, in such a way as to respond to postmodernism, may be necessary.[835] Think of the experiences of the baby boomer.

> The Dick and Jane world of my 50s childhood is over, washed away by a tsunami of change ... While the world is rethinking its entire cultural formation, it is time to find new ways of being the church that are true to our postmodern context. It is time for a Postmodern Reformation.[836]

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[831] Darrell L. Guder, Missional pp. 14-15.

[832] www.thejunction.info/articles/strategic. htm December 18, 2004. p. 2.

[833] Alex McManus, Is the Church Still Relevant? Jennifer Ashley, Mike Bickle, Mark Driscoll, Mike Howerton, eds., The Relevant Church Lake Mary, FL: Relevant Books, 2004, p. 3. Alex McManus is a member of the pastoral staff of Mosaic, a multi-ethnic congregation in Los Angeles. He refers particularly to the challenges that Mosaic faces in downtown Los Angeles while imploring the reader to consider the descriptors for one's own context.

[834] Timothy Street, Love is the Essence Jennifer Ashley, Mike Bickle, Mark Driscoll, Mike Howerton, eds., The Relevant Church Lake Mary, FL: Relevant Books, 2004, p. 3.

[835] Spencer Burke, Sense p. 26.

[836] Leonard Sweet, Tsunami flyleaf.

This is accomplished by a process which separates tradition and expression from New Testament principles, in relation to the practice of the local church.

The challenge of contextualization can be characterized in the saying, "It has been said that the church that is married to the culture of one age, becomes the widow of the culture in the next age."[837] It is imperative that leaders adapt the gospel without compromising its message or its effectiveness. "I believe that 'spirituality' is the arena in which evangelical faith and practice will have to struggle desperately, in the coming years to retain its integrity, as all 'spiritualities' present themselves as equal."[838] It must be a determination of church leadership to remain true to biblical absolutes while re-imaging the church to make it relevant.[839]

Certain aspects of Christian faith cannot be culturally adjusted:

If we begin to shape the Church[840] and faith to accommodate the culture we are on a slippery slope. These often fail to recognize the difference between a culturally relevant expression of the Faith and a reshaping of the Faith to accommodate the culture. In other words, how do we make the expression of the faith relevant while retaining all those essential aspects, Praxilogical, Ecclesial, and Doctrinal that we have inherited ...[841]

If relevance has the potential to be a 'slippery slope' then church leadership must carefully analyze the ability of its ministries to engage through the lens of the scriptures and cultural acceptance, always deciding in favour of biblical principles. The basis of true contextualization results in "a community which remembers, rehearses, and lives by the story told in the New Testament ... through the continual reading and reflection on the Bible ."[842]

The success of the churches in Africa, South America and Asia, that have established their own identity, have done so by freeing themselves from the

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[837] The Missional Church Missional Presbytery Project
http://www.pcusa.org/oga/perspectives/nov-frame.htm, p. 1, March 1, 2005.
[838] Dallas Willard, Spiritual Formation in Christ: A Perspective on What it is and How it Might Be Done http://www.dwillard.org/articles/artview.asp?artID=81, p. 1, An address at Fuller Theological Seminary, October 22, 1993, p. 1.
[839] Spencer Burke, Sense p. 27.
[840] It is assumed that this reference is to the Biblical principles associated with ecclesiology or The Church.
[841] www.churchholymartyrs.org/Neocaht/Neocathpage.htm p. 1, October 10, 2004.
[842] Lesslie Newbigin, Pluralist p. 147.

demands of European and North American church subcultures as previously promoted by Western missionaries. They accomplished this by forging a unified community of people, who bore the name of Jesus, submitted themselves and their culture to a process of spiritual purification and formation. Interestingly enough, they also observe that Western church growth principles are not at all relevant in these settings.[843]

Church leaders must employ proper methodology and communication when considering the way to engage postmodern people. Contextualization in the current era means the days of bombastic revivalist preaching are over and it is time for the church, and its communicators, to engage the culture with story telling methodology. Many postmodern people do not have any residual understanding concerning Christianity. Forgetting this fact will undermine the attempt to communicate biblical truths with them. However, anyone who tells a story of God to those who are searching for meaning to life, will find a curious audience waiting.[844] Postmoderns are viewed as people who have an "incredulity toward meta-narratives"[845] and gain optimal understanding in presentations that are "with story."[846] In a relativistic world, people will listen to the biblical narrative. They may respond, 'I'm happy that it works for you,' but it remains that they have been presented with food for thought.

The public presentation of scriptural principles must be in alignment with the postmodern's spiritual listening and learning style. Brian McLaren refers to this as the difference between telling someone how to believe instead of what to believe. The postmodern does not trust the TV evangelist. He or she listens to those with whom he or she has relationship. If that relationship is with someone of faith, they will observe the impact faith has on the Christian's life. It is imperative that the church inclusively consider those who are searching for a

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[843] Edmund P. Clowney and Lewis P. Bray, The Church: Contours of Christian Theology Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995, pp. 163-164.

[844] Dieter and Valerie Sander, The Evolution of Gen X Ministry re:generation quarterly, vol. 5, no. 3, Fall 1999, p. 19.

[845] Robert E. Webber, Ancient p. 123.

[846] Ibid.

genuine faith. The creation of a defensive, combative style apologetic is simply not effective in today's society.[847] Pastors need to develop a new rhetoric that promotes a complementary relationship between words and deeds. Words will be softer and simpler, less religious, more common, and hence more powerful in the postmodern context. Ultimately the use of the personal relationships, and the narrative, biblical and present-day, will be more effective than a theoretical presentation.[848]

For this to take place, the church needs to re-image itself by characterizing one's relationship with God as a life-long journey of discipleship.[849] Believers can accomplish this by focusing on the development of the relational components of seekers' lives by 'counting conversations as opposed to conversions.' In this model of relevancy evangelism is a "relational dance, not a win/lose conquest."[850] Congregational members may accomplish this through the sharing of personal stories while inviting people into a community that will allow them to 'belong before they believe.'

If a community of believers wishes to present a message and lifestyle to which their particular society can relate, they must also understand that contextualization will limit their impact.[851] By narrowing its focus to a particular demographic, usually referred to as 'developing a target audience,' effectiveness will increase. This should not be viewed as a tactic intentionally to alienate undesirable segments of society. It is the process of assessing the available resources and determining whom the church, and its members, can reach first and most effectively. Demographical studies of both those inside and outside the community of faith will give an indication of who can be best reached. Although some may interpret this idea as exclusive or homogeneous, there is validity in establishing 'little congregations' which relate to the corresponding

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[847] Brian D. McLaren, The Church on the Other Side Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 2000, p. 74.
[848] Ibid. pp. 88-90.
[849] This journey is called spiritual formation or discipleship.
[850] Brian D. McLaren, Models Session: Eight Factors in Postmodern Evangelism. p. 1.
[851] 19 Theses www.nextreformation.com, p. 3, January 1, 2005.

subcultures found in one's neighbourhood. A local church, made up of Christians from all walks of life and a multiplicity of ministries[852] in order to relate to a variety of people.[853]

Contextualization of the Christian message, personally or corporately, needs consistent evaluation. As a church determines the most culturally relevant expression for biblical values, the culture of their target audience continues to evolve. A comprehensive process of self-analysis insures that the prevalent culture has not impacted the church in such as way as to prompt compromise of biblical values, but continues to facilitate engagement of a changing society.

The Marks of a Church Culture

Every church has a culture as determined by such aspects as demographic and social characteristics, usually, although not without exception, representative of the community in which they are located.[854] Individual histories and identities, as defined by why they exist and what they want to accomplish, inform these cultures. They have different styles, levels of energy and resource bases and vary in their receptivity and ability to change. For this reason different congregations connect to Canadians in very different and unique ways[855] with varying degrees of effectiveness.

To promote self-understanding, church leadership should initiate a congregational cultural analysis. This process will be best facilitated as the church asks why they do the things they do and the observation of congregational artefacts, espoused values, and shared assumptions. [856] Artefacts entail physical environments such as the church building, its shape and function

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[852] Ministries for college students, parents of children, stay-at-home mothers, just to name a few.
[853] John V. Taylor, The Go Between God Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1972, p. 149.
[854] An exception would be Evangel Pentecostal Church in Montreal, QC. It is largely a lower class, Caribbean and African congregation located in the downtown core of Montreal where the young white English and French urban professionals purchase townhomes and lofts. In the 1970s Evangel went through a radical shift from a white collar English church, most of whom left after the sovereignty referendum and was repopulated by the immigrants arriving from the Caribbean, Africa and Western and Eastern Europe.
[855] Reginald Bibby, More p. 66.
[856] Dennis G. Campbell, Congregations as Learning Communities Bethesda, MA: The Alban Institute, 2000, p. 41.

and décor. Espoused values include the strategies, goals, philosophies, doctrines, and theologies that a community formally says it believes and values.[857] Shared assumptions are the unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings.[858] These are intangibles that may or may not be discussed or debated, and act as a barriers to culture change or engagement.[859] With this in mind, church leadership may facilitate renewal by clarifying and redefining the meaning of artefacts, or establishing new ones, and restating and re-educating the congregation concerning espoused values and shared assumptions.

Over the last thirty years the Pentecostal church has experienced significant growth. In 1973, Peter Wagner wrote *Look Out, The Pentecostals are Coming*. His thesis was that the churches around the world which were experiencing rapid growth were Pentecostals.[860] In 1998 he continued to track growing churches and discovered church growth movements had diversified and assumed different patterns.[861] The emergence of independent African churches, Chinese house churches and Latin America grassroots churches are indicative of a new church growth movement, referred to by some, as The New Apostolic Reformation. The common culture of these churches is marked by interdependence on other congregations, a determination to release people into ministry, a dedication to the development and fulfilment of a corporate vision, a freedom in worship style, a renewed commitment to prayer, and an aggressive compassionate outreach to those who are without faith and the marginalized of their community.

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[857] Ibid. In some cases, churches are extremely well-versed in their doctrine but lack clarity in areas of strategic planning.

[858] For some, feelings are the ultimate source of values and action.

[859] Edgar H. Schein, Organizational Culture and Leadership San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 1992, p. 17.

[860] C. Peter Wagner, Look Out, The Pentecostals Are Coming Lake Mary, FL: Creation House Publishers, 1973.

[861] C. Peter Wagner, The New Apostolic Churches Ventura, CA: Gospel Light Publications, 2000, pp. 17-25.

As the culture of an existing congregation changes to a community-oriented focus, operational methodology needs to undergo a corresponding shift, accomplishing the elimination of those philosophical, functional or cultural elements that would undermine such a focus. For example, the culture of many attractional churches expects people to come to it, and they measure their effectiveness by attendance at Sunday worship.[862] This mindset compels church leadership to structure its activities as an event or performance. Many churches are dualistic and separate the secular and sacred into two distinct spheres giving the impression that encounters with God are only possible in 'holy places.' The organizational culture of the church may lean toward a corporate, autocratic, top-down hierarchical system that neglects a bottom-up servant leadership type as implemented by Jesus.[863]

To facilitate renewal, church leadership must establish benchmarks for a redemptive and missional local church culture. Four cornerstones making up such a formation are: orthodoxy, relevance, community and outreach.[864] Orthodoxy understands the gospel as a call to close the distance produced by human alienation from God. Relevance presents the message of reconciliation as applicable in daily living while living and worshipping in community. Outreach is defined as an effort to love people into God's family, and listen to them in a church considered to be is a safe place, as opposed to offering trite solutions to the complicated problems in their lives. This may be a church that understands that worship is an encounter with the living God and merely gets out of the way, inviting people, believers and seekers, to enter into God's presence.[865] This

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[862] Backyard Missionary Blog www.backyardmissionary.typepad.com, January 1, 2005. p. 2.
[863] Ibid.
[864] Donald Posterski and Irwin Barker, Good p. 146. On page 152 of Posterski and Barker, a more simplified definition for these four cornerstones is found. Orthodoxy – in touch with truth, Community – in touch with personal needs, Relevancy – in touch with the times, Outreach – in touch with the needs of others.
[865] Mike Howerton, "The Value Driven Church" in Jennifer Ashley, Mike Bickle, Mark Driscoll, Mike Howerton, eds., The Relevant Church Lake Mary, FL: Relevant Books, 2004, p. 153.

positions the Canadian church to make a desperately needed contribution to its current cultural context.[866]

New Testament passages give guidelines for the organization of a local church allowing for cultural expression. "The concrete shape of the local community will differ from place to place, from culture to culture."[867] Perhaps North American church can take a page from African theology on this matter. The sociological structures of these countries are organized around tribes and clans. The concept of 'family,' living and dead, is of utmost importance to these cultures. Observing this, missiologists have deliberated for decades to create a biblical response concerning African Christians and their ancestors.[868] As the local church practitioner seeks to translate the gospel into a particular culture, it is advantageous to respond to the social structures and patterns of human relationships in the formation of the evangelism and discipleship of the local church. While this principle is true in the international arena, it is also applicable across a nation. The ministry of the church in Port Anson, Newfoundland and Mississauga, Ontario, should reflect the unique nuances of social and family structures found in these communities.

The same is true in matters of governance. In regions of the world churches may be predominantly hierarchal rather than democratically oriented, a direct reflection of the cultural context. Members of organizations in the Western world, particularly Christians, may tend toward biblical passages in which Jesus conforms to their worldview concerning leadership styles.[869] For example, some organizations grant authority as a function of one's position instead of their leadership abilities or gifts. Societal norms reinforce such an approach as church

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[866] Ibid. p. 147.

[867] Darrell L. Guder, The Continuing Conversion of the Church Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000, p. 146.

[868] Jack Partain, Christians and Their Ancestors: A Dilemma of African Theology Christian Century, November 26, 1986, p. 1066, http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1078, p. 1. September 30, 2006.

[869] C. Mark Steinacher, Personal Notes from a Conversation at Tyndale University and Seminary, July 10, 2006, p. 1.

leaders are often viewed in prophetic rather than priestly roles.[870] A hierarchal structure of church governance may be acceptable depending on the operational style and attitude of those who are in higher positions of responsibility and may or may not contradict a biblical model of servant leadership.

Leaders in Western churches are faced with the complexity of a rapidly changing context.

> As the rate of change increases, the complexity of the problems that face us also increases. The more complex these problems are, the more time it takes to solve them ... by the time we find solutions to many of the problems that face us, usually the most important ones, the problems have so changed that our solutions to them are no longer relevant or effective... As a result we are falling further and further behind our times.[871]

The importance of designing an organizational culture and culture, effective in the midst of cultural change, becomes apparent. Church governance structures must be limited in their number of levels minimizing bureaucracy and allowing leaders to lead. Such an organization characterizes itself by a minimum of necessary rules which give way to empowerment, unhindered decision-making, risk-taking and minimal interdependence.[872]

While changing times present a challenge for the expression of missional activity, the church must prevail in Jesus' commissional task. The Western church must position itself to become an 'emerging global church.' Because the mindset and character of the North American church is becoming increasingly suburban, church leadership must recommit itself to ministry to the marginalized in the urban regions of the world. Combined with 'de-modernizing' the church, this can be a productive posture for evangelizing and discipling the multitude of regions around the world.[873] Portico does not wish to simply be an 'old model' missions-programmed church, blindly sending money to a centralized agency for

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[870] Peter Beilharz and Trevor Hogan, Social Self Global Culture: An Introduction to Sociological Ideas New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 96.

[871] Russell Ackoff, Creating the Corporate Future New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons, 1981, pp. 4-5.

[872] John P. Kotter, Leading Change Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1996, p. 172.

[873] Geoff Hosclaw, Lines of Convergence: Global, Modern, Postmodern http://www.resourcefoundation.org/Current/PostMod/articles/holsclaw.shtml February 28, 2005, p. 1. It should also be pointed out a that the absence of bureaucracy may lead to despotic leadership.

distribution. Rather, missional activity, domestic or international, will reflect its cultural values[874] in a culturally relevant manner and facilitated with a hands-on methodology.

Conclusion

Church communities possess unique, identifiable cultural characteristics. Furthermore, each participating congregant is a member of a larger society with its own cultural markings. The latter is not a static environment. In the last number of decades Western society has undergone a number of radical paradigm shifts including a movement from modernism to postmodernism. As such, leadership must be aware of these two cultural arenas to better position the church for effective missionality.

As an agent of change, the church community must consider its role in relation to culture. The local church has a number of choices including viewing itself above culture or as a transformer of culture. Closely aligned to this discussion is the degree of engagement employed by local congregations. One must consider the context in which the message is being declared and adapting the presentation accordingly.

Simultaneously, church leadership must rise to the challenge of creating an organizational culture that is biblical and facilitates its purposes. Although there is latitude in this exercise, it is imperative to identify mission, vision and values and a corresponding organizational structure for purposes of engagement. This exercise will significantly contribute to the developing of an optimal church culture.

One downfall of church leadership in organizational culture development is the indiscriminate deployment of marketplace principles methodology, often contrary to biblical values. Each cultural adjustment must complement, and not contradict New Testament principles and patterns of development and thereby strive to meet the biblical, missional expectations for the local church.

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[874] Spiritual Formation, Authentic/Accountable Relationships, Missional Activity.

CHAPTER V - THE CHANGE PROCESS

Introduction

From the beginning of time, human life has been prolifically marked by change. A vast array of societal changes currently bombard members of North American countries. However, the theme of change is as old as time itself. In the Old Testament God led the Jewish people through a number of cataclysmic changes. In the New Testament, he outlined his expectations for change in the life of the maturing believer and the congregation to which he or she belongs. This chapter will articulate a theology of change accompanied by practical applications.

For change to be effective, organizational leaders should design a thoughtful process. Prior to considering models for culture change, leadership should identify and articulate the need for such change. They must give consideration to the basics of mission, vision and the pathway for developing a complementing culture and strategy. To create a complete process, the change agent must consider the theory associated with culture change its practical implementation.

One of the major challenges associated with the changing of an organizational culture is maintaining a proper balance. The plan for culture change should be timed according to the readiness of the people of the organization keeping in mind the nature of the organization itself and the possible positive and negative outcomes. The leader understands the inherent and explicit manifestation of this tension. Some discussion will be associated with the quantity of culture change. Additionally, one must consider the nature of the change, and the casual or intensive speed at which the leadership team integrates proposed changes.

This chapter is not about cosmetic changes, 'fixing something here and there' and hoping that somehow, some way, small modifications will make a substantial difference. It concerns the process of determining the vast and

sweeping changes needed to empower an organization to be optimally effective and establishing a process to make shifts, radical or subtle, in a wise and prudent manner. This necessitates the design of a purposeful change in an organization's culture. Failure to consider this will undermine the long-term success of constructive change and perhaps even put the survival of the organization in jeopardy.[875]

Change in Today's Context

North American culture is initiating and experiencing exponentially increasing change in the marketplace, government, healthcare, education, and personal lifestyles. Even though culture change has been a constant theme in human history, the pace of change has accelerated beyond belief.

> ...owing to a variety of causes, the speed of change has been distinctly accelerating in this century ... Never before has the whole human race been caught up simultaneously in change on a global scale, such as we witness today.[876]

Even though there are those who would say "change is hell,"[877] it is commonly accepted that change is inevitable.[878]

Members of North American society are experiencing the frustrating exercise of living life in a context where 'the rules' constantly change. Someone coined the term 'shifting paradigms' to capture the nature and magnitude of this phenomenon.[879] In such a climate, organizations, such as government and business, find themselves in a constant struggle to remain current. This is the 'culture within a culture' challenge. The predominant culture, over which an organization has no control, makes it necessary for leadership in the smaller secondary group to re-examine and readjust its organizational culture.

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[875] Ken Hultman and Bill Gellerman, Balancing Individual and Organizational Values San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer, 2002, pp. 10-11.

[876] Lloyd Geering, Faith's New Age: A Perspective on Contemporary Religious Change London, UK: Collins Publishers, 1980, p. 14.

[877] Robert Quinn as cited in Alan Nelson and Gene Appel, How to Change Your Church Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2000, p. xiii.

[878] Alan Nelson and Gene Appel, How to Change Your Church Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2000, p. xiv.

[879] Gilbert R. Rendle, Leading Change in the Congregation Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 1998, p. 3.

The church is not immune from the impact of societal change. Congregations must carefully determine their response without bowing to the pressure to change simply because the world around it is changing. Rather than taking a reactive stance, local church leadership should develop a proactive strategy by stepping back to analyze and understand the culture in which it finds itself, and then make the necessary adjustments to fulfil its mission in the world. "The society is changing and the church must change in order to do its job of reaching the society."[880]

Theology of Change

Although the contemporary human mind logically knows that the only constant is change itself, proposed changes in any setting, including the personal life of an individual, can potentially be an emotional topic, even for Christians. Some point to the immutability of God as their spiritual anchor. "By the immutability of God is meant that he is incapable of change, either in duration of life, or in nature, character, will or happiness. In none of these, nor in any other respect is there any possibility of change."[881] Consider Yahweh's conversation with Moses when he says, "I am who I am." (Exodus 3:1-15, NIV) This is reaffirmed in his words to Malachi, "I the Lord do not change" (Malachi 3:6) and in the praises of the Psalmist, "But you remain the same, and your years will never end." (Psalm 102:26-27)

New Testament scriptures affirm this divine attribute in the character of the Son: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever." (Hebrews 13:8) The characteristic of changelessness is integral when it comes to placing one's trust in an unchanging God, and having the assurance that he or she will be relating to the same deity today as tomorrow.

God's activity is marked by constant change. Consider the role of the Creator in relation to initial elemental change. It was his initiative and power

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[880] Michael Tucker, The Church: Change or Decay Wheaton, IL: Tyndale Publishers, 1978, p. 15.
[881] Rev. James Petigru Boyce, Abstract of Systematic Theology 1887, http://www.founders.org/library/boyce1/toc.html, p. 1, February 7, 2005.

that enacted creation. The activity of each of the six days was marked by establishment of a major change in the global environment. Human life and all of its facets are naturally marked by physical, mental, emotional and spiritual growth or moving in the direction toward being more mature and effective.

The Bible documents a number of histories or incidents where paradigm change took place. Some view Old Testament covenantal history from the perspective of change.[882] Yahweh articulated and demanded a way of life for the Israelites that created their unique identity. Unfortunately, through circumstances, human frailty and failure, God's people abandoned their culture and engaged in practices of idolatry and immorality. In the midst of this separation, he called the Israelites back to relationship by demanding a change in personal and corporate attitudes and behaviour.

There are other examples of corporate culture change in the Old Testament scriptures. Moses led the Israelites through a troublesome time of relocation from Egypt to the Promised Land. Living far below God's ideal under Pharaoh's rule, the Israelites saw firsthand the intervention of God who supernaturally freed them to leave the land of slavery. However, the Israeli people elongated the transition by responding to environmental and relational pressures by complaining and yearning to return to the perceived security of Egypt.

> Life threatening conflict occurs when people lose sight of the vision to which God has called them. After leaving Egypt for the Promised Land, the people lost sight of the mission. They began to murmur against their leadership and they openly disobeyed God. They became more concerned with their own comfort than with achievement of God's plan.[883]

Change management became Moses', and later Joshua's, strong suit. The divinely inspired vision kept them focused on the Promised Land.

> For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land—a land with streams and pools of water, with springs flowing in the valleys and hills; a land with wheat and barley, vines

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[882] Alan Roxburgh, Crossing the Bridge Rancho Santa Margarita, CA: Percept Group, Inc. 2000, p. 48.

[883] Jim Herrington, Mike Bonen and James H. Furr, Leading Congregational Change http://media.wiley.com/product_data/excerpt/52/07879476/0787947652.pdf, p. 6, November 22, 2005.

and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey; a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills. When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. (Deuteronomy 8:7-10)

When considering this phase of Jewish history, one can view Israel's time in the wilderness as a transformative change process, preparing them for life in the Promised Land. God's desire for change in their lives was in association with who they were becoming, as illustrated by a relationship of dependency upon him.[884] One generation later, the Exodus was complete and the Jewish nation was located in the land God intended.

There was need for an organizational structural realignment as a result of the immense pressure caused by the overwhelming leadership workload Moses was experiencing. His father-in-law intervened and strongly advised Moses to appoint levels of leaders over groups of ten whom, through multiple administrative levels, would serve the masses. These group leaders proposed solutions for personal conflicts that resulted in an increased efficiency in the usage of time and more appropriate decisions.[885]

While there were prophets who called for Israel to change her ways, it was not until 587 BC, when Nebuchadnezzar invaded and levelled the city of Jerusalem and carried the young and intelligent into exile, that they questioned their part in the resulting chaos. It was a natural awakening to the realization that the nation was suffering as a direct result of their national and personal disobedience. Positive culture change began to take place as, out of desperation, the Jewish people returned to an adherence to God's ways. They began to re-establish themselves as a strong moral nation in Jerusalem under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah. Reform was necessary to create a unique culture with a distinctive identity through the re-establishment of their covenantal relationship with God. In this span of time the nation of Israel had

[884] Gilbert R. Rendle, Leading p. 98.
[885] Norman Shawchuck and Lloyd M. Perry, Revitalizing the Twentieth-Century Church Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1982, p. 137.

abandoned their foundational beliefs, which had previously brought them success and made them effective. Recognizing God's abandonment they willingly facilitated a deliberate culture change process, marked by refocusing on God's laws and expectations, and returned to prominence among the nations.

The Nehemiah narrative gives specific insight into the role of leadership in organizational change. Nehemiah understood that to build the walls he had to marshal the resources, (Nehemiah 2:11-12) accurately assess the need, (Nehemiah 2:13-16) recruit colleagues, (Nehemiah 2:17) inspire confidence, (Nehemiah 2:18) and handle outside opposition. (Nehemiah 2:19-20)[886] In the midst of all this activity, he had to solve problems arising from conflict among middle managers within the organization.

Realizing that the success of this project hinged on every action he initiated, Nehemiah's leadership was marked by continual prayer, planning and a communicative style characterized by tact and honesty.[887] The re-establishment of a healthy Jewish culture included optimizing a three-way relationship between God, Nehemiah the leader, and his followers. At the end of the project, the public joined in declaring that the motivation for this national change was a desired alignment to God's will. This organizational culture change was expressed in the rendering to God what was rightfully his, the respecting of fellow men, and the tangible support of the place of corporate worship. (Nehemiah 10:28-29, 39) [888]

Early in Jesus' ministry, he challenged the paradigm thinking of the disciples in preparation for their future kingdom involvement through his unorthodox methodology. After fishing all night and catching nothing, he instructed them to throw their nets into the water on the other side of the boat. One is cognizant that if fish are not being caught on one side of a vessel, a mere

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[886] Raymond Brown, The Message of Nehemiah Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998, pp. 53-62.

[887] James Montgomery Boice, Two Cities, Two Loves: Christian Responsibility in a Crumbling Culture InterVarsity Press, 1996, pp. 201-227.

[888] Raymond Brown, Nehemiah p. 176ff.

ten feet will not make any difference. However, as the story unfolds in Luke 5, the disciples are overwhelmed by the catch. This sets the standard for Jesus' interaction with his disciples as he ministered in a manner unknown before his time. His methodology and interaction with people was innovative and vastly different from the religious leaders of the day.

Change was the order of the day in New Testament times. The disciples were called to change their vocations. The three thousand at Pentecost, the Greeks at Antioch, the Ethiopian eunuch, the jailer, and Lydia were all called to change, many of them from either Judaism to Christianity or paganism to Christianity. These changes, from a life marked by sin to a forgiven state, serve as a precursor to an unhindered relationship with a holy God.

The writers of the gospels and epistles championed this theme. When a biblical author used the words προσελυτς, (Matthew 23:15, Acts 2:10, 6:5, 13:43) απαρχʻε, (Romans 15:5, 1 Corinthians 16:15) or νεοπʻυτς, (1 Timothy 3:6) there is an implied change in one's beliefs, attitudes and lifestyle.[889] Conversion is "a change in viewpoint or belief from those previously held."[890] "It seems that the primary biblical viewpoint regarding a definition of religious conversion is that it means a change, a turning around from one viewpoint to another, or a return to the principles of God."[891]

Life change, and its association with redemption, continues as a predominant theme in the New Testament.   Luke says, "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord." (Acts 3:19) Matthew records Jesus' instructions to the people to become like children to enter the kingdom of heaven, (Matthew 18:3) indicating the establishment of a relationship marked by deep change in the spirit of an

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[889] V. Bailey Gillespie, Religious Conversion and Personal Identity Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1979, p. 15.
[890] V. Bailey Gillespie, Conversion p. 9.
[891] Ibid. p. 16.

individual.[892] James refers to change as a turning back or returning to God. (James 5:19,20) Paul affirms the radical change in spiritual condition at the point of salvation, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has passed away and behold the new has come." (2 Corinthians 5:17) This altered state of spiritual being is illustrated in the participation of baptism, "buried with him through baptism into death in order that ... we too may live a new life." (Romans 6:4) The writer of the book of Hebrews emphasized the transition of the level of human responsibility from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant. (Hebrews 9:15) Although there are some significant changes when one personally internalizes and applies the atonement of Christ, it is simply the initial step in a life change process.

Although it is integral to the Christian faith for one to recognize the need for an initial spiritual change, it is simply the beginning of a journey. Dialogue concerning the expectation for life change, as associated with conversion, has been described as both instantaneous and gradual, as part of a growth continuum. Saul's Damascus road experience sets the standard for those who view conversion as a dramatic, one-time, event. (Acts 9) The impact of his Judaic education and first-hand observations of the lifestyle of first century Christians is largely ignored.

The gradualist's viewpoint describes conversion as, "a gradual, almost imperceptible process"[893] of change. "Becoming Christian, then, involves real change in the believer. In terms of traditional theology, the process of change is understood as sanctification or conversion."[894] "The Gospel calls for constant change. Conversion is a change of direction; repentance is a change of mind.

[892] William Barclay, Turning to God: A Study of Conversion in the Book of Acts and Today Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979, p. 22.
[893] James Bissett Pratt, The Religious Consciousness: A Psychological Study New York, NY: Macmillan Co., 1926, p. 153.
[894] Suzanne Johnson, Christian Spiritual Formation in the Church and Classroom Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1989, p. 103.

And the Christian life is a continual change."[895] Conversion to Christ implies an adjustment in the way in which one engages their culture as ordered by their new faith and expressed in the ways of Jesus Christ.

The Biblical principle of continual change should inform church leadership on two fronts: the personal and the corporate. First, realizing that a change in one's personal worldview is necessary to establish relationship with God, church operational and instructional activity must also be designed accordingly. Second, when change is needed in the church, generally speaking, abrupt instantaneous changes are not in keeping with the pattern of the gradual sanctification process associated with the Christian life. The speed of change must be monitored and balanced considering the needed change and those involved.

On a number of occasions Jesus addressed the need for a paradigm shift in one's approach to spirituality. While being accused of not observing the normal periods of fasting, Jesus responded through the metaphor of wine and wineskins that fresh thinking was needed. (Matthew 9:14-17) This was further illustrated in the conversation with the woman at the well. She raised an age-old question concerning the acceptable place of worship. Instead of responding to the woman on her terms, Jesus opens up an entirely new worship paradigm, "Those who worship God must worship in Spirit and in truth." (John 4:23) This response was neither Jewish nor Gentile in perspective. It was a creative and unifying solution to a divisive conflict.

Stephen recognized that the message of Christ's sacrifice could not stay within the boundaries of Judaism and many previously important rituals and institutions were now obsolete.[896] "Only as it was extricated from Jewish beliefs and customs was the message free to become the good news for all nations as it was intended to be."[897] This necessitated a major change in thinking on the part of Jewish Christians. For one, Peter had preconceived assumptions about whom

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[895] Leighton Ford, One Way to Change the World New York, NY: Harper and Row Publishers, 1970, p. 13.
[896] Jim Peterson, Church without Walls Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1992, p. 69.
[897] Ibid. p. 71.

God was and what it meant to belong to him. As illustrated by Peter's reaction to the vision of unclean animals and the Spirit outpouring on the household of Cornelius, God had to reshape Peter's thinking. (Acts 10)

"It is hard for us to appreciate the extent of the cultural chasm that separated first-century Jews from the Gentile surroundings."[898] Consider the heated discussion concerning circumcision at the Council of Jerusalem, where it was argued that the pathway to Christian faith first went through the assimilation of Jewish practices. (Acts 15) The shift in the thinking of Jewish leaders, the tension it caused and the way in which it was handled, enlightens the discussion concerning a biblical pattern for fundamental change in an organization. A case in point is the disagreement concerning food distribution to the widows. (Acts 6) "As the church genuinely seeks God's will in the context of its vision, a better solution is found and the church is able to carry out its mission more effectively."[899]

According to Arminian theology, there is an implied cooperative effort throughout the scriptures between the human and divine in association with change as found in the role of the Holy Spirit.[900] The Spirit's presence provides an inner sense of belonging to God as he changes the believer (Jeremiah 31:33) through an "acceptable change in a regenerate person's life [which] must come through the Spirit's sanctifying work from within."[901] The scriptures, considered holy, powerful, and profitable when applied to the life of a believer, have the ability to teach, convict, correct and provide disciplined training in righteousness. (2 Timothy 3:14-17) This, in essence, describes the catalyst or resource for life-long change in the life of a Christian.

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[898] Jim Peterson, Walls p. 73.

[899] Jim Herrington, Mike Bonem and James H. Furr, Leading Congregational Change San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publications, 2000, http://media.wiley.com/product_data/excerpt/52/07879476/0787947652.pdf, p. 6, November 22, 2005.

[900] Ken Collins, Theology http://www.kencollins.com/glossary/theology.htm, p. 1, July 17, 2006.

[901] Jay E. Adams, How to Help People Change Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1986, p. 8.

While God is actively involved, and one does not question his motives or methodology, it must be recognized that human change activity should be conducted in a spirit of humility, "as opposed to the control-based desire to manipulate reality which often characterizes our thinking and acting."[902] With this in mind, church leadership must approach any culture change process giving priority to submissiveness to God, as opposed to simply relying on human ability to discern right timing and techniques. "It [is] possible that our desire for God to bless our plans and schemes is tantamount to an attempt to 'domesticate Yahweh' which is to produce an idol. (2 Corinthians 9:1-14)"[903]

The structure of the emerging New Testament church was not immune to change. As the church grew, controversy erupted over the inequity in the distribution of food to the Grecian and Hebraic Jews. Because administrative demands upon the disciples prohibited them from exercising their ministries, the early church appointed deacons. (Acts 6) One level of church leadership expanded to two. In his epistles to the churches, Paul continues to develop structural change by increasing the size and role of leadership of the church and encouraging each person to function according to the positional and equipping gifts God has bestowed upon them. In addition to the new offices of pastor and deacon, Pauline literature describes policies and procedures including the qualifications of those who could serve. (1 Timothy 3) An increasing corporate bureaucracy characterizes the cultural change for the church in this time period.

Christian faith is far from stagnant in character. In accordance with activity in the Old Testament and expectations in the New Testament, it is dynamic and ever changing. The call to change or adjustment in personal or church culture was for the purposes of growing closer to God and increasing effectiveness of his people. Principles evident in the biblical narrative provide a pattern for the process of culture change in today's church.

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[902] Jim Craig, Theology of Corporate Change: Preliminary Thoughts Unpublished paper prepared for the elders of Portico, February 2005, p. 3.

[903] W. Brueggemann, "Theology of the Old Testament" as cited by Jim Craig, Theology of Corporate Change, Unpublished paper, February 2005, p. 2.

Culture Change Theory

Culture Change and Chaos/Complexity Theory

There are emotional valleys and peaks, including pain, chaos, unsettledness, lack of direction, bursts of creativity and the gratification of making right choices, associated with organizational culture change.

> No significant change can take place in individuals, groups or larger organizations, regardless of the pain and possibility present, without a passage through chaos, the world's 'birthing centre,' where fundamental change and innovation come into being.[904]

This Chaos/Complexity discussion is best known by the iconic concept of "The Butterfly Effect."[905] This theory states that each action of a living moving organism has an impact on its environment. Taken to its logical conclusion, the impact of a butterfly flapping its wings in the Amazon River Basin could ultimately result in a hurricane ravaging the Florida coastline. As the nomenclature would suggest these chains of events, arising out of sensitivity to local conditions, are fuzzy, complex, chaotic, and non-linear.[906] In the ensuing chaos a number of environmental components are at odds with each other as evident in the combatants themselves and their inherent ideologies which compete.

An understanding of the interactive nature of chaotic systems, and their relation to reproduction and growth, may assist in organizational effectiveness. Proposed changes necessitate the recalibrating the systems to an existing or renewed vision[907] by introducing information or intervention techniques and

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[904] John Schere, "The Role of Chaos in the Creation of Change" Creative Change Vol. 12, No. 2, Spring 1991, p. 19. For instance, Moses recognized this principle and led the Israelites through a chaotic and unpredictable wilderness maturing process that established them as a force to be reckoned with as they entered into the land of divine entitlement.

[905] C. Mark Steinacher, "Election and Openness: New Insights from Chaos/Complexity Theory", in Stanley E. Porter and Anthony R. Cross, eds., Semper Reformandum: Studies in Honour of Clark H. Pinnock Carlisle, Cumbria, UK: Paternoster Press, 2003, pp.128-129. Steinacher differentiates between Chaos and Complexity Theory. "Complexity theory is apparently the broader of the two terms. Chaos theory refers to a more limited range of phenomena, which are predictably unpredictable. Together the two refer to the unusual behaviour of systems at the edge of chaos."

[906] Roger Beaumont, Chaos p. xiii.

[907] John P. Kotter, Leading p. 109-111.

altering one part of the system ultimately impacting organizational outcomes.[908] It is important to maintain a balance or appropriate reaction to external and internal changes affecting the organization when introducing energy or diversity of thinking into the system,[909] while at the same time being prepared to address unexpected outcomes of the change process.

Systemic change may not be as simple as it sounds. In *War, Chaos, and History,* Roger Beaumont examines the face of war while the conflict is taking place and in the eventual outcome.

> ... three central concepts-war, chaos, and history-can be viewed as 'attractors' in complexity theory, pivots that varying forces move around, or as points from which patterns diverge. In either case, the recasting of perspective throws a fresh light on many matters such as the central paradox that, as adversaries clash in war, each is buffeted, not only by forces of their foes, but by the colliding of two of the most elemental human urges-one to produce chaos and the other to impose order.[910]

There is a "basic discrepancy between expectation and realization [that] touches on the question of how much the chaos of war is chaos *per se* or the product of perpetual or mechanistic inadequacies that may be overcome."[911] For example, one should note that the size and accuracy of weapons changed during the course of World War II conflict but the way in which soldiers used these weapons was completely at their own discretion. In such a context, chaos reigns supreme. "Doctrine developed in peacetime may be like a candle developed in calm air and subjected to the blast of a blowtorch in war."[912]

In a war setting, "...combatants have little sense of a 'big picture,' that is, a larger context of their experience, or much inclination or opportunity to record experience...this is called the 'fog of war.'"[913] During World War II, problems arose due to a severe disconnect within the various levels of the participating armies. A soldier's perception of the war varied greatly depending on their

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[908] Kenneth A. Halstead, <u>From Stuck to Unstuck</u> Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 1998, p. 34.
[909] Bill Hybels, <u>The Life Changing Power of a Campaign</u> CD – Willow Creek Association Monthly Audio Journal, January 2005.
[910] Roger Beaumont, <u>War, Chaos, and History</u> Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, p. xiii.
[911] Ibid. p. 3.
[912] Ibid. p. 36.
[913] Ibid. p. 2

location in battle. Throughout and following the 'Great War' many observers and combatants noted a gap in the perception of battle between 'the men who really did the job' and the upper command echelons.[914] Contradiction in messages from either source contributed to the chaos. The possibility of the development of rumour and incorrect information, naturally countered by censorship, secrecy and propaganda, served only to escalate the conflict.

In the midst of war, realizing that there is strength in numbers, people align themselves with others of 'like mind' for the common purpose of self-preservation. In business and the church, these groupings evolve into 'warring factions' to reinforce their own opinions. One group desires progressive change while others state their satisfaction with the status quo. For example, when church leadership decides to establish a course attributed to an increased passion for missional activity, those who are uncomfortable with the new reality may form a 'resistance movement.' Without due consideration to 'big picture' issues, 'comrades' join together in the bond of fighting each other, perhaps as a result of deliberate disinformation, rather than 'taking the next hill.' Decision makers can address the problem by engaging in conversations that present and the facts and a clear plan for culture change.[915] If not, it will appear that leadership has lost their way. Confidence will be lost and the ability to lead minimized.

Parallels in Beaumont's insights from Chaos/Complexity theory are evident in organizations. The interaction of numerous human and organizational variables results in significant unpredictability. Organizational leadership lives with the constant knowledge that leading a company or a group of people through an emotionally-charged change presents the constant potential for conflict. Without attempting to be overly dramatic, organizational cultural change, unless managed well, may erupt in a war with all of its facets.

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[914] Ibid.

[915] William Bridges and Susan Mitchell, <u>Model</u> p. 7.

In the development of organizational cultural change, a 'disconnect' or lack of knowledge on the part of the average member may threaten success. Reality is what is happening in their department or ministry, and what they perceive is being said from the boardroom, pulpit or in private conversations with people 'who should know.' If, during this time of extreme unsettledness, the focus can be turned away from the actual battle and toward objective information originating from outside the system, as opposed to the people who are responsible for the system.[916] The organization may optimize balance and integrity through legitimate feedback loops, commonly referred to as morphogenesis giving opportunity for the system to reinvent itself during a time of chaos or disaster.

For some organizations in need of a significant culture adjustment, a period of intense Chaos/Complexity will shed new light on problems which may have been abandoned or pushed into the background prompting group personnel to re-examine potential solutions.[917] Generally speaking, human nature tends toward stability and therefore expends a great deal of energy insuring its maintenance. However, the advantages of the unpredictability of an aleatory system are found in the possibility of fresh solutions and an emergent order as leadership uses non-linearity to its advantage.[918] Order is "not self-generating and systematic change does not flow from an organizational ability inherent within cultural information, but requires an input of 'energy,' either intellectual or physical from human participants."[919] Often it is in times of greatest chaos and disorganization that optimistic group members, while seeking and finding solutions, ultimately discover new opportunities or ways of doing things.

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[916] Kenneth A. Halstead, Unstuck p. 34.
[917] C. Mark Steinacher, An Aleatory Folk: An Historical-Theological Approach to the Transition of the Christian Church in Canada from Fringe to Mainstream 1792-1898 unpublished ThD thesis, Wycliffe College, University of Toronto, 1999, p.63.
[918] Steinacher, Aleatory Folk p.73.
[919] Steinacher, Aleatory Folk p.76.

> Cases of accident and blind collision producing unexpectedly favourable results, in broad, figurative terms, appear to have been the result of the superimposing of a randomly oscillating wave upon another, yielding more points of intersection or congruence than the overlaying of a long, smooth, linear wave on a choppy random pattern.[920]

"Alexander Graham Bell's crucial spilling of acid"[921] and "the contamination of Alexander Fleming's petri dish"[922] are two inventions caused by fortuitous accidents changing the course of human history. With such possible outcomes, it could be said that chaos managed well has the potential for positive results and can significantly contribute to organizational culture change.

Marketplace Culture Change Methodology in the Church?

There are fundamental differences between the corporate and church worlds. These cultural dissimilarities range from the reasons they exist to operational biases, leadership styles and definitions of success.

> While the entente between [these two] worlds is more cordial than ever, the two worlds are still fundamentally different and exist for fundamentally different purposes. Regardless of whether the nonprofit is a ... religious institution or a service organization, the mission always comes first. Nonprofits are nonprofits for good reason ... revenue flows and sound management of budgets are seen purely as a means not an end.[923]

In times past, local congregations have felt that effective marketplace principles could be transferred readily into the church. While there may be some similarities between the principles and process of culture change, extreme caution must be exercised.

> The church is not a business. Yet the fact that pastors and seminarians are routinely barraged with books that promise growth based on business principles testifies to the triumph of the corporate mindset in [North] America and sadly in many [North] American churches. As those entrusted with the care of the church, we must diligently dig up the underlying assumptions informing our practices and beliefs, and scrutinize them under the light of God's Word.[924]

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[920] Roger Beaumont, Chaos p. 128.

[921] Ibid. p. 129.

[922] Ibid.

[923] Catherine Fredman, "Profiting from Nonprofits" Hemispheres October 2004, p. 68.

[924] Will Kynes, Leading Turnaournd Teams: A Review
http://www.9marks.com/partner/Article_Display_Page/0,,PTID314526\CHID598014\CII, p. 1, August 29, 2006.

Business leaders echo these thoughts. "We must reject the idea--well intentioned but dead wrong--that the primary pathway to greatness in social [religious] sectors is to become 'more like a business.'"[925] While the secular organization may hold the values of productivity and financial profit high at the expense of its workforce, the church strives to be missional and facilitate life-change.

On the other hand, there is some merit to the development and implementation of organizational principles arising from business settings within the church. "When a fallen world makes organization work, it does so with the principles of truth provided by the Creator. The fact that these [church leadership] books don't happen to have Bible verses sprinkled throughout doesn't mean there is less truth involved."[926] However, the principles of culture change theory and practice must not run counter to a biblical ecclesiology.

The spiritual orientation of a change agent is formative for his or her activities. If they are rooted in a humanistic mindset, they will reap limited results. If church leaders engage in the basics of the Christian life, spiritual formation, authentic relationships and missional activity, they will base the development of their operational principles accordingly. Any neglect of biblical principles will arise out of omission as opposed to commission.

Biblical instruction is never outdated and has consistently informed church operating principles and polity throughout the ages. The challenge for the church of today is the constant necessity of expressing biblical principles in congregational activity while engaging the society in which it is located.

> Because of the dynamics of meeting basic economic need and finding significance in any culture where the Church finds itself, the search for good leadership tools has the potential of being a Trojan horse, inadvertently letting the enemy and his philosophies within the gates. As for the business leader, unless he or she has been transformed and made aware of all aspects of the Creator's world, full cross-utilization is not even possible. In may cases, it is not even desired.[927]

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[925] Jim Collins, Social Sectors Boulder, CO: Jim Collins, 2005, p. 1.

[926] Lawrence E. Green, Effective Cross-Utilization of Leadership Principles Between Business and Church Disciplines http://www.skyenet.net/%7Eleg/crossutilization.htm, p. 3, August 29, 2006.

[927] Lawrence E. Green, Utilization p. 2, August 29, 2006.

The business world may be able to view its activities as a series of independent departments working primarily in isolation to produce a certain product. Church life and Christian spirituality are much more holistic and demand prolific intersecting. One of the oft-repeated premises by local church leadership is assuming that fixing one 'silo' program in the church will solve a multitude of problems.[928] Congregational members who think along the same lines, and demand such changes, may contribute to this mistaken methodology.

As will be discussed in a subsequent chapter, leadership in the marketplace can be the antithesis of Christlikeness. "Most nonprofits are run more like a partnership than a dictatorship."[929] Expectations for the pastor, such as power, status, money and manipulation may be more in line with those of a Chief Executive Office, but Jesus led as a servant. Elders, also instituted for purposes of serving, are reduced to policy makers and implementers. Church polity should be spiritual in nature with a focus on glorifying God and serving his people as opposed to maintaining a mindset of efficiency.

Business settings are often energized by competition in sales and productivity. Decisions are made at the top levels of the organization. This is the antithesis of the biblical value of teamwork. New Testament church leaders worked together to plant churches. When the team did not function as such, steps were taken to rectify the problem. The church is not a number of departmental or demographical entities unto themselves. Local church effectiveness depends on worshipping and working together in unity.

Developing unity is an exercise in achieving consensus. To nurture such an atmosphere, leaders need to develop a culture of persuasion. Every person has a passionate opinion and to discern the pertinent points behind such passion is a necessary leadership skill. This vetting process demands a great deal of

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[928] A 'silo' program is usually demographically oriented. The children's program or youth program would be primary examples.
[929] Catherine Fredman, <u>Nonprofits</u> p. 68.

energy and time but results in a committed paid and volunteer workforce.[930]
"True leadership only exists if people follow when they have the freedom not to."[931]

The definition of success in the marketplace is primarily financial. Business leaders are concerned about the quality of their product and the quantity of sales. If caught up in this frame of mind, the church may focus on conversions, decisions, baptisms or attendance figures. Because spiritual growth is somewhat subjective and hard to measure, church leadership may defer to the more tangible measurements. A good year is when there were more than last year. Church leadership must measure effectiveness and performance according to distinct impact as it relates to the church's mission.[932] If the church is truly concerned about 'product,' this is in reference to the equipping of a church member or adherent to engage in spiritual formation, authentic relationships and missionality.

One of the great challenges for church leadership is in the 'marketing of the church.' Those with business acumen stress the need for branding and visibility. Jesus' commissional statements emphasize the responsibility of the believer and church to 'go into all the world' and declare the gospel. This tension between the 'what' and 'how' is illustrative of the influence of business upon the church. That is not to say that marketing is biblically unacceptable. Rather, the local church may rely on corporate marketing strategies while neglecting personal evangelistic responsibilities.[933]

Operational statements, such as the articulation of mission and vision, contribute to the focus and direction of an organization. Although there is no biblical precedent for these statements which came from the business world, church leadership will find them useful for the alignment of church efforts and

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[930] Ibid.
[931] Jim Collins, Social p. 13.
[932] Ibid. p. 5.
[933] Andy Havens, What is Marketing? http://www.churchmarketingsucks.com/, p. 1, October 7, 2006.

energy. The effectiveness of a church will rise as it determines what it is passionate about, what it does best and what resource engine drives it all.[934] As with all other church activities, practitioners must measure strategic development against God's design and mission for the local assembly and result in the fulfilment of his expectations.

As missional churches and people seek to engage their context they constantly seek to 'speak the contextual language.' Canadian suburbia is populated with residents who understand business principles and interact with them every day of their lives. The local church must not readily idolize, embrace or ignore marketplace methodology; rather, it must critically assess whether such activity is in accordance with biblical principles and utilized for the right purpose.

Constructs for a Proposed Culture

As stated earlier in the study of Chaos/Complexity theory, effective corporate transformation has often been derailed by the erroneous assumption that adjusting one aspect of organizational life, such as methodology, is sufficient. A more holistic approach, which may include a paradigm shift in thinking, may be necessary.[935] One's assumptions, beliefs, ideas and values act as a filter by attaching meaning to the organization and its operational norms. These may or may not contribute to the willingness or ability to change. For a change model to be effective. leadership must be open to re-examination of their perceptions and assumptions, stopping short of sacrificing the fundamental and foundational beliefs of the organization.[936]

Group leadership may divide mission and vision into two equal but parallel paths; strategic and cultural.[937] They develop the culture of an organization as values are articulated and shared, leading to correlative practices and behaviours

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[934] Jim Collins, Social p. 17, 18.
[935] William Easum, Dancing with Dinosaurs Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993, p. 13; C, Mark Steinacher, New Insights p.130. Steinacher refers to the work of Thomas Kuhn who defines a paradigm as "an entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques and so on shared by a given community."
[936] In the case of the church, no aspect of the truth of the gospel may be sacrificed. The form or package may be radically changed to engage the context in which it is presented.
[937] See Appendix 1, p. 288.

conducive to the mission and vision. This responds to the question of identity. The same leaders develop the strategic side of the equation by answering questions concerning 'what needs to be done.' A strategy is established and broken down into goals and tasks for purposes of implementation.

Alignment is of utmost importance. Change agents must give equal attention to the mirror images on both sides of this model; cultural and strategic. Organizations tend to concentrate on the strategic side of the two pathways and offer little in the development of organizational culture. Concentrating on the strategic side will produce stagnation and the entrenchment of a highly bureaucratic organization. Contrarily, when resources are concentrated on the culture side of the model, the organization will be a wonderful place to work, but lacking in measurable long-term results.

Mission/Vision Statements

The mission of an organization describes the fundamental reason for its existence. For instance, The Coca Cola Company exists to benefit and refresh everyone it touches.[938] For the local church a mission statement is foundational. To create a mission statement a new or existing group of believers may search the scriptures, their congregational history and context, and determine God's unique purpose for this church in this location.[939] It is the "definition of the key ministry objectives of the church ... a broad general statement about who you wish to reach and what the church hopes to accomplish."[940]

While the mission statement addresses why an organization exists, a vision statement 'paints the picture' of what the organization will look like. "Vision refers to a picture of the future with some implicit or explicit commentary on why people should strive to create that future"[941] and is the articulation of a

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[938] The Coca Cola Company http://www2.coca-cola.com/ourcompany/ourpromise.html, p. 1, March 28, 2005.

[939] Norman Shawchuck and Lloyd M. Perry, Revitalizing the Twentieth-Century Church Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1982, p. 21.

[940] George Barna, The Power of Vision Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1992, p. 38.

[941] John P. Kotter, Leading Change Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1996, p. 68.

future state of the organization that is attainable.[942] While vision is solid in core, flexibility is encouraged to insure appropriateness for the local context.[943] The local church is concerned about what God want it to look like at some predetermined time in the future. "Vision for ministry is a reflection of what God wants to accomplish through you to build His kingdom."[944]

Organizations with no definitive direction may welcome renewal. An articulated vision, as a balanced picture of 'what can be,' may serve as a welcome catalyst understanding that vision can lead to a carefully constructed revitalization process. "Vision is not just the finish line; it is the whole race"[945] and the leader's role is to view the change effort as a cause, a crusade with the inherent job of championing the vision.[946]

The articulation of vision is never about maintaining the status quo. It is about stretching reality to extend beyond the existing state.[947] Antoine-Marie-Roger de Saint-Exupery wrote, "If you want to build a ship, don't drum up the men to gather wood, divide the work and give orders. Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea."[948] A carefully constructed vision brings direction to an organization and alignment to all who are part of the group and motivates participants to choose appropriate methodology. It will generate enthusiasm and energy in the creation of a desired future for an organization while capturing the uniqueness of the group and drawing people to commitment and involvement.[949]

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[942] The Importance of Alignment http://www.thepegroup.com/model.htm, p. 2, April 2, 2005.
[943] "Vision Notes – Building Church Leaders" Leadership Resources Christianity Today Intl., 1998 as distributed at MGT Family Church Board Retreat, February 2002.
[944] George Barna, Vision p. 29.
[945] Dan Southerland, Transitioning Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1999, p. 20.
[946] Price Pritchett and Ron Pound, High Velocity Culture Change Plano, TX: Pritchett Publishing, 1993, p. 15.
[947] Ibid.
[948] Antoine-Marie-Roger de Saint Exupery http://www.westegg.com/exupery/, p. 1, December 17, 2005.
[949] Dan Reiland, "Mission and Vision" The Pastor's Coach: Equipping The Leaders of Today's Church Volume 3, Issue 2, January 2002, p. 2.

The process of forming vision is critical to the future effectiveness of a church. Congregations, whose pastoral leadership structure is autocratic in nature, have assumed God declares the vision for the church to the senior leader. For congregants who are comfortable with this leadership style, their decision is simply to accept or reject the vision and respond accordingly.

If a plurality of leadership is the normal operating style of the congregation, the formation of vision is more tedious and time-consuming. However, unity and 'buy-in' may be enhanced as God leads parishioners as they pray and listen to each other's thoughts when they meet together to worship, work and plan toward the establishment of vision.[950] This will ensure that the church will not undertake any new direction or implement any change that might undermine the church's core values without the Spirit's direction.[951] While this may have the tendency to become a subjective reading of God's desires, an objective elder board may pray and dialogue with the pastor to insure consensus. Through this reflective process members of a congregation can identify why the church was established, what God has accomplished through its ministries over the years, and determine what God is doing, or about to do, and join him in the enterprise.[952]

One benefit of a clear vision is guidance in the appropriate use of resources. Each time a specific organizational change is proposed, the vision can be used as a 'measurement' to insure its fulfilment. "Vision is a lot like a jigsaw puzzle. You work at it one piece at a time and it takes a long time to get all the pieces in place."[953] For a church wishing to be missionally-minded, the creation of a vision statement expresses an outward focus. Successful fulfilment of a missional vision, established while listening to God's voice and direction, is reflected in church budget expenditures and people finding faith.

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[950] Norm Shawchuck and Lloyd M. Perry, Revitalizing p. 17.
[951] Jack Hayford, Why I Don't Set Goals http://www.christianitytoday.com/bcl/areas/vision-strategy/articles/090905.html, May 3, 2006, p. 1.
[952] Henry Blackaby, Experiencing God Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1998.
[953] Dan Southerland, Transitioning p. 47.

Vision is not something that, once stated, acts simply as a 'guiding light.' It serves as a reference point for all that takes place in an organization. A carefully articulated and oft repeated vision is an evaluative tool for every proposed action or initiative[954] and

> serves as a compass, giving a sense of direction when people feel lost. It [also] serves as a gyroscope keeping the church steady in the midst of turbulence. Without a clear, powerful vision, people become disoriented with no sense of how to move forward."[955]

Organizational Strategy

The articulated strategy of an organization concerns the anticipated future use of its human and financial resources. Should leadership lead the organization in an inwardly focused direction, the group will experience survival instead of health, vitality and growth. A proposed renewal strategy may mean defining a generational or demographic target audience and/or new or renewed initiatives. Although it may be seen to be the antithesis of God's all-encompassing intent of "loving the world," (John 3:16) it must be recognized that in Western society it is difficult to be 'all things to all people.'

This aspect of congregational planning has the potential of being the most controversial and misunderstood part of organizational culture change.[956] For some congregational members, it is understandable why a Filipino church can be established in Hong Kong to reach the 100,000 migrant domestic workers whose consistent day off is Sunday, but they find it difficult to agree with targeting a particular age group or demographic in Canadian society other than an ethnic audience.[957] It is conceivable for a church to conduct a close examination of Canadian census or Chamber of Commerce statistics to determine a potential

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[954] John P. Kotter, Leading pp. 68-69.
[955] Mary K. Sellon, Daniel P. Smith and Gail F. Grossman, Redeveloping p. 43.
[956] Dan Southerland, Transitioning p. 49.
[957] Look Out, Here Comes the Gen X church http://www.crosswalk.com/news/524732.html, p. 1, June 16, 2005. This is taken from life experience. A short term missions team from Abbotsford Pentecostal Assembly, Abbotsford, BC., travelled to Asia to serve an orphanage in India. On a stopover in Hong Kong on the return to Canada, the group observed the Filipino domestics and their church and commented on how wonderful this was. Simultaneously, they complained about the hiring of a pastor whose job description was to reach the many young adults of Abbotsford and surrounding area.

target audience or audiences while cross-referencing its resource capabilities. With this type of strategy the definition of success becomes relative. If God has called a group of people to the homeless or marginalized in an urban setting it is unlikely that a mega-church will result. On the other hand, if a church strategically plans to reach the culture in which it is located, its relative success will be measured by its ability to do so.

Assigned Goals

An effective strategy is characterized by short, time-sensitive goals over the period of six to eighteen months accompanied by built-in regular opportunities for evaluation. These are the 'what,' not the 'how,' of organizational operations and are best expressed in quantifiable resource-related terms such as human energy, time and money. These goals may be characterized as SMART:[958] specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time sensitive. Goals should include periodic and ongoing programs which act as 'stepping stones' for the achievement of strategic initiatives.

Specific Tasks

To support the strategy and goals of an organization, leaders should establish related specific tasks through guiding the self-directed choices of its members. As each member gains an understanding of the collective strategy and goals, they organize and direct their personal contribution accordingly. Effective task lists can be directly tied back to the goals, strategy and ultimately the mission and vision of the organization. At times this may be a great challenge for members of an organization who constantly feel pulled into the everyday minutia which undermines direction and productivity.

Organizational Culture

Complementary to a group's strategic pathway is the cultural or environmental atmosphere of an organization. "Culture sets the tone for how

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[958] Paul J. Meyer, Attitude is Everything http://www.topachievement.com/smart.html, p. 1, June 6, 2005. This acronym was mentioned at Portico by Principal Paul Woodley (as used by his staff at Erin Mills Middle School in Mississauga, ON.) at a Strategic Vision Team Meeting, June 15, 2004.

organizations operate and how individuals within the organization interact."[959] It is "the soul of the organization, the beliefs and values and how they are manifested ... the thing that holds an organization together and gives it life force."[960] Organizational culture creates distinction and defines boundaries while conveying a sense of identity. It functions as the social adhesive and a control mechanism that guides and shapes attitudes and behaviours of the employees or volunteers.[961]

The responsibility for this function rests squarely on the shoulders of leaders who, as a decisive function of leadership, create, destroy or modify cultures.[962] The formation, expression and maintenance of organizational culture is expressed in the language and customs of the group, the accepted norms, standards and values, formal operational philosophy, the 'rules of the game,' the physical climate or working conditions, embedded skills, employees habits of thinking, shared meanings and 'root metaphors' expressed in the ideas, feelings and images used by the groups to characterize themselves. These operational norms may be unconscious, unspoken and taken-for-granted, but act as the ultimate source of values and motivation for the actions of personnel.[963]

Shared Values

In an effort to be original, executives may spend too much time working on the development of vision and mission statements while failing to create an implementation strategy that will move the members of an organization toward adoption of shared values. Leadership must consider whether a major cultural transition is necessary or simply a minor adjustment. In some cases, leaders

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[959] Stephen P. Robbins and Nancy Langton, <u>Organizational Behaviour</u> Scarborough, ON: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1999, p. 614.
[960] Ibid. p. 615.
[961] Ibid. p. 621.
[962] Edgar Schein, <u>Organizational</u> pp. xv, 5.
[963] Edgar Schein, <u>Organizational</u> pp. 16-17.

have simply failed to "align their organization with [effective and sufficient] visions already in place."[964]

Should it be determined that a radical shift or even the destruction of a previous culture is necessary, a thoughtful transition process from a previous organization culture is as important as defining the desired culture. This can be facilitated by the creation, articulation and implementation of shared values which will assist in the shaping of behaviours.[965] Such culture-enhancing activities can be described as "a pattern of beliefs and expectations shared by the organization's members. These beliefs and expectations [which define culture], expressed in artefacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions"[966] produce norms that powerfully shape the behaviour of individuals and groups in the organization.[967] An organization's values appear as

> an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct of end-state existence. A value system is an enduring organization of beliefs concerning preferable modes of conduct of end-states or existence along a continuum of relative importance. Once embraced, values become our standards of importance. They also serve as criteria for making decisions and setting priorities and lie behind the explanations and justifications we give for our actions.[968]

These underlying assumptions are "inextricably intertwined in any culture. They are the most deeply held beliefs of the group, the beliefs that drive the actions of the members."[969] This is in concert with the effort of leadership as they establish a corporate atmosphere which empowers the members of an organization to play an integral part in the fulfilment of the mission and vision.

The established values of an organization should articulate performance expectations for each member. Optimally, the number of values should not rise

[964] Jim Collins, "Aligning Action and Values" Leader to Leader, No. 1, Summer 1996, http://www.pfdf.org/leaderbooks/L2L/summer96/collins.html, p. 1, August 18, 2005.
[965] Ken Blanchard and Mark Miller, The Secret Escondido, CA: Blanchard Family Partnership, 2003, p. 43.
[966] Ken Hultman and Bill Gellerman, Balancing p. 70. These are the organization's unconscious beliefs that are largely taken for granted.
[967] Howard Schwartz and Stanley M. Davis, "Matching Corporate Culture and Business Strategy" Organizational Dynamics, Volume 10, Summer 1981, p. 33.
[968] Ken Hultman and Bill Gellerman, Balancing p. 4.
[969] Peg Neuhauser, Ray Bender and Kirk Stromberg, Culture.com p. 7.

above a dozen. For purposes of familiarity and implementation leadership should synthesize all values into three, at most four, clear, concise and prioritized statements. This allows leadership, at times when the implementation of strategy may reveal some value-oriented conflict, to make a decision based on what is of highest value.

Shared Practices

Shared practices refer to those everyday activities in which people engage as expressed in the typical interaction among members of the organization. These seemingly insignificant activities have a tremendous impact on the overall culture. When the organization is transformed, the culture reflects and impacts the realities of people who work together daily.[970] Culture change creates a new dimension of performance and it is this [performance] that changes culture, not the reverse.[971]

The main task of leadership is to establish a culture through behaviour and performance. "Managing the journey of change is more important than the announcement of the destination."[972] A distinct correlation between 'what we believe' and 'what we do' must be established. Some organizations develop cultural statements precisely describing what types of practices are acceptable for the desired culture.

One cannot assume that because a vision has been adopted, members of an organization understand how to strategize accordingly. Disney Corporation invites their competition to come and study Disneyland because they are confident very few people will follow through on their vision. [973] Many organizations fail to facilitate the preliminary work for culture change. This may refer to the removal of structural barriers, the changing of personnel, the reallocation of resources or the reassessing of employer expectations. For

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[970] Frances Hesselbein, <u>The Key to Cultural Transformation</u>
<u>http://www.pfdf.org/leaderbooks/l2l/spring99/fh.html</u> p. 1, August 18, 2005.
[971] Ibid.
[972] Ken Blanchard cited in Marshall Shelley <u>Renewing Your Church Through Vision and Planning</u> Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1997, p. 83.
[973] John P. Kotter, <u>Leading</u> p. 103.

example, a church organization could state that one of their values is meeting the needs of the homeless without a commitment to the budgetary support to this type of ministry. This is best addressed by establishing a parallel relationship between resource allocation and associated metrics allowing for an accurate assessment of progress toward a desired culture.

Individual Behaviours

Each member of an organization should have the opportunity to respond personally to the organization's mission and vision in their day-to-day activities. Not only will it be necessary that he or she choose the right tasks, but it is necessary to carry them out in a manner compatible with accepted values and practices, 'the way we do things around here.' It is a matter of doing the right things (leadership) and doing things right (management). "In the field of social sciences this expression of culture is called norms. These behaviours and habits include everything from the formal policies and procedures to informal habits and tactics employees use to function effectively..."[974]

The leader is responsible for addressing behaviors that are not in keeping with that for which the organization stands and keeping everyone in the group personally accountable for transforming the culture.[975] Team dysfunctionality may be a strong indicator that this is taking place.[976] Such behaviours are detrimental or counterproductive to the mission and vision of the organization. It may be necessary to find and employ people that are predisposed to sharing the organization's core values as illustrated by their previous behaviour.[977] Such participants effectively illustrate a balance of culture and organization and belief and practice. As compliant people grow and flourish, the culture of the

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[974] Peg Neuhauser, Ray Bender and Kirk Stromberg, Culture.com p. 8.
[975] Price Pritchett and Ron Pound, Velocity p. 25.
[976] Patrick Lencioni, The Five Dysfunctions of a Team San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2002. This entire volume is dedicated to the problematic behaviours in organizations.
[977] Jim Collins, Aligning p. 4.

organization changes and creates the potential to impact its market or demographic in greater measure.[978]

Organizational Life Cycle Theory

An understanding of the development or maturing of organizations assists in the assessment of change.[979] The human life cycle is marked by conception, birth, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, old age and finally death. Close examination of a mature organization may reveal a similar life cycle.[980] It enthusiastically commences with a person, or group of people, who have a new vision or ideal. In the second stage the vision becomes reality and an energetic organization is formed. After a period of painful development the dream survives and, in stage three, the organization experiences significant growth as evidenced by excitement, vitality, and youthful vigour. In stage four, the need for structure becomes apparent and it is necessary for leadership to place an emphasis on the implementation of procedures and policies for the purpose of stability. In stage five the organization begins to emphasize tangible items such as budgets and buildings in an effort to provide an ongoing and consistent environment. This may be marked by a tendency toward over-management and a decline in definitive direction. The next stage (six) is marked by identifiable decline in growth, finances, and other statistical factors, which leadership had previously relied upon as success indicators. Stage seven occurs when it is apparent that the organization has 'flat-lined' and there is little or no hope for revitalization. [981]

Qualitative and quantitative growth is a strong indicator of an organization's position in an institutional life cycle.[982] In the early stages accelerated development is realized, but once an organization hits the peak of

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[978] Francis Hesselbein, <u>Key</u> p. 3.

[979] David O. Moberg, <u>The Church as a Social Institution</u> Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962, p. 118-124. William Brackney, <u>DM 72F3 Advanced Readings in Mission and Renewal</u> Classroom Notes, Spring Semester 2000, p. 3.

[980] Alan Nelson and Gene Appel, <u>Change</u> p. 49.

[981] Mary K. Sellon, Daniel P. Smith, and Gail F Grossman, <u>Redeveloping the Congregation</u> Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2002, p. xi.

[982] Arleon L. Kelly, <u>Your Church: A Dynamic Community</u> Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1982, p. 62.

growth, referred to as the 'Golden Mean,' accelerated loss begins to take place. If not addressed through minor and major adjustment, as dictated by each particular situation, the organization will level out and exist only through stubborn continuance. In the context of congregational life, the stages of the church development cycle can be characterized as beginning with a dream and growing in beliefs, goals, structures and ministry.[983] Decline begins with a nostalgia stage and further deteriorates through interpersonal questioning, polarization, and concludes with dropout.[984]

Organizational theorists concur that it is possible to re-engage the same type of energy that brought an organization to its peak of success as it declines. This catalyst for revitalization can be optimally experienced up to a certain point,[985] but if not addressed before a self-destructive decline, it is next to impossible to revitalize an organization due to a lack of momentum.[986] During this stage in which there is a receptivity to change, leadership may go through a process of initiating renewal by recognizing new possibilities and matching solutions with problems. This may be followed by implementation as leadership adapts the process to fit the context while communicating the benefits to members of the organization and imbedding them as routine activity.[987]

It is imperative that change agents carefully match the type of change mechanism to the maturity stage of the organization. "Different kinds of culture management are needed at different stages in an organization's development and maturation; culture creation, at organizational midlife and in mature and potentially declining organization."[988] For groups in the foundational stage, or early growth, change should be incremental and general so the existence of the emerging organization is not jeopardized. In organizational midlife change can

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[983] All stages tending toward increased formalization.
[984] Gilbert R. Rendle, Change p. 133.
[985] In stage five or six as described above.
[986] Alan Nelson and Gene Appel, Change p. 50.
[987] Everett M. Rogers, Diffusion of Innovations New York, NY: The Free Press, 1995, p. 392.
[988] J. Steven Ott, Sandra J. Parkes and Richard B. Simpson, Classic Readings in Organizational Behavior Belmont, CA: Thompson-Wadsworth Publishers, 2003, p. 32.

be facilitated through developmental projects and the creation of parallel learning structures. During the period of maturity and decline, change may need to be more confrontational through the involvement of outsiders, the destruction of an existing culture, coercive persuasion and/or a deliberate turnaround strategy.[989] Such radical action must be viewed in relation to the entire structure as opposed to a simple adjustment in operational methodology or reorganization.

Church Culture Change

Assessing The Need for Organizational Culture Change

As society changes around and within an organization, the need for strategic change becomes apparent. The evidence of colliding cultures signals the need for fundamental refocusing. "In the world of organizational development, it is understood that change will occur only when there is a high correlation of two variables: a sense of urgency and a consensus to change."[990] "Change is a given. It will happen. Your organization will adapt or die."[991] This marks the opportunity to manage and direct the organization to greater effectiveness.

If an organizational culture, which once successfully served the context in which it existed, has become increasingly ineffective, contemporary leaders need to "lead through the inevitable changes now transforming North American culture to the extent that we have understood the maps of change now transforming our world."[992] This must not be a 'knee-jerk reaction' to what may be viewed as evil or undesirable. Rather, culture adjustment must be a positive, proactive response to what is happening in the organization's sphere of influence.

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[989] Edgar H. Schein, Organizational Culture and Leadership San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2004, p. 304.

[990] Michael Pocock and Joseph Henriques, Cultural Change and Your Church Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2002, p. 99.

[991] Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges, The Servant Leader Nashville, TN: J. Countryman, 2003, p. 65.

[992] Alan Roxburgh, Crossing p. 30.

Change for the sake of change is not reason enough for an organizational overhaul. In both the church and marketplace, there has been a tendency to employ a wide variety of resource tools from outside sources, including consulting organizations and new programs, without giving much thought to the underlying problem. Before church leadership embarks on a journey of massive change it must ask itself "Why?" Not only must the actions of church leaders be ethical but there must also be selfless motivation behind the perceived need for change.[993] If the proposed shift is simply for organizational survival, a desire for personal job security, relevance for the sake of relevance, or for numerical growth, (as opposed to Kingdom growth) change may not be appropriate or welcomed.[994] Recognition of the need for reengineering must be associated with the health or survival of an organization and be articulated in such as way as to isolate the issue and formulate a problem statement with the intent to establish a plan and rectify the problem. [995]

When assessing the need for culture change, the leadership of an organization must return to the foundational philosophy for its existence. Motivation for change is based on a group's [or a person's] worldview, theology and their understanding of God's purpose.[996] Church leadership must bear in mind that the local church, in its varied expressions, was God's idea. Any proposed culture change should be with the view of bringing into alignment biblical patterns and purposes for that unique church and the role it can play in that particular community. For the local church this means understanding who they are as God's people and, through their gifts, resources and abilities, their missional role in their context.

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[993] James D. Craig, <u>Corporate</u> p. 3. Paul refers to motivation in his letter to the Corinthian church. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. (1 Corinthians 4:5)
[994] Ibid. p. 4.
[995] Patrick E. Conner and Linda K. Lake, <u>Managing Organizational Change</u> New York, NY: Praeger Publishing, 1988, p. 15.
[996] Ronald J. Sider, <u>Evangelicals and Development: Toward a Theology of Social Change</u> Philadelphia: PA: Westminster Press, 1981, p. 19.

Throughout the last decade, one of the most predominant catalysts for change in the church has been a heightened awareness concerning missionality, or lack thereof. To address this shortcoming, a call has sounded for a fundamental shift of organizational structures, frameworks and paradigms.[997] The local church must redefine its mission according to four values: "...more Christians, better Christians, authentic missional community, and for the good of the world."[998] While secular organizations may focus on doing similar things, which ultimately reward the initiators (higher profitability means higher salaries), Christians initiate change for the sake of growth in God's people and God's kingdom. They see themselves as existing for something or Someone beyond themselves and contributing to the highest expression of Christian spirituality.

Church leadership must ascertain the motive for missionality and how it intersects with contextual relevance and engagement.[999] If it is primarily for church growth or to establish something significant, then they must re-examine their foundational principles for culture change.

> Change is activity. It does not have to be, indeed it should not be, a frantic search for just any activity, but, in a Christian context, is a way of doing things to make a difference to oneself and others. Change is activity with its purpose rooted in the message and manner of Christ.[1000]

If it is determined that the church is not living up to God's calling and expectations for this local assembly, and change is needed to insure that this becomes reality, then alterations, adjustments or holistic reorganization may be justifiable. "This is much broader than simply growing the church numerically and involves embracing as our purpose maximal faithfulness to the biblical patterns for the church in our own cultural context."[1001] Rather than establish

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[997] Alan Roxburgh, Crossing p. 31.
[998] Brian D. McLaren, Other p. 28.
[999] These questions are examined in previous sections concerning Ecclesiology and Missionality.
[1000] Douglas W. Johnson, Managing Change in the Church New York, NY: Friendship Press, 1974, p. 5.
[1001] James D. Craig, Corporate p. 4.

the goal of a better church, one should return to the basis of a church with the understanding that,

> our ultimate goal is to empower people to become transformed followers of Jesus Christ. This means that we must provide processes, resources, and relationships that facilitate the communication, acceptance, and pursuit of moral and spiritual truth, growth in godly character, significant participation in a community of faith, and a deepening and passionate relationship with God.[1002]

The desire for relevance can be more accurately described as a passion for engaging the cultural context. This has been described as an association between spiritual changes made in the lives of God's people and the purpose of the church in the world. [1003] The church is to be an agent of change in the lives of those who need to experience reconciliation, restoration and salvation. By its presence and its message the church is constantly calling out with a message of hope, encouraging hearers to experience life-change through Jesus Christ. "Ultimately outcomes are understood to come from God rather than as a result of approaching this with the correct technique hence the central place of prayer and the resultant thanksgiving when the blessings, as opposed to the 'results,' come."[1004] It is the responsibility of each congregation to determine before God the changes which are needed to increase effectiveness in the spiritual formation, community building and missionality of parishioners.

As leadership realizes that the local church is not living up to Christ's expectations they can begin to implement systemic changes in instruction, programming or activity resulting in greater effectiveness. Practically speaking, this strategic planning is defined as, "...the work a congregation does to (1) identify the activity of God and (2) make the personal and congregational adjustments needed to join him in that activity."[1005] God's role and contribution

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[1002]George Barna, The Second Coming of the Church Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 1998, p. 175.
[1003] Missional Church 101
http://www.mennonitemission.net/Resources/Publications/Various/Downloads/MissionalChurch10
1.pdf. December 28, 2004, p. 4.
[1004] James D. Craig, Corporate p. 3.
[1005] Jim Herrington, Mike Bonem and James H. Furr, Leading Congregational Change San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publications, 2000, p. 6 as cited in

is of utmost significance; "God is the one who brings change. God invites us to be co-creators and not only invites us but expects us to contribute. But finally, God is the one who gives the fruit we will bear."[1006]

In the 1940s and 1950s, one could be reasonably assured that if he or she attended a denominational church in one locale it would be very similar to another located five hundred miles away and what worked in one place would be successful in another.[1007] In contemporary culture this is referred to as 'branding.'[1008] Churches consisted of similar people practicing faith in like manner. Today's culture is characterized by diversity, indicating a shift, even in the local church.

> The driving assumption about congregations today is that they each have a unique call to ministry, a call very much determined by the congregation's location and ministry with a specific and unique group of individuals, who have specific and unique needs and interests within the greater framework of the faith tradition ... This shift from honouring sameness is a change that is as much cultural as it is congregational.[1009]

A church before God must consider its unique role and ask, "What is it in the church that needs changing?"

There are differences in the theological and methodological aspects of congregational life. While a church may desire to remain conservative in its theology, it may wish to be more progressive in methodology.[1010] Too often progressive methods are viewed as synonymous with liberal theology, and any change to make the church more relevant is rejected, illustrating the importance of a careful strategy for change. If change is not a matter of rejecting theological underpinnings, it must be determined what is prompting church culture change.

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http://media.wiley.com/product_data/excerpt/52/07879476/0787947652.pdf November 22, 2005, p. 1.

[1006]Mary K. Sellon, Daniel P. Smith and Gail F. Grossman, Redeveloping p. xiv.

[1007] This may have been akin to 'branding' to facilitate the person who moved and desired a familiar religious setting.

[1008] Core Brand http://www.corebrand.com/, p. 1, July 26, 2006.

[1009] Gilbert R. Rendle, Change p. 6.

[1010] Michael F. Tucker, The Church that Dared to Change Wheaton, IL: Tyndale Publishers, 1975, p. 90.

To be successful in organizational and cultural realignment, there must be a commitment to appropriate change accompanied by a clearly established and articulate, yet flexible, process. "The clearest pattern is on what pastors and congregational leaders have recognized for years: achieving change depends on trying to change."[1011] A surfing analogy has been used to describe church culture change.[1012] Church leadership should be able to see the wave of what God is doing, and desires to do, in their community. Some of these events may be explained only by the action of invisible forces or an act of faith implying teleology.[1013] Once this is discerned, the challenge is to catch the wave, create a plan for change and ride it until God leads another way.

Before the change process begins, it must be recognized that the problem may be systemic in nature. "These types of responses to the malaise of church systems are being integrated into long practiced frameworks with little or no actual reflection on the frameworks themselves."[1014] An organization must return to the most basic type of investigation asking the fundamental questions associated with the reason for its existence and its unique role in the world. Such contemplation will clarify the core values of the group, shared underlying assumptions, behaviours and habits and symbols and language.[1015] As organizational leadership recasts the values, defined as the most deeply held beliefs of the group, the culture will begin to change as evidenced by the breaking of old habits and the development of new ones.

When it is observed that an organization is waning in its effectiveness or is in measurable decline, intervention is necessary. Determining to what extent change is necessary requires a full documentation and understanding of the organization's history. Those who would view themselves as agents of change

[1011] Richard H. Bliese, Communities that Change, Congregations that Adapt www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=236, p. 3, November 30, 2004.
[1012] Rick Warren, Catching the Passion Wave http://www.christianitytoday.com/leaders/newsletter/2004/cln40316.html, p. 1, January 2, 2006.
[1013] C. Mark Steinacher, Aleatory Folk p.70.
[1014] Alan Roxburgh, Crossing p. 26.
[1015] Peg Neuhauser, Ray Bender and Kirk Stromberg Culture.com p. 5. These are listed in order of importance and in the order in which they should be addressed.

often fail to study adequately a situation before making what, in their view, are the necessary changes.

However, over-analysis can be counterproductive. Studying the past and planning for the future are not mutually exclusive. "We need to be able to understand what needs to be preserved, matured, transformed or discarded."[1016] The magnitude of the proposed cultural shift will depend on the severity of apparent challenges and whether the present direction of the organization could ultimately be a threat to the very existence of the organization. If this is the case, leadership may choose to re-engineer the corporate culture by, "the tossing aside of old systems and starting over."[1017]

Culture Change Readiness

Knowledge of an organization's history is invaluable in determining an organization's readiness for culture change. In terms of operational effectiveness, current conditions within the organization may be accurately documented with a view to assessing, forecasting and strategizing for the future. Hopes, dreams and possible improvements in an organization have a place in the preliminary discussion stages leading to corporate change.[1018] In some cases an evaluation of past activities may be discerned through 'paper trails.' This enables the leader to assess objectively an organization's readiness for major change by examining previous patterns and logic.[1019] The strengths of the organization, or the things that have been done right, must not be ignored. The group's weaknesses must also be documented with the intent to adopt a strategy to insure they are not repeated.

The Willow Creek Association has produced an analytical exercise that provides invaluable assistance in this endeavor.[1020] It contains a non-

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[1016] James Craig, <u>Corporate</u> p. 2.
[1017] Ibid. p. 129.
[1018] Patrick E. Conner and Linda K. Lake, <u>Managing</u> pp. 15, 91.
[1019] Roger Beaumont, <u>Chaos</u> p. 135.
[1020] <u>Assessing Your Congregation's Readiness for Change</u> Barrington, IL: Willow Creek Association. Distributed at the "How to Change Your Church Without Killing It" Conference,

quantifiable formula which calculates change readiness based on the factors of leadership ability, influencer readiness, time and new idea impact. Each of the components of this formula has direct bearing on the success of a proposed shift in direction. The leader must have abilities that enable him or her to facilitate change such as being able to promote change by publicly and privately articulating vision and gathering and motivating an effective management team.[1021] In each organization there are those whose leadership, whether indicated by official position or not, can contribute to either a smooth transition or unrest and discontent. An assessment must be conducted to determine what key influencers think about the proposed change. Time refers to the proposed length of time it takes to process the change, overnight or over a period of months, while new impact refers to the magnitude of the change.[1022] A careful response to worksheet questions will reveal where an organization will be placed on a spectrum between 'high risk' or 'overly ripe.'

Types of Church Culture Change

Churches which sense their need for cultural change and express a willingness to embrace it can be categorized into three types: traditional, transitional and transformational.[1023] The traditional church maintains the course and expects the pastor to be the primary 'doer' of ministry. It is not a high priority for a traditional church to engage the surrounding community. The transitional church works to adjust and adapt its programs, structures and activities to be more effective while the transformational church views all aspects of church life as open to review. The latter returns to the foundation of scripture and sound theology to examine the basic reason for its existence and to determine what radical shifts may be needed to fulfil its mission. The

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January 27-29, 2003, hosted by Central Christian Church, Las Vegas, NV. See Appendix 2, p. 289.

[1021] Alan Nelson, Assessing Your Readiness For Change: How to Change Your Church Without Killing It Session 3, Willow Creek Association Conference, Las Vegas, NV, January 28, 2003.

[1022] In the church setting this may be something like adding a morning service or selling the present church property and relocating to another area of the city.

[1023] E. Stanley Ott. Twelve Dynamic Shifts for Transforming Your Church Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002, p. 13.

transformational church will gain its energy from congregational discussion as facilitated by a group of leaders as opposed to a process, which is top-down driven by one person.[1024]

The critical factor in these three types of churches is not the actual label, or where it lies on the continuum at the present time, as much as determining in which direction it is moving. A traditional church can become more entrenched in its culture or make preparation to become transitional and ultimately transformational.

A similar model categorizes the cultures of existing churches as traditional, mainstream and emerging, based on the ability of the church to engage its context.[1025] In the traditional church there is little or no dissonance from what has been the accepted public expression of faith over many years. The mainstream church is more progressive in its desire to be relevant and yet remains conservative in its methodology. The emerging church is radical, in both its theology and methodology, in an effort to relate to a postmodern mindset. While acknowledging there is room for all types of churches, it is imperative that each church should decide its unique role in the kingdom of God rather than attempting to be all things to all people.

History of Church Renewal

The church of today seems to adhere to structures, methodology, and messages relevant in the 1960s. Perhaps it is because, just as generals feel they have fought the 'last war,' Christians like to think that they have learned the solutions to every situation, and they do not want to admit that there may be a new set of questions rendering earlier answers virtually useless.[1026] Just as the style, tools and functions of war 'morphed' from World War I to World War II

[1024] Clark D. Cowden, The Missional Church/Missional Presbytery Project http://www.sjpresbytery.org/misional.htm, April 11, 2005, p. 4.

[1025] Earl Creps, Emerging Models of Ministry in the 21st Century Personal Notes from Assemblies of God Theological Seminary Leadership Roundtable, Sacramento, CA, March 4-5, 2002. It should be noted that the terms 'traditional' and 'mainstream' are synonymous in some circles. For Creps, a Pentecostal, 'traditional' pertains more to historical Protestantism while 'mainstream' refers to classical Pentecostals.

[1026] Mark Steinacher. Personal Notes from a Conversation p. 1, September 2004.

due to advances in technology, so the church must carefully adapt to emerging post-modern societal values.

> The question becomes one of who (or what) sets the agenda for adaptation. "Liberalism" was more a process than a set of ideas. There are those who would not be caught dead as "thoroughly-modern Millies" (i.e. liberals) who are falling all over each other to be "thoroughly-post-modern Pollies.[1027]

Many evangelicals, Pentecostals included, who abhorred the new theology of traditional churches in the 1960s, have now become seeker-sensitive. Others, from the same groupings have vehemently resisted a 'seeker sensitive' orientation. The challenge remains: to answer questions concerning the difference between the contextualization of the gospel today and that of yesteryear and the ecclesiological principles forming the boundaries for the renewal of a local church. The strategic planning of pastors and church boards may be facilitated in a long series of discussions, but destructive chaos can result if a clearly-stated vision of the church has not been established.

It would be gratifying to think that once a visionary course is plotted that all would fall into place and people would 'get on board' contributing life energy to the change process. Unfortunately, there are some things that mitigate change. To share vision sporadically and expect that all who hear it will retain it over the long period is an unrealistic expectation. Vision is created to be cast or given away, with the idea that the more people own it, the more likely it is to be lived out.[1028]

One reason efforts at organizational transformations fail is that new practices and new behaviours do not get rooted deeply into the culture and old behaviours re-emerge pushing aside new values and practices causing any opportunity for long term change to disappear.[1029] Because "vision leaks"[1030] church leadership must informally cast vision by making formal public statements

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[1027] Ibid.

[1028] George Barna, Barna Responds to Christianity Today Article www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=121, p. 1, April 21, 2005.

[1029] John P. Kotter, Leading pp. 145-147.

[1030] Andy Stanley, Vision Leaks http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2004/001/19.68.html, p. 1, June 16, 2005.

at least every thirty days.[1031] The church setting affords leadership a number of venues to cast vision. The main opportunity is during the weekly sermon as the pastor examines biblical vision and God's expectations for the local church and its members. At times, a special large group meeting may be called for a vision presentation at which an informative discussion can take place complemented by visuals, printed materials, formal teaching and informal question and answer periods. Members of the organization should be constantly exposed to reminders of the vision by use of visual icons, small group studies, consistently used phrases and terminology, faith stories, one-on-one meetings, conferences and a modelling of the vision by each church leader.[1032]

Church Culture Renewal and Vision

To rise to the challenge of reaching a changing society, a church must contemplate the underlying philosophical reason for its existence and determine what changes need to be made. Change for the sake of change, or change which is only 'skin deep' or cosmetic, does little to increase the effectiveness of an organization. However, to remain current and relevant, an organization may need to reinvent itself continually through the maintenance of a church culture which anticipates and welcomes change.[1033] This is done through the constant casting of vision and portraying the institution as never arriving but always going somewhere. Through this journey, changes must be measured, and results rewarded, so the organization as a whole will take on a different, more productive attitude.[1034]

The church may be more delicate than one might think. In some cases, the church may appear to be stable when in fact it is approaching a state far from equilibrium. An energized and motivated body of believers will emerge from far-from-equilibrium, chaotic system as leadership articulates a clear

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[1031] Ibid.
[1032] Dan Southerland, Transitioning pp. 84-96.
[1033] Ken Blanchard and Mark Miller, Secret pp. 82-83.
[1034] Price Pritchett and Ron Pound, Velocity p. 13.

vision.[1035] "Some may view this style of vision development as 'vision by chaos,' and they would be right. But out of chaos, God creates order."[1036] When engaging in church renewal, leadership must restructure to ensure a place of freedom, including abandoning clear lines of control. Group leadership should have elements that are non-linear while allowing for spontaneity derived from accurate, disseminated information.[1037] "Complexity theory illuminates the long-range significance of small action [and] underscores the vital role of interrelationships in the church."[1038]

This does not absolve congregational leadership from proactive involvement. "Congregations are big on the 'V' word [vision] but struggle to connect it to the 'I' word, implementation."[1039] In the church context, leadership must rely on its competencies and skill sets to implement change in a chaotic and complex system. Over time, a system's development process impacts its future direction. A simple change may be successful in the short term, but detrimental in the long term.[1040] Leadership may address this concern through an appreciative inquiry process. It "identifies the healthiest, most life-producing aspects of a congregation and then builds upon those strengths to create a new future ... the best of the past and present to ignite the collective imagination of what might be."[1041] The advantage of a systems approach is the opportunity for what is referred to as leverage, the impact a small change can have which may ultimately result in a larger positive systemic change.[1042]

[1035] C. Mark Steinacher, Aleatory Folk p.75.
[1036] Leonard Hjalmarson, Kingdom p. 4.
[1037] C. Mark Steinacher, Aleatory Folk pp.77-81.
[1038] Howard A. Snyder and Daniel V. Runyon, Decoding pp. 38-39.
[1039] Chris Erdman and Alan Roxburgh, The Prophetic Dimension of Missional Leadership http://odyssey.blogs.com/odyssey/2004/05/, p. 1, January 1, 2005.
[1040] Peter Senge as cited by Dennis G. Campbell, Congregations as Learning Communities. Bethesda, MD: 2000, p. 16.
[1041] David Cooperrider, Jane Magruder Watson, Dinana Whittley and Cathy Royal, Appreciative Inquiry Consultant's Manual Washington, DC: Jane Magruder Watson, 1996, p. 1.
[1042] Kenneth A. Halstead, Unstuck p. 30.

In war, there is "a gap in the perception of battle between 'the men who really did the job' and the upper command echelons."[1043] Effective church leaders who are facilitating culture change will eliminate tension between 'ground truth' and the 'big picture' by opening the lines of communication and 'listening to the people who are in the trenches.' While the optimum vantage point for the big picture may be 'behind the lines,' or in the tactical room, the front line warriors are more familiar with risk and violence. Failure to consider this may lead to dissension and disunity.[1044]

Simultaneously, there is the need to educate all levels of the organization team in terms of the 'big picture' and to teach them how to think in alignment with the desired culture. This is accomplished by teaching Biblical principles as opposed to specific behavioural patterns. Church leadership must constantly tell the story of the church ... what it stood for in the past and what has changed. For a church whose foundation was missional activity, nothing has changed other than methodology. The congregation needs to be reminded that the essence of the message must be retained, but the method of declaration or form may change according to the context. "While we hold on to biblical values and purpose (function) it is equally important that we don't idolize old forms. Forms change, the message remains the same."[1045]

The Process of Church Renewal

While proposed and implemented changes may draw criticism, the process itself often bears much of the responsibility for dissent. Consultation associated with the change process may look very different depending on the size and nature of an organization. An office of three people can meet at 9 a.m. and agree to a fundamental shift in focus and direction and begin to implement it by noon. A church with 1500 regular attendees, where everyone has a vested interest and different expectations as to what the change should be and how it

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[1043] Roger Beaumont, Chaos p. 5.
[1044] Ibid. p. 78.
[1045] Leonard Hjalmarson, Kingdom p. 17.

should be processed, requires a clearly defined process which can be monitored in terms of its progress, augmenting areas of weakness and making appropriate adjustments along the way.

Successful culture change takes place over a period of time. The following change curve model articulates the natural steps for change in a larger organization.

Name of Period	Description	Morale
Stagnation	The organization is depressed or hyperactive	Low
Decision Time	A decision to change is made	Remains low
Preparation	The appetite for change reaches a critical mass	Begins to climb
Implementation	Vision Strategy is shared and plans shaped and people from multiple layers are involved.	Reaches an all-time high
Determination	Something begins to be wrong. Conflicts, clashes and failure begin to be manifested	Rapid decline or the potential for conflict
Fruition	Change is either abandoned or reaffirmed	Abandonment means morale is lower than in the beginning. Reaffirmation of successful change means greater morale than ever before.

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Each of these periods has inherent nuances and demand specific skills as outlined in a more formalized model which elucidates five phases of change accompanied by appropriate methodology.[1047]

While stability may appear to be a church's strength, this first phase may function as a barrier to future effectiveness. Proposed change may be opposed from the beginning through various feedback mechanisms serving the human propensity to maintain equilibrium and a sense of identity. This is commonly referred to as ʽομεοστασιο.[1048] With this understanding, a type of transition in which changes are small and subtle establishes a pattern and pathway for the proposed redesign.

[1046] Jeanie Daniel Duck, The Change Monster Boston, MA: The Boston Consulting Group, 2001, pp. 16-17.
[1047] Alan Roxburgh, Crossing pp. 31-46.
[1048] Kenneth A. Halstead, Unstuck p. 33.

The second phase is called discontinuity. This is a period of time when it is increasingly apparent that powerful sub-cultures have been challenging the effectiveness of the church in its present form as characterized by clashes inside and outside the church.

The next phase, dis-embedding, is marked by increasing levels of distress and conflict which, although leadership is committed to resolving, appear to go nowhere because of the inadequacy of existing frameworks of tradition, structure, and practice. A change in worship style or removal of the denomination's name from the church name or sign is indicative of these types of conflicts.

It is not until the fourth stage, transition, that the problem is intentionally addressed. Admittedly, it is the most difficult period in the process due to tension between needed change and the tendency to default to methodology the organization knows and has experienced, instead of planning for what is necessary for the future.

Cultural transition must be marked by a breaking with the past as a preparation for the fifth stage, re-formation. The church in North America is 'doing the same thing everywhere' using familiar liturgy and form in an attempt to return to an active practice and expression of faith.[1049] A new vision and mission will give rise to redesigned systems and a new identity. Within this renewed organizational culture new roles begin to emerge as rules and frameworks are established. Although this may at first appear to be a linear model, nothing could be further from the truth. The chaotic nature of an organization will not allow a smooth, uniform progression. It will be difficult, uncertain, confusing and may at times be three steps forward and two steps back.[1050]

While the above approach may describe change that is ongoing, deliberate and methodical, others advocate 'shock treatment.' "You must hit

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[1049] Alan Roxburgh, <u>Crossing</u> p. 42.
[1050] Ibid.

with enough shock effect to immobilize the old culture at least temporarily [because] if you don't make significant changes in the reward system, you'll actually reward resistance."[1051] The term 'destabilize' refers to the process of creating dissatisfaction with things as they are presently while disarming the old culture and achieving hard results in a shortest period of time possible.[1052] In this case, information is used as a force to move the organization in the chosen direction. For those organizational cultures that are resistant to change, this process, marked by the correct amount of destabilization, should be initiated while avoiding too much imbalance which has the potential to lead to anarchy, the dark side of chaos.[1053] The term 'unfreezing' is used to describe this first non-negotiable step[1054] and produces an internal motivation to change.[1055]

If 'shock' and 'unfreezing' are the methodologies of choice, they must be deployed in a sensitive and compassionate manner, especially in the context of the local church. While it may be necessary in extreme cases to employ the 'shock treatment' it is more advantageous to facilitate cultural change as a member-friendly process, evolutionary in character as opposed to revolutionary.[1056]

"There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a

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[1051] Price Pritchett and Ron Pound, Velocity pp. 5,11.
[1052] Ibid.
[1053] C. Mark Steinacher, Personal Notes from a Conversation p. 1, March 3, 2006.
[1054] Victor Daniels, Kurt Lewin Notes, http://www.sonoma.edu/users/d/daniels/lewinnotes.html, p. 1, April 11, 2005.
[1055] Destabilizing a system is often done with a view to eliciting creative solutions, or culture change, for purposes of greater organizational effectiveness. As a case in point, Mark Steinacher refers to The Connexion, which deliberately destabilized its ecclesiastical formations to achieve positive results. C. Mark Steinacher, Aleatory Folk pp. 83-84, 87.
[1056] Mark Steinacher, Personal Notes from a Conversation p. 1. March 3, 2006.

new order of things."[1057] Effective change cannot be managed. It is understood and led, but not controlled,[1058] and is dependant on the abilities of the leader.

> At the core of the spiritual and relational vitality part of our model is the conviction that leaders bear a disproportionate share of the responsibility for leading change. It follows that the spiritual and relational vitality of the leader or leaders is foundational to the change journey[1059]

Such a style of servant leadership should hold the values of team and consensus building high. Some of the congregational variables which can be impacted by church leadership are a positive identity, congregational harmony and cooperation, leadership's ability to generate enthusiasm and involvement in social action and programming.[1060] While the manipulation of these factors may contribute to the change process, this list is by no means exhaustive.

A Systems Approach to Church Culture Change

The concept of cultural change within the church is not without history. The world of science has progressed from a world driven by mechanistic assumptions to a world marked by the introduction of new holistic sciences such as quantum physics. Unfortunately, congregational leadership continues to view churches as the sum total of a group of parts. When changes are deemed necessary, one part of the 'church machine' is adjusted or changed resulting in a failure to deal with the real issue. [1061] This type of 'tinkering' was encouraged by the widespread acceptance of certain shallow methodologies utilized in denominations or branches of the Christian church[1062] while neglecting paradigm shifts which could have resulted in more effective congregations.

[1057] Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1984, cited in George G. Hunter III, Leading and Managing a Growing Church. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000, p. 11.

[1058] Michael Fullen, Leading in a Culture of Change San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2001, p. 33.

[1059] Jim Herrington, Mike Bonem and James H. Furr, Congregational p. 7.

[1060] Roy Oswald and Speed Leas, The Inviting Church. A Study of Member Assimilation Washington, DC: The Alban Institute, 1987, p. 29.

[1061] Gilbert R. Rendle, Change p. 3. Until the 1990s this methodology continued to be the norm in evangelical churches.

[1062] Such as evangelical churches.

If one has adopted a worldview that assumes the mechanical nature of organizations, parts of the system are isolated and examined to determine what adjustment is needed to impact the whole. Contrary to the dominant thinking in modern society concerning organizations, the church is not a machine or 'one big happy family.'[1063] It is a large and complex (and chaotic) organization.[1064] "Cause and effect are not one-way linear steps ... [they] are reciprocal and circular."[1065] Accomplishing mission can be characterized more accurately as an open-ended dynamic system in a far-from-equilibrium or chaotic state. Although Chaos/Complexity theory may seem to be the antithesis of

> decently and in order, it is possible for a Christian to envision how God may truly interact with creation temporally while standing over time as its creator [which allows for] highly contingent, emergent possibilities interspersed with 'landmarks' of God's will.[1066]

When God is allowed 'free reign' in the lives of church organizations, his creative input will result in Kingdom effectiveness.

As a church forecasts and plans for change, each of the programs and initiatives of the church must be viewed not as 'stand alone'[1067] but as intersecting, interactive and complementing entities. If one program is not functioning properly it will not only impact a particular demographic, but the entire church system, possibly limiting spiritual and numerical growth.[1068] In a systems approach, church leadership must consider the means of spiritual birthing and reproduction, the ridding of harmful elements and disease,

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[1063] Kenneth A. Halstead, Unstuck Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 1998, p. 26. James D. Craig and Irving A. Whitt, Theology p. 3. Craig suggests, "Our western mindset predisposes us heavily towards understanding change as requiring intervention on the basis of 'technique.' Essentially we believe we live in a universe where we have the power through relational means to effect beneficial change. As a result western believers have produced reams of 'biblical' how-to manuals which identify the correct steps to follow to guarantee success in evangelism, marriage, relationships, child-rearing and so forth.

[1064] George G. Hunter III, Leading and Managing a Growing Church Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000, p. 21.

[1065] Kenneth A. Halstead, UnStuck p. 29.

[1066] C. Mark Steinacher, New Insights pp.132-133.

[1067] Leadership at Portico has labelled 'stand alone' ministries as 'silos.' In these cases the ministry continues to grow in size but there is little or no interaction with each other or sharing of vision, mission or strategy.

[1068] Brian D. McLaren, Other pp. 45-49.

appropriate infusion of energy, possible external attack, the possible multiple function of a part of a microcosm, and the close co-existence of two or more systems.[1069] The health of a system may depend on the leader's ability to react to external or internal changes while achieving a balance in sameness and diversity, and order and disorder.

Rather than segmenting the local church and focusing on individual aspects, it must be viewed as a living organism consisting of any number of interdependent systems which create an organizational culture. A congregation possesses interrelated and interconnected parts which interact while seeking a balance and an equilibrium[1070] in relation to an organizational system characterized by a large number of people, and whose 'product' is human spiritual development. While many pastors view the church as a linear entity and address the change process by programming accordingly[1071] or by adding or enhancing one element, such as contemporary worship, they do so in the belief that numerical growth will result.[1072] For example, once maximum growth is experienced due to a change in musical style, then leadership should move on to another adjustment, perhaps in the youth program. Unfortunately, the result is less than desirable as the congregation experiences a gap between ordered expectations and chaotic realities.[1073]

Systems-thinking assists the leader in understanding that an accurate metaphor for the church organization is more like a 3-D puzzle than a linked chain. Discernment is needed when assessing current situations and strategizing

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[1069] These systems refer to competing or complementing ministries, programs or structures within a congregation, which are more prevalent in a large church.
[1070] Gilbert R. Rendle, Change p. 55.
[1071] Howard A. Snyder and Daniel V. Runyon, Decoding the Church Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2002, pp. 35-42.
[1072] Evangelical churches have focused on numerical growth while often sacrificing the personal or spiritual growth of individuals.
[1073] Roger Beaumont, Chaos p. 49.

for the future, understanding that at times a system becomes sick or dysfunctional.[1074]

To facilitate change one must assess the whole with all of its related interrelationships, as opposed to focusing on a small part of the entire picture.[1075] A systems approach to ministry will enable the leadership to analyze and anticipate change and respond suitably.[1076] To understand the local church as a system one must consider as many aspects as possible of local congregational life and their impact on the life of a believer.

> Everything is interrelated in a system...This concept has implications for congregations, such as what happens in one part affects the whole and vice versa. It also suggests that congregations have a personality and a spirit and that members have a relationship with that spirit as well as with parts of a congregation.[1077]

An engaging church will be more insightful concerning the programs of the church and how they interact with each other in a system. What may be an appropriate culture adjustment for one church may contribute to another's demise.

The larger the church becomes, the greater the challenge of leadership. Church leaders need to transition from the attempt to care for an entire congregation, to a model similar to that of Moses, (Exodus 18) where he or she cares for a number of people who, in turn, serve an equal number of people. (Ephesians 4:12)[1078] Using the metaphor of an air traffic controller or a symphony conductor in the church setting illustrates that a leader functions best as a directing enabler.[1079]

[1074] Brian D. McLaren, Reinventing Your Church Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1998, pp. 42-47.
[1075] Peter Senge, The Fifth Discipline: Mastering the Five Practices of the Learning Organization New York, NY: Doubleday Publishers, 1990, pp. 68-69.
[1076] Brian D. McLaren, Other p. 42.
[1077] Kenneth A. Halstead, Unstuck p. 26.
[1078] The equipping work of the church leaders is a direct fulfilment of this serving model.
[1079] Leonard Hjalmarson, Kingdom p. 1.

Facilitating and Maintaining the Church Culture Change Process
The Role of the Culture Change Team

The gifts and roles God instituted for the local church assist in the process of establishing a consultative process leading to agreement on vision.[1080] Conscientious church leadership may accomplish this through spiritual activities such as fasting, praying, waiting and conferring. As a church corporately commits to these disciplines, God will begin to open up their understanding and bring unity to the body of believers. Ensuing discussions are marked by an increased cohesiveness as individuals listen to God and express what he has been saying as the group meets together. The challenge for each church leadership team is to discover God's design for their particular congregation, examine the appropriateness of their mission and vision of their church,[1081] assess their ability to fulfill it and establish appropriate goals and strategies and to create a complementing and productive organizational culture.

When planning for change in the local church setting, effectiveness will increase as the primary leader or pastor develops a team to raise the awareness of current challenges and facilitate culture change by "work[ing] below the surface."[1082] Such groups have been referred to as "a dream team."[1083] This group of people will understand the need to consider culture change and be willing to invest their lives in the development of an appropriate vision and strategy with a view to actively implementing course corrections through procedural planning and organization, propagation of unity, and the setting of goals marked by a highly communicative style of facilitation.[1084]

Leaders proposing organizational assessment and readjustment need to develop a change process that simultaneously enlists support from stakeholders.

[1080] Mary K. Sellon, Daniel P. Smith and Gail F. Grossman, Redeveloping the Congregation Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2002, p. 23. This is referred to as a CORE team or Formative Microcosm.
[1081] This would include establishing mission and vision if it is nonexistent.
[1082] Gene Appel, Preparing the Soil for Change An address at the Willow Creek Association "Change Your Church Without Killing It" Conference, Las Vegas, NV, January 28, 2003.
[1083] Ibid.
[1084] Micheal Tucker, Decay p. 23ff.

Once the problem is identified, an outside consultant may be called upon to assist in the gathering of data from a wide cross-section of group membership and present a preliminary diagnosis. A small working group is called together to reflect and analyze the consultant's work and move toward joint strategic planning. Upon completion of these steps, action is taken, followed by a further assessment of the effectiveness of the change. The assets of this approach are the input of an objective observer and ownership by stakeholders which provide a solid foundation for the change process.[1085]

The consensus styled leader who is committed to change must be engaged in objective analyzing, gathering related information and carefully creating a plan of action while considering all that might go wrong.[1086] These functions are collectively labelled as re-culturing, changing "the way we do things around here [and which] is a contact sport that involves hard, labour-intensive work. It takes time and indeed never ends."[1087] If the problem is systemic, the consultation process may force stakeholders to reconsider the foundational philosophy of the organization. This is akin to 'zero-based budgeting,' which requires the justification of all expenditures.

As part of the process, this team would be responsible to re-visit the current vision and mission, if such does exist, and make recommendations through an appropriate communication process. Operative questions, such as those listed below, may be helpful for strategic development.[1088]

[1085] Thomas G. Cummings and Christopher G. Worley, Organizational Development and Change New York, NY: West Publishing Co., 1993, pp. 56-58.

[1086] Roger Beaumont, Chaos pp. 38-41.

[1087] Michael Fullen, Leading in a Culture of Change San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2001, p. 43.

[1088] Curt Watke, Strategic Ministry Development Series Cambridge, ON: Church Growth Resources, 2001, p. 2. Other valuable sources for this congregational exercise are Lyle E. Schaller, 44 Questions for Congregational Self-Appraisal Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998 and Rick Warren, Getting God's Vision for Your Church http://www.pastor.com/MT/26/?id=26&artid=977&expand=1, p. 1, February 11, 2001.

Type of Question	Operative Question
Philosophical	What is your ministry and why are you doing it?
Context	Where are you doing ministry?
Project	When and how are you doing ministry?
Contact	With whom are you doing ministry?
Strategic	Are you doing the right ministry? How well are you doing ministry?
Systemic	Which ministry process are you doing?
Reproduction	Are you reproducing your ministry?

Neglecting initially to identify the problem accurately has the potential of creating a major stumbling block to change. Culture change effectiveness is increased as leaders articulate and investigate the problem as opposed to mistakenly focusing on the solution.[1089] A discreet release of discomforting data illustrating how the organization is falling short or failing, while ensuring psychological safety to those who are willing to risk being part of the solution, can illustrate the need for change. Leaders can encourage members to experiment with possible solutions, understanding that while failure is a real possibility, great things can be accomplished through trial and error. Once the problems or obstacles hindering church effectiveness have been identified, the urgency of the matter should be raised in the congregational setting.

This leadership team must begin to act in such a way as to gain credibility by meeting with people of influence and continually emphasizing values and simultaneously assessing change readiness. To stand in front of a congregation on a Sunday morning or at a congregational meeting and unilaterally declare a

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[1089] Gene Appel, How to Change Your Church Without Killing It Willow Creek Association Conference, Las Vegas, NV, January 27, 2003. Appel says that only 10% of leaders address culture change by articulating the problem. Ninety percent focus on the solution.

new direction for the church is 'leadership suicide.' It may be tempting to move quickly toward one solution, but consideration should be given to alternative solutions arising out of these brainstorming sessions. Once this is accomplished, the vision must be seeded into the hearts of congregational members, beginning with those who have the greatest vested interest and gradually disseminated through the entire congregation. Subsequent decision-making consists of making an informed choice from various alternatives followed by a thoughtful process of implementation. Once it appears that there is openness to a new direction and success is probable, culture change may be instituted.

Good leaders, as they work in cooperation with other people, have an innate sense of what is needed and when to enact changes. These course corrections, both destructive and constructive, have the potential of contributing to the success of the initiative. Realizing there will be obstacles to change, these leaders need to celebrate short term 'wins' and use 'losses' as a guide for ongoing strategization for further culture adjustment.[1090]

The next step is to develop and present a compelling vision capturing the values of the church. Contrary to the understanding of many church members, the church was not designed as a democracy.[1091] While congregational 'buy-in' certainly is preferable, and should be the goal of the process, the vision and mission of the church cannot be determined by a simple majority or sixty-six percent vote. It is the result of a group of God's people[1092] listening to his voice and coming to an understanding of his unique design for their particular church and determining what adjustments are needed to bring about the fulfilment of this vision through a carefully crafted process. Any unsettledness can be

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[1090] John P. Kotter, Leading p. 21.
[1091] Thomas Molnar, "Church and Democracy" as cited by Carl F. Henry in Has Democracy Had Its Day? http://www.acton.org/publicat/occasionalpapers/democracy.html, p. 1, October 7, 2006. A strong case may be made for or against the role of democracy in the church, and in particular as it relates to culture change. This would be an interesting theological study but it is beyond the scope of this thesis.
[1092] In most cases church leadership.

overcome by intensifying the communication process while constantly promoting vision and freeing the people to find their place in the changing culture.[1093]

Transition and culture change is not an unfamiliar concept in the church. The makeup of pastoral teams, committees, and boards regularly changes, inherently resulting in culture shifts. This may be detrimental because such a culture shift may be limited to related transitions associated with a change in personnel as opposed to focusing on a compelling vision that infers that the best ministry days of a congregation are ahead.[1094]

How Much Culture Change?

One key to successful culture adjustment is the establishment and maintenance of a balance in the nature and amount of change. It is inconceivable that every single aspect of an organization is in need of renewal. If this were the case, it would be better to declare the association non-existent and begin afresh. In most cases there are aspects, traditions, values and operational norms that should be retained and built upon. On the other hand, there must be a willingness to change. An organization determined to optimize its effectiveness consists of people who seek new learnings and refuse blindly to accept old rules. They are willing to let go of 'the way things used to be' and the manner in which tasks were successfully accomplished in the past, and perhaps their whole world of experience, sense of identity and possibly their sense of reality as they perceive it.[1095]

While there are benefits to disequilibrium, leaving an organization in a state of flux for any length of time may prove counterproductive. After illustrating the discrepancies between desired behaviour and outcomes, leadership must shift into a period of moving[1096] which is the process of developing new behaviours, strategies, goals, values and attitudes. Once a new

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[1093] Price Pritchett and Ron Pound, Velocity pp. 30-31.

[1094] E. Stanley Ott, Shifts p. 6.

[1095] William Bridges and Susan Mitchell, Leading Transition: A New Model for Change Leader to Leader, No. 16, Spring 2000, http://pdf.org/leaderbooks/121/spring2000/bridges.html, p. 2, August 18, 2005.

[1096] Thomas G. Cummings and Christopher G. Worley, Organizational p. 53.

equilibrium is realized, the organization can enter a process of 'refreezing' which involves the reinforcement of the new organizational culture, norms, policies and structures.

In some cases an organization must transition by operating two parallel cultures for a period of time. An original culture may be allowed to coexist peacefully in the minds and hearts of the members of the group if it is deemed not to be destructive and can provide a basis for building a new culture. Simultaneously, members are called to the new culture with an attractive vision, mission and values.[1097] Over a period of time, the new culture becomes predominant and adherents to the original culture are won over or choose to leave the organization.

Church Members and Staff and Change

To facilitate culture change, the right participants need to be engaged. Culture change is so difficult that leadership cannot expect all members to remain through the process.[1098] While some members of the existing team may be able to make the adjustment and contribute, others will not.[1099] This scenario needs to be declared at the outset of the culture change and followed by frank discussions, including possible parting of the ways by some members. While it is important to bring new members to the team who have the right character, competencies and chemistry[1100] to launch and maintain a new culture, leaders must be certain of the member's commitment to the culture being promoted.[1101]

[1097] Peg Neuhauser, Ray Bender and Kirk Stromberg, Culture.com p. 103.

[1098] Price Pritchett and Ron Pound, Velocity p. 21.

[1099] Stephen P. Robbins and Nancy Langton, Organizational Behaviour Scarborough, ON: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1999. p. 630. Robbins and Langton refer to this period as 'Organizational Metamorphosis,' when employees or volunteers are adjusting to the new norms and behaviours.

[1100] Providing Leadership to the Church http://www.willowcreek.org/news/5_18_04/elders.asp, p. 1, May 1, 2006. Chemistry refers to the 'fit' of the individual within the organization or team. It is important to determine whether they reflect the cultural values of the organization and interact well with other members of the team.

[1101] Cultural Leadership http://www.carey.ac.nz/leadership/156.htm, p. 1, April 11, 2005.

The way in which staff members are recruited and engaged has great impact on the process of changing a culture of an organization.[1102] At times it may be appropriate to promote someone who understands where the organization needs to go. Internally, jobs may be rotated, re-engineered, enlarged or eliminated to fulfill mission and vision. If this cannot be accomplished with existing leadership, new members may need to be enlisted. This transition becomes one of the most critical times to consider the impact a role has to play. A new staff person is able to bring creative ideas originating in other organizational settings which will result in positive change. This may also allow for a less painful change of culture as long as current members do not actively sabotage the change effort.

Speed of Change

Cultural realignment is not something that is changed instantaneously but results from a process implemented over time. Usually it is a carefully crafted sustained change in the operational culture that is needed. Leadership is successful as they develop ongoing strategies by focusing on shared values insuring that new vision and practices grow roots into the fabric of the group. It is entrenched through results, constant communication, and some turnover as people who cannot support the new direction leave.[1103]

When assessing the 'speed of change' in an organization, there is the possibility of two extremes: too much change in a short time frame, or too little change, causing any impact to be negligible, leading to the death of the organization. The enslaved Hebrews were unable to conceive the idea of being free. Their mindset was so entrenched that Moses had to take them to the wilderness for forty years to wait for the former slaves to die off and allow for a

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[1102] Patrick E. Conner and Linda K. Lake, Managing Organizational Change New York, NY: Praeger Publishing, 1988, p. 15.
[1103] John P. Kotter, Leading pp. 148-157.

new generational culture to emerge.[1104] Although this may be the extreme case, the rate of transition in the church setting must be carefully monitored.

While change in the past may have been confined to a geographical area, today it is a global phenomenon.[1105] Employees are increasingly aware of the need for flexibility to adapt to continual changes in the world of business. While the 'speed of change' has significantly increased over the last century in the marketplace, church leaders must be cognizant that culture adjustments are more easily instituted in those settings than in the volunteer arena of church life.

Sustained change and leadership longevity is a direct result of proceeding slowly. "The reason 99 out of 100 churches that try to make major transitions fail, is that they go too fast."[1106] Leadership is implored to create a delicate balance when implementing change. The operative word is 's-l-o-w-l-y' as one keeps the challenge in front of the people and remains honest and transparent and refrains from manipulating the congregation to change through a response motivated by guilt.[1107]

The Church as a Learning Culture

Leaders engaged in changing the culture of their organization may ask if change should be a constant reality. Although it might be assumed that the renewal of an organization is an event which sporadically takes place through its life, leadership of an organization should be constantly considering what adjustments, major or minor, are needed to bring about greater effectiveness. This "routine reengineering [is] based on changes in size, constituency, resources and strategy."[1108]

As members and circumstances constantly change in both the surrounding culture, consideration must be given to issue a constructive response. Institutional stress can be the result of constant reengineering and instability and

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[1104] Leonard Hjalmarson, Kingdom p. 14.
[1105] Lloyd Geering, New p. 14.
[1106] Dan Southerland, Transitioning p. 41.
[1107] Micheal Tucker, Dared p. 82.
[1108] Brian D. McLaren, The Church on the Other Side Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 2000, p. 95.

counterproductive in the long run.[1109] Any drastic change of corporate culture is usually necessary because, over the years, the organization has not made adjustments to maintain effectiveness.

Following a change in organizational culture, whether massive or minimal, leadership can maintain the direction as directed by its mission and vision. The leader may accomplish this by turning his or her attention to the creation of a 'learning culture.' Pertinent information is freely shared, the process of ongoing learning is emphasized and valued, [1110] risk-taking is encouraged and members are expected to constantly increase their effectiveness.[1111]

Such an environment may not be as difficult to establish as it may sound. It utilizes non-linear or mosaic methodology, capitalizing on teachable moments and marked by a reduction of bureaucracy. Cultural education may be facilitated in formal or informal settings, in the classroom or during on-line instruction. Although such a process may have an intellectual component, learning may be primarily experientially based allowing the participant immediately to apply their newly acquired skills and thereby heighten employee or volunteer retention rates.[1112] Effectiveness is dramatically increased as leaders encourage others to internalize the new culture through stories, rituals, material symbols such as logos and language and nomenclature.[1113] A learning culture creates stability within the organization, making things predictable, and at the same time, learning-oriented, adaptive and innovative.[1114]

[1109] Autocratic leaders deploy such methodology for control purposes.

[1110] A process that supplants the old culture.

[1111] Jeffrey A. Krames, What the Best CEO's Know New York, NY: McGraw Hill Publishers, 2003, p. 86, 99-101.

[1112] Leonard Hjalmarson, Kingdom Leadership in the Postmodern Era http://www.christianity.ca/church/leadership/2005/05.000.html August 19, 2005, p. 8.

[1113] The Marks of a New Organizational Culture www.gocn.org/news104.htm, p. 1, January 1, 2005.

[1113] Stephen P. Robbins and Nancy Langton, Organizational p. 632-635.

[1114] Abstracts of the Lake Arrowhead Conference – 2002 http://hcs.ucla.edu/lake-arrowhead-2002/abstracts.htm, p. 1, April 11, 2005.

The People Side of Change

The church proposing a significant change in culture, wages war on two fronts: against the forces of darkness and within the congregation itself. The emotional side of change is determined by the nature of people involved.[1115] Church 'civil war,' traditionally refers to a church split and is often caused by differing reactions to culture change. The inherent nature of an organization, and the agenda of some of the people who hold membership, is to preserve the present way of doing things. To use the words of old hymns their anthem may be "I'm pressing on the upward way, new heights I'm gaining every day"[1116] while others sing, "I shall not be, I shall not be moved, just like a tree planted by the waters, Lord, I shall not be moved."[1117]   It is only when the tension between these two mindsets becomes untenable, or when war erupts, that change is considered. Such a motivation for change can provide a dubious foundation.

For some, the operative questions concern how the proposed change will affect them or how they will survive. There may be a perceived or real loss of power and position. A reality check has been issued in response to such concerns by asking "Whose church is it anyway? The answer in many circles is, it belongs to the pastor, it belongs to the board, it belongs to Aunt Lulubelle, it belongs to ole John – anybody but God."[1118] The issue becomes more about power than ideology. This is problematic in the church setting where leadership fails to realize that the church is a reflection of the kingdom of God and should impact those who do not have faith.

When proposing culture change, it is the responsibility of leaders to understand that differing categories of participants are resident in any

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[1115] Alan Nelson and Gene Appel, Change p. 71.
[1116] Johnson Oatman, Jr., Higher Ground http://www.tanbible.com/tol_sng/higherground.htm, May 14, 2005, p. 1.
[1117] Homer Morris, I Shall Not be Moved http://www.lyricsdownload.com/johnny-cash-i-shall-not-be-moved-lyrics.html, May 14, 2005, p. 1.
[1118] "Get It?!" Enrich Editorial (Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada Leadership Magazine), Fall 2004, p. 19.

organization and should be engaged at their level of perspective. How congregational members view change will determine their level of acceptance. Realizing that each person is unique, it is understandable that creative people will be energized by newness associated with change. These people are called creators. Progressives may not be the originators of ideas but, when they see an idea they can support, they will act rapidly and decisively by editing and ultimately adapting it. Those who look to the progressives for direction are called builders. While they are not resistant to new ideas, they simply desire stability and an assurance that the proposed cultural change will not threaten the organization's existence. Foundationals, on the other hand, are content with the status quo and believe success in the future is assured by preserving the past and being loyal to ideals and methods which have proven merit. Members who are even more conservative and esteem ritual and history are called anchors. Tradition is highly valued resulting in an inherent resistance to change. These church adherents may feel the church is theirs to protect. Change is viewed as a threat to the heritage of their organization so they are constantly engaged in sober second thought. Recognizing the vast array of stakeholders in an organization, and the differing levels at which they embrace change, a leader must develop a communication strategy that is adaptable to each member.

Knowing that it is impossible to please everyone, the leaders' focus should be to please God. Mike Breaux, a pastor who led a traditional Baptist church in Lexington, Kentucky to missional renewal, urges local change agents not to take criticism personally, understanding that some people will choose to direct their negative barbs at leadership. The leader must remain true to his or her calling, the task to which God has called them, and establish priorities while maintaining an utter dependence on God.[1119]

[1119] Mike Breaux, Planting the Seeds of Change Personal notes from an address at the Willow Creek Association 'Change Your Church Without Killing It' Conference, Las Vegas, NV, p. 1, January 28, 2003.

To implement effective change one may need to develop a willingness to let people leave the congregation knowing that their presence and opinions may have ultimately stood in the way of culture change while also giving consideration that God may be using a person's opposition to communicate something that will contribute to positive change. A leader does need to remain accountable and not unilaterally initiate change.

Resistance to Change

To assume that the implementation of culture change will not be met with some resistance is naïve. Change will produce conflict, which may be constructive and is not to be avoided. Generally speaking, people immunize themselves against change and feel awkward when being asked to enter into unrecognizable territory.

If church leaders dare to dream they will "face two draconian realities."[1120] Church culture is the most difficult soil to nurture vision due to the diverse backgrounds and ministry philosophies of those who serve in leadership. Second, surrounding conditions, over which the congregation has no control, pressure the church sub-culture into constant change. The result is that members of the local church may naturally resist change while existing in a changing world.

Church culture change is often a clarification of ecclesiastical priorities. This is problematic for those who have previously aligned themselves with the organization which previously best expressed their value system. Human nature prompts members of an organization to examine any proposed change through the lens of 'self.' They are concerned about the net effect on their personal situation and if they will be forced to alter their lifestyle by contributing resources such as time or finances.[1121] Simultaneously, the natural preservation of that which is comfortable and familiar exists, leading to a resistance of "any change in

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[1120] Wayne Pohl cited in Marshall Shelley <u>Renewing Your Church Through Vision and Planning</u> Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1997, p. 88-89.
[1121] Blanchard and Hodges, <u>Servant</u> p. 66, 67.

the internal structure of their beliefs and practices which may have been contemplated" as a response to modernity or post-modernity.[1122] This may lead to a glamorization of the past and while some will be able to make the adjustments, others will vehemently resist and others will quietly slip away.

A model called the 'Roller Coaster of Change' has been developed to analyze culture change resistance.[1123] After initial anticipation and excitement associated with an upcoming change builds, leadership announces the plan. Recipients of the message respond with shock, mourning, turmoil, rage, causing an atmosphere of declining energy that finally prompts a moment of decision as to whether to stick with the organization or leave. Once they decide to continue with the organization, with increasing energy they search for new meaning and purpose within the change and respond with hope and a new commitment. If there are persistent dissenters, church leadership must determine if there is merit in what is being said and proceed accordingly.

"How a congregation manages conflict can enhance or diminish the congregation's spiritual and relational vitality. When managed in a life-giving manner, conflict empowers the people to solve the problem and keep the church on mission."[1124] This process can be compared to white-water rafting. It is an exhilarating adventure that can turn dangerous if not executed properly. Having the right equipment is not enough. A rafter must be able to negotiate the rapids. In the same way, the leader of a spiritual body must ensure spiritual and relational vitality prior to instituting change.[1125] If conflicts (rapids) appear, spiritually mature leaders address them in a manner which stimulates the change process. These skills are more art than science. Conflict is best managed in a life-giving manner through wisdom, patience and the input of a multitude of counsellors.

[1122] Lloyd Geering, Faith's New Age London, UK: Collins, 1980, p. 21.
[1123] Gilbert R. Rendle, Change p. 110.
[1124] Ibid. p. 7.
[1125] Jim Herrington, Mike Bonem and James H. Furr, Leading p. 9.

Short-sighted congregations which consistently resist change usually experience serious declines in membership reducing their impact in the community. To overcome this problem congregations may need to try new forms of outreach while establishing a new identity to relate to the changing community which surrounds it.

Constructive communication is important for the realization of the proposed culture changes. If improperly facilitated, people will allow their biases, background, and preconceived notions to "connect the dots in the most pathological way possible"[1126] and undermine the proposed cultural improvements. This can also be a direct correlation between levels of members' contributions and their credibility. People who comment 'while sitting in an armchair' have considerably less credibility than those who are on the frontlines.[1127]

Cultural change has earned a bad reputation through oft-repeated narratives concerning those who have attempted, unsuccessfully and insensitively, a cultural change in an organization. At other times, people simply do not understand the proposed change and therefore resist it or leaders shy away from facilitating change based on their perceived personal inadequacies concerning the necessary skills.

Resistance to change is not confined to those who are against a culture change. It is also inherent in those who agree with the proposed change, but may be so accustomed to operating with the previous cultural values that they automatically default to them. The desired change of a culture in an organization constantly lags behind that which is envisioned. It is a clearly developed, defined and implemented strategy, arising from a mission, vision and values that will change the culture.[1128]

[1126] Jeanie Daniel Duck, Understanding the Emotions of Change Session 4, An address at the Willow Creek Association "Change Your Church Without Killing It" Conference, Las Vegas, NV, January 29, 2003.
[1127] Ibid.
[1128] Duck. Understanding p. 1.

Not all resistance will be active. People 'quit and stay' by remaining part of the organization while refusing to contribute to its furtherance. "In many cases they are wagering that the proposed changes are a fad that will pass, often coincident with the departure of the pastor promoting it and that their task is simply to outlast him/her and then regain their church."[1129] To realize effective change, the leader must be able to portray that the organization is going somewhere and, through the means of some point of personal connection, solicit the support of those who may view themselves as disenfranchised and propel them toward fulfilment, personally and corporately. This may take the form of a process which will take place over a period of months using written communiqués, town hall meetings and question and answer forums.[1130]

One should anticipate legitimate areas of concern by doing their 'homework.' "Every conceivable objection to the change needs to be analyzed and practical answers provided."[1131] Recognizing and articulating that culture transition is disruptive in the lives of those who deal with it on an everyday basis will be of more assistance than living in denial of the massive change going on in the organization.[1132] It is important to note that criticism may or may not be about the leader and his or her motivation or style. On the other hand Southerland believes that armed with an expectation of opposition, an objective leader can learn not to take criticism personally.[1133]

> In the end, it is a good thing that culture is not easily changed. A culture defines the heart of the organization, and a change of heart is not to be taken lightly. But the introspective and inclusive process by which an organization formulates its values and revisits its mission will allow organizations to serve their ... communities ... to be relevant in an uncertain future. The capacity to change and to serve is the essence of a great and vibrant culture.[1134]

[1129] Mark Steinacher, Personal Notes from a Conversation p. 1, July 10, 2006.
[1130] Duck, Understanding
[1131] Danny Von Kanel, Built by the Owner's Design: The Positive Approach to Building Your Church God's Way Lima, OH: CSS Publishing, 2003, p. 22.
[1132] Peg Neuhauser, Ray Bender and Kirk Stromberg, Culture.com p. 15.
[1133] Dan Southerland, Transitioning p. 110-128.
[1134] Francis Hesselbein, Transformation p.3.

Appendix 1

Organizational Mission and Vision

Organization's Strategic Path

Organization's Cultural Path

Organizational Strategy ←·····→ Shared Values

Assigned Goals ←·····→ Shared Practices

Specific Tasks ←·····→ Individual Behaviors

End Results

1135

[1135] <u>The Importance of Alignment</u> http://www.thepegroup.com/model.htm, p. 1, October 23, 2001.

Appendix 2

WILLOW CREEK ASSOCIATION®
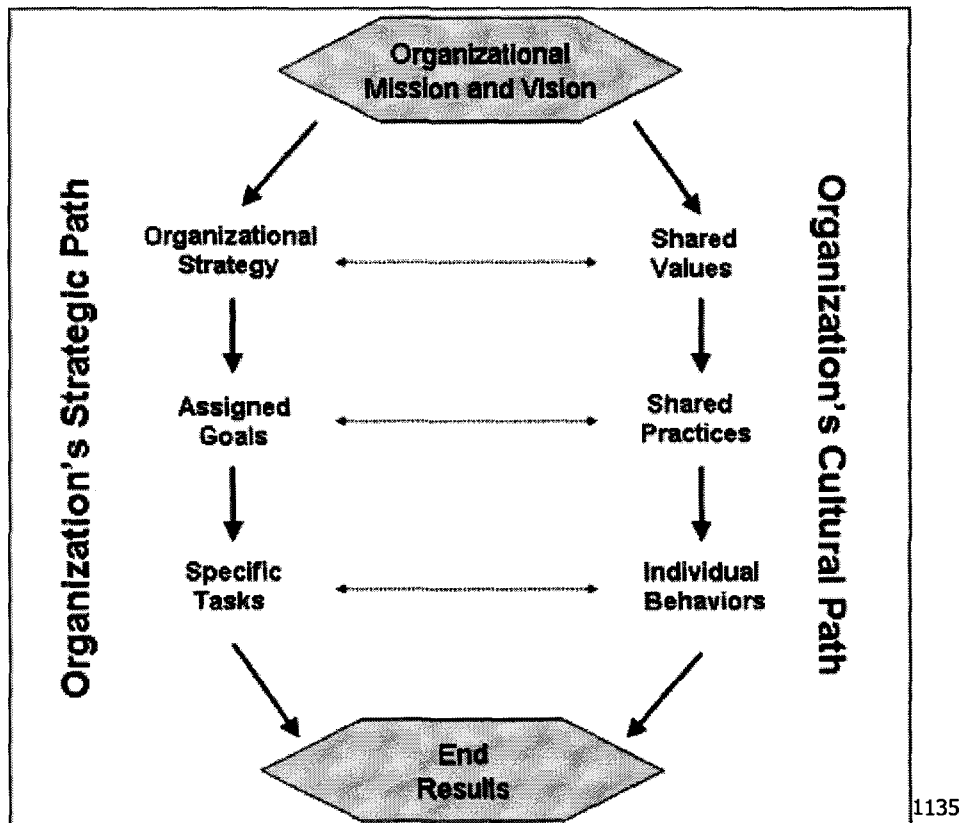
Assessing Your Congregation's Readiness to Change

Here is an opportunity for you and your team to openly and honestly focus on your church or ministry. During this time, it is our hope and prayer that this assessment and process time will guide your discussions and give you key insights. We trust that you will take away some critical next steps for your team to make the changes that are necessary for your church or ministry to prevail for the long haul.

Team Instructions:

(We recommend that you break your team into no more than 5-7 people to work through this assessment.)

1. Choose a team facilitator to open the group up in prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion and give your team any insights that would help guide you in the change process.

2. Have your team identify the specific change you want to make and write it in the space provided below.

Your Change Idea/or Suggested Improvement:

_____

_____

Leadership Ability (of the leadership team):

1. As a team, rate your leadership team's ability (this would include the senior/lead pastor and those few people in formal or informal decision-making roles) by circling your answer to the YES or NO questions below.
2. When you have finished, document your answer in the space provided below.

Leadership Ability Questions:

1. Has the senior/lead pastor been at the church   3 years?

2. Does the leadership team plan to invest in the church for more than 5 years?

3. Are the primary leaders willing to risk failure?

4. Do the primary leaders handle conflict well (vs. avoiding or exploding it)?

5. Does the leadership team have a clear idea of what God wants the church to become?

6. Is the leadership gift represented on the leadership team?

7. Is there an effective communicator on the leadership team?

8. Have you intentionally developed new leaders in the last year?

9. Has the leadership team started new ministries in the last year?

10. Does current staff have the ability to fulfill the needed changes once made?

Total number of questions that you answered YES _____ divided by 2
= average of _____ (Leadership Ability Factor)

$$\frac{(Leadership\ Ability + Influencer\ Readiness) \times Time}{New\ Idea\ Impact} = Change\ Readiness$$

Time (number of months or years to implement the change):

1. As a team, determine how long you would ideally like to take to fully implement this change by using the response scale below.
2. When you have finished, document your answer in the space provided below.

Use the following scale to indicate how long you would ideally like to take to fully implement this change:

1. **0-6 months** (Microwave change; we want to do it now because we feel we're ready or we're in a crisis mode.)

2. **6-12 months** (We've got some preliminary prep work to do, but this is urgent and should not wait long.)

3. **1-2 years** (Conventional oven; we've got homework to do and want to make sure we're covering our bases, while not taking too long to see some changes implemented.)

4. **2-3 years** (We're not in a big hurry, but feel that with some preparation we can steadily transition the improvement.)

5. **3-5 years** (Crockpot change; we've got time and realize this is a big and/or slow ship to turn, so we don't need to rush into things.)

Time Factor _____

(Leadership Ability + Influencer Readiness) x Time
New Idea Impact = **Change Readiness**

New Idea Impact (how different the church will be, due to this change):

1. As a team, and using the scale below, estimate the impact the change could have on your church or ministry.
2. When you are finished, document your answer in the space provided below.

Use the following scale to estimate the impact the change could have on your church or ministry:

1. **Incremental Impact** (You are improving existing ministries, and the change will be difficult to observe.)

2. **Noticeable but Minor Impact** (You are improving existing ministries and adding new elements which may not draw significant attention to themselves. The changes you will make may be noticed by the congregation but they are within your church's current values system and methods for ministry.)

3. **Significant Impact** (You are adding new elements that fit within your existing value system but you will still need to "sell" the change with some planning, promotion, and explanation.)

4. **Major Impact** (You need to assign significant time and resources to design and launch this change or new idea. This change is not currently within your church's value system and you will have the potential of changing your church culture.)

5. **Transformational Impact** (You will have definite changes to your church culture. This change is very far from the current value system and methods that you currently operate in. When this change is made you may experience new people coming to your church who may not have come under your former church culture.)

New Idea Impact Factor: _____

$$\frac{\text{(Leadership Ability + Influencer Readiness) x Time}}{\text{New Idea Impact}} = \text{Change Readiness}$$

Change Readiness Index (indicates how ready you are to implement this change):

1. As a team, place the values of the 4 factors (from the previous pages) into the formula in order to determine a single *Change Readiness Index*.
2. When you are finished, use the scale below to get an idea of how ready your church or ministry is to adopt your new idea and change.
3. As a team, discuss your reaction to the level your church/ministry might be at. Do you agree or disagree with the description and why? If you don't agree, what level do you think you are at?

$$\frac{(\text{Leadership Ability} \bigcirc + \text{Influencer Readiness} \bigcirc) \times \text{Time} \bigcirc}{\text{New Idea Impact} \bigcirc}$$

$= \bigcirc$ *(Change Readiness Index)*

This number is your *Change Readiness Index*. It will help a transition team determine how ready your church or ministry may be for change. None of the categories below are reasons to abort your current strategy, but rather, they are intended to help you in planning the transition phase. Much like a physician observes a patient who is about to deliver a baby, birthing new ideas and change is a delicate procedure. Effective leaders tend not to under estimate or over estimate the factors in the crucial transition phase, which will affect the life of a new idea and the health of an organization.

Use the following key to determine how ready your church or ministry may be to change. Circle the level your church or ministry is at:

Level 1: (0 -1.5) **High risk**. If you are at this level, elaborate care will be needed in the transition process. You can expect tension and you may want to reconsider the advantages of implementing this change. To improve your church or ministry's readiness to change you may want to reassess the time factor you have chosen. As a team you may want to allow more time to implement the new idea or change? You may also want to reassess the new idea impact factor to see if you can or should reduce its impact.

Level 2: (1.6-2.9) **Careful**. If you are at this level, significant planning and strategic thought needs to go into the transition process to reduce the pain your church or ministry could experience. At this level realize there will be some people in your church or ministry who may choose not make the transition. When this happens, because you have already determined that the change is needed, pursue the change with God-led confidence. To improve your church or ministry's readiness to change you may want to reassess the time factor and take more effort to communicate the change with your congregation.

Level 3: (3.0-4.9) **Positive.** If you are at this level, you will want to make sure your transition team does a thorough job in the transition phase. At this level your change still has the potential to go well or to go sour. This will depend on the level of positive momentum you can create regarding the change. To improve your church or ministry's readiness to change you may want to reassess the influencer readiness factor, increase communication with your congregation about the change, and factor in additional time to make the change. Also be sure to take special care to encourage those in your church who are less positive toward the change.

Level 4: (5-20) **Optimum:** If you are at this level, then thumbs up to you and your team! To improve your church or ministry's readiness to change you will want to be very careful to avoid carelessness of quick decisions or lack of communication during the transition phase. At this level continue to emphasize the positives regarding the change and to cover the necessary bases of communication with your key influencers.

Level 5: (21-50) **Overly ripe:** If you are at this level, less care is needed above the normal communication and planning to implement your change. When you have reached this level, the chances are you have waited too long or may have been overly cautious in your decision to implement the change. To improve your church or ministry's readiness to change in the future, you may want to take bolder steps towards improvement and use these tools to increase your confidence level.

Summary/Solutions:

The bottom line is that the wrong solution, effectively implemented, is still the wrong solution. At the same time, the right solution, inappropriately implemented will not benefit your church or ministry either. A transition team needs to be honest in assessing and estimating these four factors and then thoroughly consider the implications of modifying or not modifying them. Most failed church change processes are due to ignorance of transition issues.

Final Questions:

As a team, take a few minutes to discuss the following questions.

1. Are there any key insights or comments that you may have as a result of working through this assessment?

2. As a team, what is your next step?

For church change consulting or leadership coaching, contact Alan Nelson at www.LeadingIdeas.org, Scottsdale, AZ.

Change Readiness Index

Figure axes and labels:

Transition Effectiveness (y-axis)

High risk	Careful	Positive	Optimum	Overly ripe
.4-1.5	1.6-2.9	3-4.9	5-20	21-50

Levels   I   II   III   IV   V
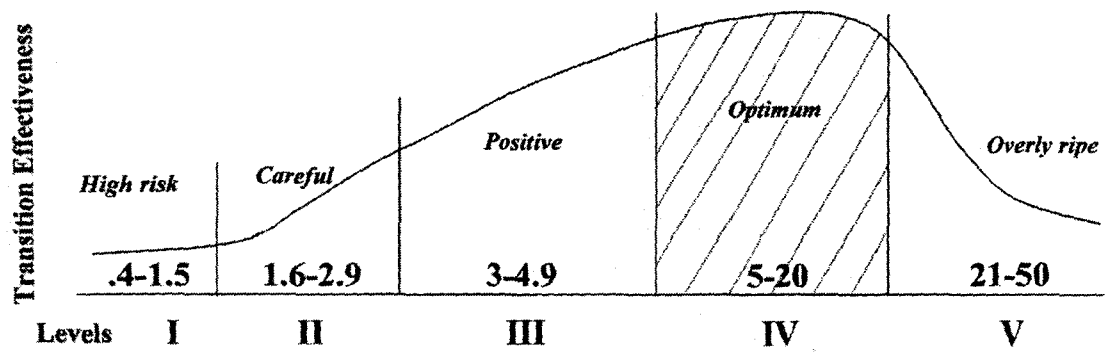
CHAPTER VI – LEADERSHIP AND CHANGE
Introduction

One of the most critical factors associated with effective culture realignment is the exercise of leadership, particularly in institutions and associations comprised mainly of voluntary participants. No matter which organizational arena one enters, different styles of leadership are evident.

Local church leaders have become increasingly aware of the dynamics of leadership and have articulated their impact upon the success of Kingdom activity. The inherent challenge continues to be the development of a biblical and workable model for the expression of local church leadership while keeping the mission, vision and values of the faith community in a balanced perspective.

In the church setting, the ability for a congregational leader to facilitate organizational culture change may be determined by the role he or she assumes.[1136] In the eyes of many congregants the senior pastor is simply 'the preacher' responsible for weekend services with little or no expected influence concerning the vision or direction of the church.[1137] On the other hand, if the church leader portrays him/herself as a prophet, complete with fresh, and possibly strange 'Thus saith the Lord' admonitions, change will be contingent on the willingness of congregational members to accept this new direction as from God.[1138] However, if a pastoral leadership role is exhibited the process will be directed in a significantly different way. As a leader engages in the process of culture change in an organization, he or she must have a clear understanding of biblical patterns for leadership, the pressures from society to act contrary to

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[1136] Lloyd Geering, <u>Faith's New Age</u> Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 1980, p. 22.

[1137] Reggie McNeal, <u>A Work of Heart</u> San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2000, pp. 100- 101. <u>The Preacher as Performer</u> http://www.rtjournal.org/vol_2/no_1/sennet2.html, p. 1, April 10, 2006. In some church settings this is exclusively the role of lay leadership.

[1138] Ted Brooks, <u>And We All Fall Down</u> www.a-voice.org/discern/falldown.htm, p. 1, April 10, 2006. In some sectors of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, particularly in the province of Alberta, during the years spanning 2002-2005, a number of pastors styled themselves as apostles, who were prophetic in nature. This is a return to the Latter Reign movement. Steve Kukla, <u>George R. Hawtin: Pentecostal Pioneer for the Kingdom Message</u> www.truthinhistory.org/Hawtin.htm, p. 1 April 10, 2006. An official position paper regarding apostles and prophets can be found at http://www.ag.org/top/beleifs/Position_Papers/pp_4195_apostles_prophets.cfm, April 10, 2006.

these principles, and the type of local church leadership environment which will best facilitate culture change.

A Short Theology of Leadership

The Trinity serves as an ideal leadership model. Marked by relational interaction, The Godhead was able to plan, among many other things, creation and human redemption. Trinitarian leadership is characterized by uniqueness of the partners, unity in diversity, a plurality of leadership, loving relationships, shared authority and engagement in activity directed toward the benefit of the whole as opposed to single-person focused.[1139]

The Old Testament model of leadership was hierarchal and downwardly directed. In a theocratic system God interacted with people such as Moses who proceeded to the people to declare explicit instructions.[1140] The expression of this type of divine leadership was for the primary purpose of moulding Israel into a servant nation ultimately setting the stage for the incarnation of a divine Servant who would become the Saviour of the world.[1141]

In the New Testament an ideological and methodological shift takes place. What had been a leader-held monopoly, in relation to God's communication to the corporate body, transitioned to one's personal ability to approach God concerning church matters. To make this possible, the Son of Man also came to earth with the predisposition of serving mankind in all aspects of his ministry. (Mark 10:45) This refers to the attitude or motivation of the leader and how it significantly contributes to the ongoing success of a movement or organization. He or she must reconcile that the task of equipping is secondary to the development of a servant mindset as derived from the life of Jesus. Jesus emphasized the role of serving as he washed the feet of the disciples. (John 13:4-17)

[1139] Stacy T. Rinehart, Upside Down. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1998, p. 89.

[1140] In the case of Moses, he went to the people with The Law.

[1141] Lawrence O. Richards and Clyde Hoeldtke, A Theology of Church Leadership Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1980, pp. 103-104. The passage used is Isaiah 44:1-2 twice contains the phrase, "O Jacob, my servant."

Although Jesus may have appeared to be a strong, perhaps dictatorial leader, he was constantly working toward building a team culture, which would ultimately be implemented in the New Testament church leadership structure. While engaging twelve men who had not risen to religious leadership in their own communities, he led them, through a close relationship, in an intense three-year 'leadership development course.' His strategy was characterized by equipping, releasing and empowering. Whether it was the Twelve or seventy-two, (Luke 10) he spent time in concentrated instruction and then sent them out to impact their world and Paul later followed a similar model with his apprentices.[1142]

New Testament leadership took on a different appearance in post-resurrection times. Ideally, each member of the church[1143] (1 Corinthians 12) was in relationship with God and contributed to its corporate direction and vision.[1144] This structure was neither monocratic nor democratic.[1145] The contribution of each member was valued in the context of serving one another as they wholeheartedly expressed their gifts and abilities. For example, with the intent of increasing the effectiveness of the church in Ephesus through a unifying process, Paul outlined the role of different types of church leadership. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers were single-focused in their task "to prepare God's people for works of service."[1146] (Ephesians 4:12) Ultimately, the responsibility of those who ministered in one of these roles was to equip the people of the church for optimum ministry effectiveness.

Caution must be exercised regarding the role of the leader concerning empowerment. The scriptures very clearly state that power will come from the

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[1142] Don Kugelberg, Studies in Philippians
http://ig.gospelcom.net/EnglishWorld/BibleStudiesOnline/Philippians_Studies-Kugelberg_05/Philippians-study01_intro_KUGELBERG.htm, p. 1, August 6, 2006.
[1143] Paul uses the body as a model for stating that each member has something to offer the church.
[1144] Stacy T. Rinehart, Upside p. 95.
[1145] Johannes A. Van Der Ven, Ecclesiology in Context Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993, pp. 317-328.
[1146] The New King James Version uses the term "for the equipping of the saints."

Holy Spirit while one participates in his activity.[1147] Leaders may interact with developing leaders in areas of skill development, personal encouragement, life counselling and deployment in the appropriate ministry in the organization, but must look to God for divine empowerment.

A biblically designed leadership philosophy needs to be adopted and practiced by the entire church. "The practice of one person functioning as a solo pastor within a local congregation does not appear to have been the normative pattern among these [New Testament] churches."[1148] This does not discount the role of the person who acts as the spokesman or preacher, but leadership was a corporate function marked by the activity of such teams as the Jerusalem council (Acts 15) and Paul and his church-planting companions.[1149] As evidenced by the prolific literature concerning leadership, one realizes that this is a complex issue. It will be argued that to develop patterns and principles for the local church, one should observe the pattern of the leaders of the first century church who engaged in the activities of preaching passionately and relevantly, creating community, equipping emerging leaders and building consensus to reach the then-known world.

Leadership: Secular vs. Sacred

The many secular expressions of leadership result in inherent questions in the church setting concerning who is a leader in the church and what their role is in the local congregation. Each congregation should define leadership in the congregational setting in such a way as to clarify the confusion between positionally oriented leadership and all that it entails, and leadership as defined by influence.

[1147] Holy Spirit Empowerment www.presycan.ca/record/Laity04.html, p. 1, April 16, 2005. Acts 1:8, John 1:12.
[1148] Craig Van Gelder, The Essence of the Church Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2000, p. 184.
[1149] One such person was Barnabas as recorded in Acts 11.

An all-inclusive definition of leadership is elusive "because leadership is not a science; it is an art. Art, by its very nature, virtually defies definition"[1150] and there are so many personal perspectives. There is a tendency to define inadequately a leader prescriptively, such as in the case with Webster's Dictionary which defines him or her as "A person ... that leads; directing, commanding or guiding head as of a group or activity."[1151] "If you define leadership positionally then not all believers are leaders ... [However] all believers should exercise leadership, that is, seek to influence the lives of others."[1152] The weakness in such a definition is illustrated when a person assumes a position of leadership but may lead poorly or not at all.[1153]

The marketplace is in a period of radical mind-shift in leadership theory. In times past, methodology in this area was the antithesis of biblical principles. The metaphor of climbing a ladder of power and authority has been used to describe the secular view of leadership marked by the values of standardization, conformity, pragmatism, productivity and centralization.[1154] These leaders are alternatively described as people who make things happen, never act as passive puppets and concentrate on performance.[1155]

Such a secular view of leadership is not new. The default expression of leadership in the times of Jesus was hierarchal and 'top down.'[1156] Leaders engaged their followers[1157] primarily to carry out their ideas and commands. The church has not been immune to this malaise. "To some extent the domineering,

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[1150] George Barna, ed., Leaders on Leadership Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1997, p. 21.
[1151] Daniel Webster, Webster's Dictionary http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org/ p. 1, January 8, 2007. It should be noted that leadership gurus such as Paul Hersey, Kenneth N. Blanchard and Walter E. Natemyer utilize a very similar definition as cited by Charles Van Engen, God's Missionary People Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991, p. 164-165.
[1152] Ibid.
[1153] John P. Kotter, A Force for Change: How Leadership Differs from Management New York, NY: The Free Press, 1990, p. 3.
[1154] Stacy T. Rinehart, Upside pp. 23, 34-37.
[1155] Lawrence O. Richards and Clyde Hoeldtke, Theology pp. 20-23.
[1156] It should not be surprising if this is a historical style of leadership that it is still employed today.
[1157] These are all the people who are 'below' including those who ultimately are recipients of the ministry of the church.

hierarchical style of leading has produced many inactive, unconcerned, and sometimes angry church members who find themselves faced with the choice of either doing what they are told or doing nothing at all"[1158] with little or no commitment on the part of the leader to the contributing member.

Jesus approach to leadership was radically different because it included a significant investment in the lives of people. "The servant concept makes modelling, illustrating, and doing a part of leadership itself."[1159] The role of the servant leader is to serve those who are in his or her care. Nehemiah serves as a biblical example of this type of person, a "dynamic, visionary, mobilizing leader..."[1160] By way of contrast, Charles Van Engen addresses the anti-servant leadership styles by examining the topic of influence. He refers to the Matthean passage where Jesus compares leadership in the Gentile world as contrasted with servitude.

> Jesus called them together and said, You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Matthew 20:25-28)

Secular operational methodology, marked by the values of power and authority, and the exercise of influence, are in direct contrast to Christ's example. Biblical leadership considers "the perceptions, emotions, cognitions, motivations and behaviours"[1161] of those whom one is leading. "Leading from a position of authority and power might be the accepted way of the world, but Jesus said *it was not to be so among His people* [italics his]."[1162] Jesus inverts this triangular leadership structure[1163] so that the prominent leader serves the person over whom he or she has influence. In a leadership culture that is

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[1158] Charles Van Engen, Missionary p. 170.
[1159] Ibid. p. 168.
[1160] Ibid. p. 171. Van Engen outlines twenty-three characteristics of a servant leader as found in the book of Nehemiah.
[1161] Johannes Van Der Ven. Ecclesiology p. 296.
[1162] Stacy T. Rinehart, Upside p. 20.
[1163] This triangle appears with the narrow edge at the top and every activity and directive emanates from that point.

biblical the values of empowerment, diversity and authenticity replace standardization, conformity and control.[1164] The leader

> turn[s] the pyramid upside down so that top managers are at the bottom. When this happens there is a subtle, but powerful, twist in who is responsible and who should be responsive to whom ... In other words ... managers should work for their people and not the reverse.[1165]

Inherent in the Scriptures are the expectations upon a leader who influences others within and outside the Kingdom of God. While secular society may assess a leader by his appearance or speech, God examines interior qualities such as motive. (1 Samuel 16:7) A leader in God's Kingdom must have relationship with God and be engaged in the acquiring of knowledge, subsequently submitting their leadership style and methodology to Biblical patterns. A significant aspect of godly leadership is the willingness to be responsible for and care for those whom they lead[1166] while having the potential to produce dramatic and useful change in the organization they serve.[1167]

A descriptive definition of leadership is more in keeping with biblical principles. "Leadership is mobilizing others toward a goal shared by the leader and followers."[1168] This definition can be extrapolated for use in the context of local church. "A Christian leader is someone who is called by God to lead; leads with and through Christ-like character; and demonstrates the functional competencies that permit effective leadership to take place."[1169] Such leadership has the best interests of the followers at heart and, through feedback mechanisms, seeks to empower them to be all that God intended.

[1164] Stacy T. Rinehart, Upside p. 41.

[1165] Ken Blanchard, Leadership and the One Minute Manager New York, NY: William Morrow and Co., 1985, p. 17-18. This is in stark contrast to the autocratic leadership found in both the marketplace and church. Ken Blanchard, Willow Creek Leadership Summit, Personal notes, p. 1, August 12, 2005, Ken Blanchard stated that it is more advantageous for the Bible to inform marketplace principles as opposed to the church integrating business principles which have the potential to contradict biblical expectations.

[1166] James D. Craig, Give us a king!: The Monarchy Old Testament Survey Course, Fall 2004, Master's College and Seminary Lesson 7, Notes from class lecture, p. 1.

[1167] Overmanaged and Underled Toronto, ON: Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce Leadership Network, October 1999, p 3.

[1168] George Barna, Leaders p. 22.

[1169] Ibid. p. 25.

The local church must adopt a definition of leadership which is in keeping with biblical values. "Leadership is a relationship – a relationship in which one person seeks to influence the thoughts, behaviours, beliefs or values of another person."[1170] In a world which is becoming more post-modern each passing day,

> Leadership is not about forming grand plans laid out in the atomic clocks of strategic plans and people alignment. Leadership is about cultivating environments within which all ... might begin to learn the nature of the dance and discover the amazing imagination the Spirit of God is pouring out within and among them... it's about inviting the community of Jesus to risk entering a journey where we might know the last chapter but we can only discover the way toward that future by entering a dance together.[1171]

More simply stated, "A leader is someone whose character causes others to accept his or her influence thus enabling that person to make a difference in the world."[1172] This is in contrast to an expectation that is ingrained in the minds of members of Western society. To value the principle of influence over the authoritative position often creates dissonance in the minds of those who are following. The best possible scenario is if a leader has both exemplary character and leadership skills and has been given a leadership position by an external authority. However if one of these components is missing, confusion concerning leadership may be the outcome.[1173]

If the expectation of leadership is that all members should lead by influence, one might be concerned about the potential for anarchy. Practically speaking, if everyone is a leader then the organization potentially could be led in dozens of directions depending on the number of members. The local church is a divine institution,[1174] and as such, relies on the leading of the Holy Spirit. A leader is responsible to maintain a servant's heart, relying on God to understand the needs of people and the organization in direct contrast to one wanting his or her own way.

[1170] Walter C. Wright, Relational Leadership Cumbria, UK: Paternoster Press, 2000, p. 2.
[1171] Alan Roxburgh, The Certainty of Atomic Clocks and the Myth of Control. www.mliweb.net/newsletter.dec04.html January 1, 2005. This alludes to the organic, systemic and chaotic nature of an organization and the leadership styles demanded by such.
[1172] Peter Koestenbaum, The Heart of Business Dallas, TX: Saybrook Publishing, 1987, p. 34.
[1173] James C. Craig. Thoughts on Leadership An Email, January 11, 2005. p. 1. In January 2005 the CORE team of Portico began to formally develop the leadership development structure for their local church. Thoughts were solicited and this quote is taken from a subsequent email.
[1174] See section on Ecclesiology, p. 48.

Understanding that organizations will continue to maintain positional leadership, the role of the leader is to use his or her position constructively to serve the members of the organization by focusing on its mission and vision and moving the organization toward health and vitality.[1175] A leader must remain aware of the underlying goals of management and leadership.

It has been suggested that leadership is getting things done through other people or achieving the organization's objectives through other people.[1176] In the local church the responsibility of the leader or manager is to serve and inspire those with whom they minister in such as way as to marshal their knowledge and energy to build the Kingdom of God. This is accomplished by the development of meaningful and authentic relationships with one another,[1177] the Holy Spirit, the Father and Christ.[1178] This definition which emphasizes influence is consistent with the other definitions found in contemporary literature concerning leadership and management.[1179]

This raises the necessity of differentiating between leadership and management.[1180] Managers,

> emphasize rationality and control, [act as] problem-solvers (focusing on goals, resources, organization structures, or people) and often ask the question, 'What problems have to be solved, and what are the best ways to achieve results so that people will continue to contribute to this organization?'[1181]

"Managers produce a degree of predictability and order and have the potential to consistently produce the short-term results expected by various

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[1175] Lawrence O. Richards and Clyde Hoeldtke, Theology pp. 88-95.

[1176] George G. Hunter, Leading and Managing a Growing Church Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000, p. 33.

[1177] This refers to all of those who are part of the church community and those who are not.

[1178] Lawrence O. Richards and Clyde Hoeldtke, Theology pp. 93-95. The reason for differentiation between members of the Trinity are as follows: The relationship between the leader and The Holy Spirit is marked by a dedication to serving one another in spirit-empowered gift expression. The leader's relationship with the Father increases one's awareness of the divine and allows them to be a catalyst in corporate worship and praise. Relationship with Jesus equips the leader for meaningful relationships with others.

[1179] James D. Craig, Thoughts p. 1.

[1180] Jay A Conger and Rabindra N. Kunungo, Charismatic Leadership in Organizations Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing, 1966, p. 9. It is important to note that this differentiation is between leadership and management not leaders and managers. Individuals can embody both roles.

[1181] Leading Vs. Managing: They're Two Different Animals http://www.onlinewbc.gov/docs/manage/leading.html, p. 1, January 24, 2005.

stakeholders"[1182] and as a result may not be concerned with the people whom they lead. They are focused on the task to be accomplished. While they may prefer to work with others,

> they focus on how things get done; maintain controlled, rational, and equitable structures. Leaders maintain inner perceptiveness that they can use in their relationships with others; relate to people an intuitive, empathetic way; [and] focus on what events and decisions mean to participants.[1183]

While managers cope with complexity in organizations, leaders strategize for change. Although each has their place in an organization, the ideal is to develop leader-managers. This blend will include leadership characteristics that manifest themselves in creative imagination, non-conformity, self-control, focus, and risk-taking.[1184]

A circular relationship exists between culture and leadership. Leaders create, manage and modify cultures and culture ultimately defines leadership.

> When one brings culture to the level of the organization and even down to groups within the organization, one can see more clearly how it is created, embedded, developed, and ultimately manipulated, managed and changed. These dynamic processes of culture creation and management are the essence of leadership and make one realize that leadership and culture are two sides of the same coin.[1185]

Leaders create organizational cultures through possible functions such as the destruction of a previous counterproductive culture and creation and management of a new positive culture. This is not a matter of determining where the organization is moving, and as a populist leader, simply lead in the same direction. Successful leaders have the ability to step outside their setting in which they lead and objectively assess the needs of the organization and subsequently plan to initiate adaptive change processes.[1186] If a leader does not lead an organization to change, he or she will assume the existing culture of the group.

[1182] Overmanaged p. 3.
[1183] Animals p. 1.
[1184] Ibid.
[1185] Edgar H. Schein, Organizational Culture and Leadership San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992, p. 1.
[1186] Ibid. pp. 2-5.

Leadership and mission are tied together "A leader is someone whose character causes others to accept his or her influence, thus enabling that person to make a difference in the world."[1187] Missional leadership is a corporate function.

> The people of God move forward in mission in the world as they live out their vision of God's call and will for them, stimulated by a number of leader-catalysts, and mobilized by the Holy Spirit in response to what God is doing in their midst and in their context of mission to the world.[1188]

Although valid for the missional church setting, this definition emphasizes the role of leadership while neglecting the relational side of leadership. Jesus worked with The Twelve, primarily through instructional relationship, to mould them into missional leaders.

There is a distinct relationship between discipleship and the development of leaders. While the visionary process and day-to-day congregational management is important, leadership should concentrate on the process of discipleship. Leaders will be identified out of the discipleship process and, through a consultative process, will contribute to the strategy process concerning the vision of the church. It may not be necessary for pastors who assume leadership of an existing congregation to initiate this endeavor. They may have the luxury of working with mature Christians who have been discipled and are in the process of discipling others. The maintenance or enhancement of this methodology can positively affect the ongoing effectiveness of the church.

While understanding that discipleship and leadership development possess strong similarities, a differentiation must be established. On the individual level, "A disciple is a Christian who is growing in conformity to Christ, is achieving fruit in evangelism, and is working in follow-up to conserve [that] fruit."[1189] In terms

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[1187] Peter Koestenbaum, The Heart of Business Dallas TX: Saybrook Publishing, 1987, p. 13.
[1188] Charles Van Engen, Missionary p. 165.
[1189] Gary W. Kuhne, The Dynamics of Discipleship Training Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1978, p. 13.

of his or her relationship with others, "The goal of our disciple-building work [is] to produce a transferer or a teacher."[1190]

It appears that the discipling relationship is confined to two people, the discipler and the disciple. The leader, on the other hand is specifically gifted by God to take an organization to a new level. His or her leadership gifts have been recognized by membership of the body so that he or she is granted a position of authority. In an organization the leader has a larger sphere of influence in the group whereas one who disciples another is usually engaged in one-to-one development. "There are many disciples who will never assist a group of people to reach a specific 'destination.' However, they will show others the way to know and to love God."[1191] On the other hand, each disciple, as they mature in faith, must be challenged to consider their leadership aptitude in relation to their attitude and competencies. A good leader has the ability to think beyond addition to multiplication by reproducing a disciple-making ministry. [1192]

Positional Leadership vs. Servant Leadership

Believing the church is not a democracy has manifold implications in the leadership realm.[1193] When the local church calls a person to leadership, it invites them to a life of "sacrifice, suffering and service."[1194] Jesus said, "Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, [44]and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all." (Mark 10:43-44)

In some leadership literature there is reference to distinct developmental levels of leadership. In one model an emerging leader moves from level one to level five, transitioning from a de-emphasis on one's personal abilities to a greater emphasis on the needs of others and the organization. A culture of team and accountability is developed as personal ego and ambition are substituted for

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[1190] Ibid. p. 15.
[1191] James D. Craig, Thoughts p. 2.
[1192] Leroy Eims, The Lost Art of Disciple-Making Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1978, p. 125.
[1193] David Watson, I Believe in the Church. London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1978, p. 87.
[1194] Stacy T. Rinehart, Upside p. 29.

contribution based on corporate mission and vision.[1195] The ensuing challenge is to develop a leadership culture marked by servanthood, inverted pyramids, team dynamics and gift-based activity.

The Bible refers to the gift of leadership. "This refers to 'he [sic] who leads' or προιστεμι, literally, the one who stands in front." (Romans 12:8) Dissonance occurs when one attempts to reconcile the authoritarian side of leadership, as illustrated in the person who unilaterally determines organizational direction, and the person who serves into the lives of others with a view of seeing them reach their fullest potential in the Kingdom of God. These two ideas can peacefully coexist.

> We...know that the style of biblical leadership is servitude, or leading by relational influence more than imposed authority. Here we see the ideal: an individual gifted by God (thus inherently skillful, although this can also be developed) AND one whose character causes others to accept his influence (servitude.)[1196]

The New Testament church allowed for a leadership structure which considered both giftedness and roles; positional and functional. Congregational teachers stress that spiritual gifts are given to members to build up the entire body, prompting each person to recognize the contribution they can make.[1197] In relation to the leadership gift, healthy church communities practice plurality. Leaders emerge in pastoral, departmental and small group roles. Each of these leaders contributes to the ecclesiality of a local assembly by establishing an optimal structure for the fulfilment of its vision and remaining flexible to engage its societal context.[1198]

Recognizing that local congregations need leaders, one needs to examine the New Testament model. The blueprint "was the appointment of elders to provide this leadership. This pattern appears to have followed the common practice of Jewish synagogues...clearly the emphasis was on providing effective

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[1195] Jim Collins, Social p. 12.
[1196] James D. Craig, Thoughts p. 1.
[1197] Howard A. Snyder and Daniel V. Runyon, Decoding the Church Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2002, p. 53.
[1198] Van Der Ven, Ecclesiology p. 310.

rule[1199] in the life of the congregation."[1200] Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers[1201] were gifted in distinct ways that usually implied a unique placement in the leadership structure of the local church. Bishops, elders and deacons, although diversely gifted, were responsible for different functions and roles in the body. Additionally, others were empowered as they expressed numerous other gifts to contribute to the life of the local body and its mission. In the complement of these three intersecting leadership groups, the assembly benefited from an atmosphere of shared decision-making and mutual accountability.[1202] Through a process developed in each local setting, church leadership established a unique mission and vision which influenced the optimal structure for the local context while maintaining adherence to the wider guidelines and parameters of scripture.

Church leadership, at the best of times, has inherent challenges. Proposing a change in church culture can be that much more demanding. The pastor must be cautioned regarding his or her propensity to lead the church in a particular direction. In a church where the primary purpose of equipping the congregation is to achieve his or her vision and goals, the process is considerably undermined. In this regard, leadership literature has changed over the last ten years reflecting the mindset change from modern to postmodern. Tomorrow's leaders will reflect the organic nature of organizations and be able to change quickly while maintaining core values and a common mission while steadily moving the organization forward in the fulfilment of its mission, vision and goals. Congregational leaders will envision the church as a service centre where leadership grasps the concept of serving the body of Christ.[1203]

[1199] The word 'rule' may seem to infer autocratic leadership. For purposes of this chapter, 'rule' is expressed by a servant heart, as the leader seeks the best for the congregation and individuals.

[1200] Craig Van Gelder, Essence p. 183.

[1201] Or any combination thereof.

[1202] Craig Van Gelder, Essence p. 179.

[1203] Robert D. Dale, Leadership for a Changing Church Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998, p. 24.

As the chief servant, wanting to lead the local expression of God's kingdom to greater effectiveness, a pastor must enlist key leaders into a discussion regarding how best to facilitate culture realignment. This process calls people to a clearly articulated mission and vision. In the large church setting this may entail connecting with a number of leadership groups.

For change to be effective, key leaders must demonstrate a commitment to the new direction as they will be the primary models to the congregation. They need to be willing to encourage feedback as they speak to the issues with members of the church family. Such operative questions such as, "Is it time honoured? Is it productive?" and "Is it worth changing?" should be employed.[1204]

When the leadership group determines the best course of action and establishes the step-by-step process, it will be necessary to stand firm, anticipating resistance and understanding that people may leave the church.[1205] "Many congregational leaders will be surprised to hear that their task in not to focus on the 'happiness' (satisfaction) of the members"[1206] but to fulfill God's design for their church.

Leadership style and the ability to facilitate change can be summed up as the difference between simply managing change and effectively leading it. This is accomplished by asking the right questions. A leader knows the best course of action by assessing the program in which change is being proposed. A manager will focus on the tangibles such as planning, budgeting, organizing, and staffing.[1207] A leader has a good grasp of the change process and associated issues such as the speed of change and is more concerned with establishing direction, aligning people, and motivating and inspiring them through the change

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[1204] Danny Von Kanel, "Some Things Never Change" Enrich Fall 2004, p. 20.
[1205] Walt Kallestad, Turn Your Church Inside Out Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Press, 1989, p. 169. Welcoming feedback from membership continues in the implementation process.
[1206] Gilbert R. Rendle, Change p. 13.
[1207] It should be noted that there is need for managerial skills because the possibility for undermining the long-term effectiveness of change increases without supporting the organizational infrastructure.

process.[1208] A leader is one who steps "out into the future to discern what God is calling the congregation to do in the next chapter of its life."[1209]

Equipping Leadership in the Local Church

Jesus did not choose to act alone in the fulfillment of his mission. He revealed his strategy by calling twelve men to follow him, not to establish a program but to instill his evangelistic passion in their hearts.[1210] During the ensuing three years of Jesus' earthly ministry, The Twelve were his constant companions. While living and ministering to their personal needs, he was preparing them for their leadership in the local church as described by various images including a hospital for the spiritually sick, a greenhouse for the growth of new believers, and a training centre for the mature leader in formation.[1211]

While Christianity began with one leader equipping twelve men, it quickly grew to a leadership community engaged in multi-level training. Parallels of this strategy can be found in today's marketplace and in the halls of higher learning. Jesus' followers may be referred to as a 'learning cohort.' The term learning organization' is used in contemporary business literature to describe a company, which constantly challenges its employees to life and skill development. Local church leaders[1212] are responsible for managing the multidimensional and multileveled aspects of leadership development. This should begin with personal preparation (discipleship) and graduate toward specialized training in the area of one's giftedness.

The teaching methods of Jesus included impartation, demonstration, delegation, supervision and reproduction in this three-year process[1213] referred to

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[1208] John P. Kotter, Leading p. 26.
[1209] Gilbert R. Rendle, Change p. 14.
[1210] Robert E. Coleman, The Master Plan of Evangelism Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1993, p. 27.
[1211] Bill Hull, The Disciple-Making Church Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Publishing Co., 1990, p. 41.
[1212] It is very clear that the role of a pastor is to equip Christians to do the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:12). However, this is often left to the professional clergy. A learning organization makes this function a responsibility of all who are members.
[1213] Robert Coleman, Master p. 27. This is a word summary of the chapter outlines.

as life coaching[1214] by leaders in contemporary corporate and church settings. This is "the art of improving the performance of others" by encouraging and challenging them to create the "conditions for continuous development...to define and achieve goals"[1215] and give attention to their personal development in the areas of self-management, spiritual gifts, and leadership skills.

Jesus may be characterized as a situational servant leader who engaged in the process of transforming his followers. He sought to create a learning environment which could be adapted at any moment, depending on the situation and the learner. He was able to develop his disciples by understanding what they needed in each situation to increase their effectiveness based on the necessary competencies for their post-ascension mission. After a concise analysis, Jesus knew to what degree to engage the emerging leader, to direct overtly, to express support or merely delegate.[1216] The environment varied between personal, engaging, relational, instructional and learner-focused. This function is a highly relational, person-directed process, which provides

> collaborative assistance that is both problem-solving and developmental. Its target is both the situation and the professional capability of the person. Today's leader, in a fundamental sense, is a coach, and the leader can best learn that role by being coached."[1217]

It is marked by the investment in people in the short term with the outcome of both individual and organization reaping the benefits of a strong leadership team in the long term.[1218] "Coaches help people grow by seeing beyond what a leader in formation is today to what they can become tomorrow."[1219]

[1214] Life Coaching and Personal Coaching http://www.businessballs.com/lifecoaching.htm, p. 1, October 9, 2006.

[1215] John Easton and Roy Johnson, Coaching Successfully New York, NY: Doring Kindersley Publishing, 2000, p. 6.

[1216] Ken Blanchard, Servant pp. 69-83. By examining the conversations that Jesus has with the individual disciples (such as when he asked Peter, "Who do you say that I am?") one will discern that each dialogue served a purpose for the individual as well as those who were looking on.

[1217] William Bridges and Susan Mitchell, Leading Transition: A New Model for Change http://www.pfdf.org/leaderbooks/121/spring2000/bridges.html, p. 1, July 18, 2005.

[1218] John Easton and Roy Johnson, Coaching p. 8.

[1219] James A. Belasco, as cited in Sandro DiSabatino, The Coach in the Classroom MGT Family Church Coaches Retreat Presentation, Brantford, ON: June 18-19, 2004, p. 7.

An organizational structure, properly configured and aligned, can have a significant impact on a church's leadership development. If the church is highly programmed recruited leaders will be primarily taught how to complete assigned tasks successfully. It would follow that a leader who is asked to focus on 'the job' may view leadership development as secondary. However, a church structure that is more organic and organized around people or groups of people may be more successful in developing a people-centred model of leadership development. This is true for the church of small groups. An apprentice small group leader, upon being found faithful and competent, may assume leadership in a new group. He or she may exhibit spiritual gifts that, once developed, may lead to a place of greater responsibility and service[1220] and ultimately be placed as a coach within the organization.

The local church, to its detriment, has traditionally focused on skill development in its training sessions with little or no emphasis on interpersonal coaching. As a coach becomes directive, identifying and focusing on 'growth gaps,' the leader-in-formation is able to experience growth in behaviour and performance[1221] while clarifying their purpose, value and role and how it relates to 'the big picture.'[1222] "Great coaches are visionaries who penetrate the interaction of spirit and culture to discern the emergence of grace and who surrender their lifestyles to the ensuing chaos."[1223]

Competent church leadership understands the church is a chaotic organization[1224] and the old paradigm of a domineering, controlling style, which exerts pressure in one area with the expectation of wholesale change, simply

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[1220] Mac Lake, Leadership Development Personal notes from presentation at Coast-to-Coast Multi-Site Conference, Chicago, IL, October 25, 2005, p. 1.

[1221] Sandro DiSabatino, Classroom pp. 16-17.

[1222] Ken Blanchard, Servant pp. 75-83. Transformational Coaching allows the leader to determine what level of input is needed by the leader-in-training. This will vary between highly supportive and low directive (directing) to low supportive and low directive (delegating.)

[1223] Thomas G. Bandy, Coaching Change Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000, p. 168.

[1224] The chaotic nature of an organization was discussed in the previous chapter. It is important to note that "chaos" is not a desirable characteristic of organizations and often is one of the greatest challenges for the church leader. It is a reality that must be led and managed well.

does not work.[1225] Effective leaders view the church as an organic system and increase organizational effectiveness by coaching others to make an impact on their areas of influence by developing and releasing more and better leaders.

> A leadership model that rests on the power inherent in the position, and operates in a controlling manner, will eventually hinder the task of releasing and empowering others for ministry. A servant leadership model, on the other hand, helps equip and liberate other to fulfil God's purposes for them in the world.[1226]

The servant leader, who believes in the effectiveness of coaching, is constantly looking at emerging members of Christ's body to encourage them, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and further develop their gifts for great service in the Kingdom.

Conclusion

There are many considerations surrounding leadership in the local church. While the marketplace has been more prolific in the development and articulation of leadership principles, biblical values and patterns, often the antithesis of those in business, must remain foundational. The local church is responsible for the integration of gifted people into its various leadership positions. These leaders, responsible for the creation of a learning culture, exhibit great drive, ambition and energy characteristic of unwavering commitment for the sole purpose of serving the people of his or her congregation and community. It is with this mindset that leadership can equip and motivate the congregation to fulfill the mission and vision to which God has called the congregation.

[1225] Robert D. Dale, Leadership for a Changing Church Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998, p. 17.

[1226] Stacy T. Rinehart, Upside p. 29.

CHAPTER VII - THE CHANGE PROCESS AT PORTICO
(FORMERLY MGT FAMILY CHURCH)
A Short History

The history of Portico is short compared to other churches in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, and yet, due to a number of factors, there has been significant growth and change over the last thirty-six years. Dedicated congregational members have worked diligently to create a viable church presence. Strategic initiatives orchestrated by church leadership and the rapid growth of Mississauga, which until 1979, (at that time the population was approximately 200,000[1227] whereas, currently the number of residents is almost 700,000,[1228] due largely to Canadian government immigration policies) was a relatively unknown Canadian municipality, have produced positive conditions for church growth. This chapter will chronologically trace the history of Mississauga Gospel Temple in 1970 to its current shape as Portico.

The history and unique stages of the church have been illustrated in name changes. The first congregational label was Mississauga Gospel Temple. During the tenure of Evon Horton, the name subtly changed to MGT Family Church. The second name change (which will be documented in a subsequent chapter) was to Portico, in keeping with the culture change process.

During the 1950s and 1960s, when Mississauga was in its infancy, Queensway Cathedral conducted programs in Port Credit and Etobicoke. This laid the groundwork for future church planting. During this preparatory period the outreach focus was children and families. During off hours from the Queensway church programs, a type of Sunday school came into existence in east Mississauga locations.[1229]

[1227] http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=PubMed&list_uids=10245119&dopt=Abstract April 14, 2006, p. 1.

[1228] http://www.newhomesandcondos.com/modules/magazine/article.asp?AID=3571&MID=4&JDATE=3/6/2006&CMID=4&CIDATE=4/3/2006 April 14, 2006, p. 1.

[1229] Nancy Woodley, A Short History of MGT Family Church June 2002, p. 1. An unpublished document created through first person interviews with MGT Family Church members and is on file with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada Archives.

In 1970, the Western Ontario district leadership in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC) had a vision for a church in the growing municipality of Mississauga. In cooperation with Rev. Paul McInroy, they purchased a large white house at the intersection of the Queen Elizabeth Way and Hurontario Street, in what has become the central business district of Mississauga.[1230] Initially, Pastor McInroy lived in this home with his family and used it as a base for a church-planting endeavors by conducting house meetings. As the group grew to approximately fifty people, it met in Sheridan Park Public School in Port Credit for approximately one year. After Rev. Paul McInroy resigned the fledgling group continued to meet from time to time in one or another of the member's home, but without formal pastoral leadership most began to attend other churches.[1231]

With renewed vision to plant and maintain a Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada church in Mississauga, the Western Ontario District Office of the PAOC approached Rev. Fred Fulford to come and establish what would become Mississauga Gospel Temple. In February 1972, he began conducting services in The Orange Hall on Agnes Street, Cooksville with twenty-eight people attending the first meeting.[1232] In June 1972, Mississauga Gospel Temple became organized as an affiliate of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada and a two-acre site was purchased by the congregation in Erin Mills for a future building. In September of that same year, the congregation returned to Sheridan Park Public School from the Orange Hall where services were held by church leadership for three years while the first church building was constructed.

In 1975 a congregation of almost 100 moved into the new church facilities at 2460 The Collegeway, affectionately called 'The White Church.' Over the next

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[1230] Ibid. Helen Aello, A Short History of MGT Family Church June 25, 2004, p.1. An unpublished document created as notes for a seniors gathering and on file with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada Archives.

[1231] Ibid.

[1232] Ibid. Lillian Miller, A Short History of MGT Family Church June 25, 2004, p.1. An unpublished document created as notes for a seniors gathering and on file with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada Archives.

five years rapid growth took place "partly due to the fast-growing nature of the community and to the many talented, dedicated, loving members"[1233] noted Fred Fulford.

In February 1980, the congregation purchased a 4.5 acre piece of property on Barbertown Road, making way for the construction of a 65,000 square foot church building.[1234] During this construction phase the church met at Erindale Collegiate as 'The White Church' was sold to a Salvation Army corps. The formal dedication of the present facilities at 1814 Barbertown Road took place on Sunday, March 7, 1982.[1235] At this time, the congregation was approximately 550 in size. Fulford continued on until the fall of 1985, after giving leadership for almost 14 years.

The second pastor in the history of Mississauga Gospel Temple was Rev. Ken Birch who assumed the senior pastoral office in April 1986. At this time the congregation was approximately one thousand in size.[1236] In 1988 Pastor Birch made a concerted effort to create a Five Year Plan.[1237] He outlined three objectives: Evangelism, Caring and Growth. Under this plan, church members were to be equipped for lifestyle evangelism, a church was to be planted in east Mississauga,[1238] missions giving was to increase, short term teams were to be sent overseas, an ethnic congregation was to be established, the increased use of media was to be investigated and the leadership established the goal of one pastoral staff member for every 150-200 members. To optimize improved

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[1233] George Grosshans, "Major Church Complex Under Construction" Pentecostal Testimony, August 1981, p. 15.

[1234] Ibid. Nancy Woodley,History p. 1. Lillian Miller, History p. 1. Helen Aello, History p. 1. Victor G. Brown, ed., 50 Years of Pentecostal History Burlington, ON: Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, 1983. pp. 93-94. George Grosshans Major Church Complex Under Construction Mississauga News, February 24, 1982.

[1235] Ibid.

[1236] When the size of a congregation is reported in PAOC denominational circles, the number represents the average weekend attendance at church services.

[1237] Ken Birch, Mississauga Gospel Temple Five Year Plan 1988-1992 January 31, 1988. A multi-paged document published for circulation to the congregation, on file at Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada Archives.

[1238] Ruth Stagg, Personal Notes from a Phone Conversation p. 1, April 21, 2006. This church is Central Pentecostal Church. Today it is a healthy congregation of approximately 300 people at Sunday morning services.

pastoral care and office efficiency the church hired another pastor and an administrator. Increased attendance, immersion baptisms,[1239] membership applications and financial contributions were established as indicators of success. The leadership noted the need for expanded facilities at this time and they established a long range planning committee to plan an addition to the existing structure.[1240] Any reference to mission or vision statements was notably absent from church literature or report. The Five Year Plan was a loosely constructed menu of endeavors, projects and methodology employed to move the church ahead.

To their credit, this growing congregation attempted to instill community by the creation of small groups. However, conflicted people were the result of high expectations upon the congregation and an unclear and an unarticulated vision or purpose for small groups. Members viewed them as an unnecessary addition to the prolific number of pre-existing programs. However, these small groups were responsible for the increased involvement in social concerns such as practically helping the underprivileged. They assisted the Life Center for women with crisis pregnancies and engaged government in conversations concerning the social issues of the day.

During this time period, the demographic make-up of the congregation changed. The church, previously consisting largely of families with young children, now reflected an increased number of teenagers. Under the direction of Eldon Wright, the youth ministry grew significantly as the church directed significant resources toward this demographic. The youth department created a well-rounded program, including a Friday Nite Live event, youth discipleship small groups, Sunday school classes and a weekly full-fledged Junior High meeting. In the vein of initiating or growing a program through the hiring of

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[1239] Baptismal candidates must be at least eleven years old and able to articulate a profession of faith in Jesus Christ.

[1240] Mississauga Gospel Temple 1992 Annual Report p. 5. It should be noted that acceptable metrics for success were, for the most part, quantitative in nature. This is the 'Bigger is Better' philosophy that was prevalent in the 1980s and 1990s.

professional staff, the board recognized the need for a children's ministry pastor to give leadership to this demographic. Denise Peltomaki was the first person to fill this role.[1241]

Near the end of Rev. Birch's tenure, he called for a "refreshing of the Spirit."[1242] Mississauga Gospel Temple had earned the reputation of a non-Pentecostal member of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. Church leadership placed little emphasis on expressive worship or those experiential moments common in other Pentecostal churches.[1243] Although it appears this new emphasis may have contributed to a lack of unity, it became formative in the choice of a new pastor when Ken Birch resigned.

In the fall of 1992, Evon Horton, a former Methodist who had experienced *glossalalia*, assumed the role of Senior Pastor of Mississauga Gospel Temple. He had served as an Assistant Pastor under Rev. Ken Birch for almost three years. The 1993 Mississauga Annual Report outlined his new initiatives: an emphasis on the leading of the Holy Spirit, intentional relationship building, caring for one another, effective ministry in the community and a proposed growth in missions perspective.[1244] Although the church began and maintained programs such as the 'Tuesday Night Bible Hour' there was an absence of an articulated vision for this congregation of approximately one thousand.[1245]

In 1994 the awareness of Mississauga Gospel Temple's ministry in the community increased due to the presentation of large-scale Christmas productions and because of Pastor Horton's personal community involvement. Although Mississauga Gospel Temple had always been a missionary-minded

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[1241] 1992 Annual Report ; Mississauga Gospel Temple Distributed to the congregation on Sundays in February 1993 and on file at Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada Archives. Marilyn Stroud, A Tribute Pastor Denise Peltomaki A power point presentation upon the departure of Denise Peltomaki, October 2005 and on file at the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada Archives.
[1242] Nancy Woodley,History p. 2.
[1243] Gerry Johnston, (former Mississauga Gospel Temple Associate Pastor) Personal Notes from a Conversation p. 1, February 1993 in Montreal.
[1244] 1993 Annual Report: Mississauga Gospel Temple Distributed to the congregation on Sundays in February 1994 and on file at Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada Archives. Senior Pastor's Report pp. 2-5.
[1245] Ibid.

church, it was during the next number of years that Mississauga Gospel Temple began hosting ethnic churches (Spanish, Egyptian, Chinese) clearly reflecting the growing cultural demographics of the Peel region.[1246] During this year Rev. Mario Ancheri pioneered the Spanish church. The profile of overseas missions activity also accelerated as the church became more involved in giving to missionary endeavors and relief work[1247] and sending short term missions teams to various parts of the world.

The church began to sense a Holy Spirit renewal similar to the historical beginnings of Canadian Pentecostal church. It differed in that the senior pastor was new to Pentecostalism and did not possess the 'historical baggage' associated with long time Pentecostalism.[1248] During this year there was a major crisis in the youth department. Due to insubordination, the senior pastor dismissed the youth pastor, and a large number of ministry supporters questioned this decision.[1249]

In 1994 the congregation enfolded other para-church ministries such as The Life Center.[1250] This activity intensified in 1995 and continued for the next few years. Annual reports listed churches such as Cornerstone (Downtown

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[1246] Profile of Census Metropolitan Areas, Tracted Census Agglomerations and Census Subdivisions, 1996 Census http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census96/data/profiles/DataTable.cfm?YEAR=1996&LANG=E&PID=35544&S=A&GID=262305, Accessed April 15, 2006. Refer to section concerning Desired Change, p. 328.

[1247] David Hatton, Canadian Foodgrains Bank: MGT Family Church Fall 2001 Report Unpublished document for the MGT Family Church Missions Committee (on file at Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada Archives.) David Hatton, Canadian Foodgrains Bank: MGT Family Church Fall 2002 Report Unpublished document for the MGT Family Church Missions Committee (on file at Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada Archives.) David Hatton, Canadian Foodgrains Bank: MGT Family Church Spring 2003 Report Unpublished document for the MGT Family Church Missions Committee (on file at Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada Archives.) The congregation purchased a quarter section of land in Saskatchewan to grow grain for the Canadian Food Grains Bank. Each crop is matched four to one by the Canadian government and sent to drought stricken nations around the world. http://www.foodgrainsbank.ca.

[1248] Firsthand observation. The writer has attending Portico since 1994 and has had numerous conversations with Evon Horton, listened to his sermons dealing with the topic and observed his operational methodology.

[1249] Evon Horton, October 1997, MGT Family Church.

[1250] "Senior Pastor's Report" 1994 Annual Report; Mississauga Gospel Temple distributed to the congregation on Sundays in February 1995 and on file at Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada Archives, pp.2-3.

Toronto), River Oaks (Oakville), and Central Pentecostal (East Mississauga) as MGT projects.[1251] It is questionable as to how much real resourcing, financial or otherwise, actually took place. The major initiative in 1995 included the establishment of a Ministry Training Center for pastors-in-training and a transition of roles within the existing pastoral staff.[1252] Because the church experienced neglect in the traditional practice of pastoral care, church leadership attempted to introduce community and care through the establishment of small groups and the appointment of a staff for this portfolio.

On June 24, 1996 the congregation held a meeting to initiate a building fund campaign. In early 1997 it became apparent, as evidenced by the level of financial pledges, that the campaign was a miserable failure and devoid of any vision, mission or strategy.[1253] On the positive side, the number of small groups began to grow and monthly leadership training was a success. The multi-faceted Women's Ministry impacted lives in the church and missions endeavors around the world. The major Easter and Christmas productions continued to increase in quality and effectiveness.

The highly structured church relied on corporate gatherings to produce life change. Beginning late in 1996 the pastoral staff offered a Life Development course; Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze levels.[1254] This multi-levelled study attempted to educate newcomers to faith and establish teachings on doctrine, denominational distinctives, local church life, biblical practices and introduce missional thinking to others in the church.

[1251] "Senior Pastor's Report" 1995 Annual Report; Mississauga Gospel Temple Distributed to the congregation on Sundays in February 1995 and on file at Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada Archives, p. 4-5.

[1252] Eldon Wright, Ministry Training Center Report 1996 Annual Report; Mississauga Gospel Temple, Distributed to the congregation on Sundays in February 1996 and on file at Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada Archives, p. 14.

[1253] "Senior Pastor's Report" 1996 Annual Report; Mississauga Gospel Temple Distributed to the congregation on Sundays in February 1997 and on file at Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada Archives, p. 4-5

[1254] Eldon Wright, Life Development Course: Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum A course, published for internal use at MGT Family Church. This course was symptomatic of a more programmatically oriented congregation, rather than relational, organic or holistic.

Each year the board of deacons and senior pastor met during a two-day retreat to assess the past year's ministry and strategize for the future. A major turning point occurred as they identified areas of needed development at the 1997 gathering.[1255] The deacons suggested that the spiritual tenor of the congregation was good and conversion growth had taken place. Recognizing the need for an articulated vision, Evon Horton articulated the following statement:

> However, with conversion growth there is a need to disciple these new believers. This involves persons of spiritual maturity sensing the burden to provide guidance, mentoring and spiritual care. We believe this disciple-making is best undertaken in the [meta-Church] small group caring relationship context.[1256]

In 1997 church leadership articulated a different type of vision; "The vision is clear – souls. The philosophy of ministry – is caring relationships."[1257] Leadership was changing the design of Sunday services to "effectively reach into our community" with a simultaneous effort to move from large scale programming to the development of small groups which would be the setting for caring relationships. In an effort to be more realistic, regarding church attendance and involvement the pastoral team created a design for suggested congregational participation.[1258] These expectations stated that a person from Mississauga Gospel Temple would attend a Sunday morning service, participate in a small group and serve the church in some capacity.[1259] However, nothing was said about a person's missional responsibility to non-believers.

Two other major decisions in 1997 adding an assistant pastor[1260] and embarking upon a stewardship campaign to expand and refurbish the facilities.

[1255] Evon Horton, <u>Pastor–Board Retreat Report</u> Power Point presentation, evening service, June 15, 1997.

[1256] Evon Horton <u>Retreat</u>. Meta-church is a term used to describe a network of small groups, which are under the covering of a church.

[1257] "Senior Pastor's Report" <u>1997 Annual Report; Mississauga Gospel Temple</u> Distributed to the congregation on Sundays in February 1998 and on file at Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada Archives, p. 3-4.

[1258] Prior to this time a person would be expected to be at Sunday school, Sunday morning service, Sunday evening service, a mid-week activity, a small group and serve on a committee or two.

[1259] As with many of the church initiatives, these expectations addressed behavioural issues but failed to provide a master plan of spiritual formation.

[1260] The author of this thesis fulfilled this new role.

The senior pastor invited a Christian school and Chinese and Arabic churches to share the overtaxed facilities. For the first time in the history of the church, women were able to serve on the board of deacons.[1261]

In 1998 church leadership conducted a stewardship campaign to raise one million dollars with a view to expanding the present structure and a public promise of no further indebtedness.[1262] In this time period church morale rapidly declined and the campaign raised less than $500,000. The compromise was to construct a ten-room portable classroom structure, which continues to serve the church as office and educational space.

In hindsight, the 1998 assessment of the church was accurate. The church was growing numerically as people found faith in God. Programs taxed the facilities beyond their limits. As church attendance grew larger, church leadership recognized that the church needed to strategize and organize in such as way as to encourage community. The pastoral staff used the term 'grow smaller' to describe the increased intentional emphasis on small group ministry. The need for intentional discipleship and spiritual formation was at an all-time high. However, leadership did not conduct any further discussion concerning the development of a strategic plan.

In 1999 MGT Family Church used the Natural Church Development (NCD)[1263] diagnostic to determine the health of the congregation. Its creator, Christian Schwarz, has studied 26,000 churches and documented the eight quality characteristics that contribute to the health of a church.[1264] He lists them as: Empowering Leadership, Gift-oriented Ministry, Passionate Spirituality,

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[1261] "Senior Pastor's Report" 1997 Annual Report; Mississauga Gospel Temple Distributed to the congregation on Sundays in February 1998 and on file at Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada Archives., p. 3-4.

[1262] Evon Horton Preparing for the Harvest. Pamphlet distributed to the Portico congregation in January 1998. The indebtedness was $1.2 million and through financial mismanagement had not decreased to any great extent for a number of years, other than paying interest and a small amount of principle. Church income was used primarily to build "bigger and better" programs.

[1263] Natural Church Development http://www.ncd-international.org, p. 1, October 1, 2005.

[1264] Christian A. Schwarz. Natural Church Development Winfield, BC: International Centre for Leadership Development and Evangelism, 1998. pp. 22-38.

Functional Structures, Inspiring Worship, Holistic Small Groups, Need-oriented Evangelism and Loving Relationships.

The survey consulted thirty people from each church and reports numerical statistics illustrating strengths and weaknesses. The "minimum factor"[1265] (one or two of the eight) should become the focus of development for church leadership. In the 1999 study, the church scored very high in the areas of Need-Oriented Evangelism and Inspiring Worship. The minimum factors were Empowering Leadership and Functional Structures.[1266] The survey observed that senior leadership was unwilling to empower pastoral or lay leadership or create a church organizational structure that would allow for further growth. As a response to this study, Pastor Horton made direct reference to the mission of the church in printed material. It was entitled "A Call to Prayer and Discipleship."[1267] Although the message was 'about going deeper with God' there was little or no strategic plan for discipleship other than previously existing age-demographic programming.

In the fall of 2000, at a pastors' retreat, the ministry staff expressed concern to the senior pastor that while the church had been very successful in leading a large number of people to Christian faith,[1268] they observed an ensuing weakness concerning a lack of discipleship and spiritual growth. The pastoral team coined a phrase in connection with the character of the church, 'a mile wide and an inch thick.' Marc Gauvreau, Young Adults and Spiritual Formation pastor, called it a "Crisis of Product and Process."[1269] Not only were there few long-term disciples, but also leadership observed that there was a significant absence of disciple-makers, both within the staff and church membership. People were responding to information (the Gospel) but life

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[1265] Ibid. p. 52.

[1266] Survey results are on file in Portico senior pastor's office.

[1267] Dr. Evon Horton, Homecoming Weekend: A Call to Prayer and Discipleship Pamphlet distributed to the Portico congregation in September 2000 on file in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada Archives.

[1268] Marc Gauvreau, Discipleship Oral Presentation, Pastors' Retreat, Brantford, ON September 10, 2004.

[1269] Ibid.

transformation was not taking place. This trend was further evidenced in a significant downturn in volunteerism as ministries were dying and team unity among the staff and laity was at an all-time low. The emphasis was on developing age appropriate programming with little or no rationale based on the concept of spiritual formation. In hindsight, the pastoral staff began to realize that this was a result of years of enculturing an emphasis on 'Doing' as opposed to 'Becoming.'

The two-year period between 1999 and 2000 became one of the most tumultuous in MGT Family Church's history. During this time period, approximately 400 people and twelve staff left the church.[1270] Many of the members who departed were those who were instrumental in the early establishment of MGT Family Church. For the most part, people gave reasons associated with the leadership style of the senior pastor and the lack of any articulated vision or strategic plan.[1271] Although the church has felt the impact of this exodus, current leadership observes that had this contingent remained at MGT Family Church, culture change implementation may have proved to be difficult, if not impossible.

During this same time frame, the senior pastor agreed that a small group of three pastors would begin to study spiritual formation with a view to bring a recommendation to the entire pastoral staff.[1272] This committee began to meet in October of 2000. Due to the intense interest by other pastoral staff in what they was viewed as a pivotal study, the committee doubled in size. Their work centred around three themes, spiritual growth and maturity as defined by changes in Personhood, Relationships, and Lifestyle. Simultaneously, a group of people began to facilitate the ALPHA course. Response was significant and although it serves as an introduction to Christianity, the large number of people

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[1270] In early 2000, two former staff members counted the number of members in a 1994 church directory that no longer attended MGT Family Church.

[1271] Ongoing formal and informal exit interviews have been conducted by pastoral staff and elders, with those who have left the church over the last ten years.

[1272] Marc Gauvreau, Discipleship Forum Personal Notes from this discussion group, which convened weekly for over one year from October 2000.

finding faith in Jesus Christ served to highlight the need for a coordinated strategy for spiritual formation.

Shortly thereafter, the senior pastor resigned and by mid-November an interim pastor and staff had been named.[1273] Unlike other Pentecostal churches, the pastoral staff was not obligated to resign, so work continued in the Discipleship Forum. In hindsight, this may be one of the most significant developments in determination of the need for culture change in the history of MGT Family Church.

For the first six months of 2001, the church was in a maintenance mode. Behind the scenes a pastoral search committee determined the present culture of MGT Family Church and what type of senior pastoral leadership was needed to lead the church to the next level. Outside of operating norms, the board consulted the pastoral staff and agreed on two fronts: the need for an alternative style of leadership and an unwavering commitment to the development of a church culture rooted in a process of spiritual formation. Recognizing these needs, the search committee further developed criteria for a new senior pastor through a consultative process.[1274]

This group determined that MGT Family Church was in need of a major cultural change and that a leader who understood process and change, possessed excellent communication skills, and exhibited a consensus leadership style was ideal. In May 2001, after five months of active searching, Rev. Douglas Rhind 'preached for the call' and the congregation voted him in as MGT Family Church's fourth senior pastor in thirty years.[1275] He inherited a church without an articulated mission, vision, values and strategy, a church that was in need of change.

[1273] Terry Clark, Oral Reports to the MGT Family Church congregation November 21 and 28, 2000. The author of this thesis had departed on December 31, 1999 to fulfill a one-year contract with Master's College and Seminary as Transition Coordinator and returned as part of the interim pastoral team.

[1274] Terry Clark, Senior Pastoral Selection Notes Notes concerning the senior pastoral selection process have been destroyed. A conversation on April 4, 2006 confirmed these details.

[1275] MGT Family Church Congregational Meeting Minutes April 11, 2000, p. 1.

The Desired Culture Change at Portico
Introduction

While the 2001 leadership of MGT Family Church[1276] may not have planned wholesale changes, as in TV's "Extreme Home Makeover,"[1277] they certainly had a will to engage in a culture change process to increase the effectiveness of the church. After a period of study, centred on the biblical characteristics and activity of a local church, congregational leadership agreed that there was a need for the congregation to grow in the area of corporate and personal spiritual formation. Furthermore, they recognized that the church was to be the setting for the development of biblical community while extending a missional call to its societal context. With these parameters articulated, pastoral staff and volunteers began to establish a vision for culture change at MGT Family Church.

As MGT Family Church leadership discussed possible changes, there was an absence of a desire to 'return to being the one true church.' While some church leaders fall into the trap of "restoring the New Testament church in our time,"[1278] MGT Family Church's leadership realized that first Century Christians also encountered significant problems as they related to their culture[1279] yet the persistent ways in which the early church leadership engaged their culture was exemplary. The churches of that era focused on reaching the then-known world with the message of eternal hope made possible by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Since the establishment of New Testament churches, local congregations have sought to impact their communities. In the 1970s and 80s, in its attempt to be missional, North American evangelical Christianity primarily focused on numerical growth as illustrated by the church growth movement.[1280]   After

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[1276] Although the name of the church was changed on January 9, 2005 (to Portico), this chapter will refer to the congregation as MGT Family Church, due to the fact that most of this 'desired change' discussion took place prior to that date.

[1277] Extreme Makeover http://abc.go.com/primetime/extrememakeover/, p. 1, May 5, 2006.

[1278] This is commonly referred to as 'Restorationism.'

[1279] K. Gnanakan, Kingdom Concerns Bangalore, India: Theological Book Trust, 1989, p. 138.

[1280] Os Guiness, Dancing with the Devil Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1993, pp. 13, 22.

discovering that this myopic thinking resulted in a shallow, ineffective church, leadership redefined missional success for the local church. The emphasis shifted from size, efficiency and image, to accessibility, impact and integrity.[1281] Facilitators measure the effectiveness of the local church's ability to respond to the rapidly changing ministry context by creating an effective model for culture engagement.[1282]

Closely associated with the lack of effectiveness has been the "we've always done it this way" syndrome in which leadership simply attempts to do the same things better.

> The Church is not immune from the tendency to parochialize its message and/or its mission. Given a people, a structure, a culture and duration of time, more often than not parochialism emerges in one form or another with varying degrees of intensity. Form, in both message and mission, supplants function and purpose and when this happens we have institutionalized Christianity in a given culture. This institutionalization, being a precise cultural expression of the faith, separates itself to degrees with other cultural expressions of the faith, this becoming parochialized.[1283]

The marks of evangelical parochialism are an overemphasis on the supernatural, institutionalized truth in creedal statements, codified morality and over-regulated ministries, each in their own right indicating a need for re-evaluation.[1284]

The church can no longer exist as a "vendor of religious goods and services" or "an outpost for the reign of God." [1285] The contemporary church exists in a post-Christian context and must engage the culture, which no longer "knows our language, honors our stories, or privileges our symbols."[1286] Without

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[1281] Although culture change is desired, MGT Family Church leadership does not aspire to the creation of a mega-church model.

[1282] Missional Church Newsletter for the College of Biblical Studies Volume 1, Number 2, April 2003, http://www.acu.edu/academics/cbs/newsletter/2003-04.html, January 1, 2005. p. 3.

[1283] Everett E. Richey, The Church: Its Mission and Message Melvin E. Dieter and Daniel N. Berg, eds. The Church: An Inquiry into Ecclesiology from a Biblical Theological Perspective, Anderson, IN: Warner Press Inc., 1984, pp. 480-481.

[1284] Ibid.

[1285] Missional p.3. Use of the word 'outpost' raises the issue whether the role of a church and is active or passive. 'Outpost' seems to imply 'presence' as opposed to 'engagement.' Contrary to this, very early in the change process, the leadership at MGT Family Church agreed that the church was to be missionally active.

[1286] Ibid.

dismissing previous success and historical milestones, church leadership at MGT Family Church is committed to a process of constant Spirit-led self-examination.

To be effective in culture renewal, church leadership must rely on God through contemplative listening[1287] and recognize and join movements of God rather than pursuing an institutional agenda. Instead of asking "How do we do church work better?" facilitators should focus on partnering with God in his work in the world beyond the church's institutional concern.[1288] God takes initiative and does what he alone can accomplish in the lives of believers and in the life of the local church.[1289]

The establishment or renewal of a local church should not emphasize a focus on the church. Instead it is the outgrowth of a group of people who are growing in their Christlikeness. The leadership of MGT Family Church are designing functions and programs with a view to fostering a deeper understanding of one's relationship with God as opposed to being preoccupied with the quantity of people whose lives are impacted. "For missional churches, the goal of church growth is not to get bigger. The task of the local church is to equip more people to live as authentic disciples of Jesus Christ."[1290] MGT Family Church views its primary focus as the facilitation of a spiritually formative process enabling each individual to build a godly character while continually gaining a greater dependence on God.

As such, a church renewal philosophy resonated with MGT Family Church leadership. They identified the required changes to create a culture which would maximize congregational effectiveness while giving due consideration to the church's ability to be relevant in the context to which it ministered. For example, the morning news regularly declares Canadian society to be spiritual and not

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[1287] Henry Blackaby, What the Spirit is Saying to the Churches Sisters, OR: Multnomah Press, 2003, p. 15ff.
[1288] Reggie McNeal, "Helping Church Leaders Transition From the Present to the Future" NetFax Number 93, March 16, 1998, p.1.
[1289] Henry Blackaby, Saying p. 21ff, 31ff.
[1290] Milfred Minatrea, Shaped by God's Heart San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2004, p. 112.

religious.[1291] People are no longer choosing between churches, they are choosing between Christianity and other faith groups.[1292] MGT Family Church leadership has determined to return to an understanding of New Testament spirituality, community and mission as guidelines for its reforming and renewal.

When one examines the disparities between the New Testament church and the church of today, and the church of today and the world, the need for a church culture change is apparent. The term 'reinvented church' means a

> radical self-assessment, of going back to roots, sources, and first things. But the reinvented church does not try to draft a new blueprint. Instead, it comes up with a new philosophy of ministry that prepares it to meet whatever unforeseen changes are to come. To use contemporary jargon, it is "reengineered"; it discovers "new paradigms." In biblical terms, it seeks not only new wineskins (renewal), but new wine – which includes a new attitude toward wineskins in general. The church decides that it loves new wine so much, it will never again be so attached to wineskins of any sort. Then when the wineskins need to be discarded, they can be with a minimum of anguish.[1293]

Such an outlook is characteristic of a church change from one of tradition and order to one driven by an articulated mission and vision.[1294]

The local church can realize missional effectiveness through establishing and equipping people for a church culture marked by three intersecting values. Leadership will promote a spiritual worldview[1295] based on biblical principles while engaging in intentional, accountable relationships with other Christians, and is missionally involved in the lives of those who have yet to cross the line of faith. Following four years of culture formation (2001-2004) teaching and activities, leadership will survey members of the MGT Family Church congregation[1296] to determine the degree of assimilation of these three values.

[1291] Spiritual But Not Religious 680 Radio Newscast, Toronto Ontario, 8 a.m., March 24, 2005.
[1292] George Barna, The Second Coming of the Church Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 1998, p. 130.
[1293] Brian D. McLaren, Reinventing Your Church Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1998,
p. 23.
[1294] George Barna, Second p. 177.
[1295] Ibid. p. 135.
[1296] A proposed survey and its results compose the contents of an ensuing chapter.

While engaging in the design of proposed changes, pastors entered prayerfully considered and intentionally biblically based discussions.[1297] Activities inherent in the New Testament church 'program' need to be part of MGT Family Church life.[1298] However, proposed changes at MGT Family Church are symptoms of a 'holy dissatisfaction' with the church in its present form, a church that has no plan and lacks in missional effectiveness. Proposed cultural change will shift MGT Family Church from a directionless maintenance mentality to advancing and sustaining a dynamic vision while focusing on the goal of developing disciples who will impact the world.

Spiritual Formation

The question for the church is not, "How do we make better church members?" It is, "How do we develop people who think and act like Christ and who have a vibrant, living relationship with Him?"[1299] This marks a transition in the purpose of church activities from the dispensing and acquisition of spiritual knowledge to life transformation.[1300] Traditionally the local church has relied on church exposure (services) and education (teaching, preaching) to produce fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ, making the flawed assumption that these same people will become 'better church members.' However, heightened church activity does not insure spiritual growth.[1301] Local church discipleship should include a shift from program-based ministry to a people-driven ministry, moving from building consensus to building character and using the biblical narrative to apply biblical principles.[1302]

Church leadership recognizes spiritual formation cannot be a function of church ministries alone. The operative question becomes "How do we develop

[1297] E. Stanley Ott, Twelve Dynamic Shifts for Transforming Your Church Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdman's Publishing Company, 2002, p. 24. Ott also uses the term 'Spirit-driven' to note the reliance leadership places on God in their desire to hear his thoughts.
[1298] Preaching, communion, church governance and benevolence, to name a few.
[1299] Reggie McNeal, Transition p. 2.
[1300] George Barna, Second p. 177.
[1301] Reggie McNeal Helping p.2.
[1302] Ted Haggard, Dog Training, Fly Fishing, and Sharing Christ in the 21st Century Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2002, p. 61.

people who think and act like Christ and have a vibrant, living relationship with him?"[1303] The journey of becoming more Christ-like must include significant emphasis on personal spiritual disciplines. MGT Family Church desires to be a church that promotes, explains and equips believers at all levels of spiritual maturity in their spiritual formation by providing motivation, instruction and resources to those who are part of its congregation.

MGT Family Church recognizes its responsibility to equip the believer with tools for spiritual formation. As part of this pathway, the disciple embarks on a journey of self-discovery marked by the question, "Why did God design me the way that He did?" For example, Clark Cowden, a Presbyterian from the San Joaquin Valley in California, asserts that the biblical narrative has a pivotal role in the development of a missional church.[1304] The scriptural record speaks to current societal conditions by way of the stories of exodus and exile and the reaction of Biblical characters.[1305]

A large part of spiritual formation is the discovery and deployment of the believer's spiritual gifts. A program-oriented church has often circumvented this necessity by focusing on the deployment of the laity into church ministry positions. It is the desire of church leadership that all who associate with MGT Family Church will not be categorized according to the extent of their resources contribution, but each will be challenged to be a member of a team-based[1306] church, committed to the cause first and each other second.[1307]

MGT Family Church desires to recognize the gifts and abilities of each person who contributes to this local expression of God's kingdom. In some

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[1303] Reggie McNeal, Helping p.2.

[1304] There have been other narratives (business and military) whose principles have been adopted in past and current models of church organization and operation. In its proposed culture change, MGT Family Church, while not dismissing these principles outright, desires to establish mission, vision and strategy based on the biblical record.

[1305] Clark D. Cowden, Is the North American Church Like Major League Baseball http://www.sjpresbytery.org/misional.htm, January 1, 2005, p. 2.

[1306] The term 'team-based' refers to the desire for individuals in spiritual formation to engage in ministry together, as opposed to being 'lone rangers.'

[1307] Dave Ferguson, Four Secrets of Great Team-Based Leadership www.smallgroups.com, 2003.

cases, leaders may view the spiritual gifts of pastor, elder and teacher as positional as determined by their status of employment. The pastor may be full-time while the others are volunteers. In other cases, church membership may express giftedness part-time in the church and full-time in the marketplace. Leadership should mark a team-based environment by collaboration, compassion, constructive conflict, and accountability. Such an equipping community model is rooted in the mission of the gospel.[1308]

The leadership at MGT Family Church desires to change from simply equipping God's people for church effectiveness to deploying people to impact others in their world for God's Kingdom. The outgrowth of a parishioner's spiritual formation can influence other believers with whom he or she has relationship, but in Great Commission thinking, spiritual formation is primarily for the purpose of engaging the unchurched in one's home, community, marketplace and social circles.

The media has reminded the world of the complex governmental structure of the Roman Catholic Church[1309] as it observed the formalities surrounding the death of Pope John Paul II.[1310] The evangelical church may smugly suggest that it is free from that type of ecclesiastical complication but a closer examination of most churches reveals a hierarchal system complete with power brokers. While the New Testament allows for positional church leadership,[1311] MGT Family Church desires to develop an emphasis on giftedness with a minimized hierarchal structure. This will include a de-emphasis on positional leadership and a determination to focus on one's gift, ultimately erasing the line between laity and clergy. The church desires to transition from being pastor-driven to elder-led, allowing selected gifted men and women to create a culture of inclusivity,

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[1308] Darrell L. Guder, Be My Witnesses Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdman's Publishing Co., 1985, p. 106.
[1309] How a Pope is Elected http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/7319823/?GT1=6428, p. 1, April 4, 2005.
[1310] Pope John Paul II Dies http://www.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/europe/04/02/pope.dies/, p. 1, June 13, 2005.
[1311] According to pastoral, apostolic, teaching or administrative gifting.

consensus and maximum involvement in Kingdom activity. MGT Family Church wishes to change its governance culture from a centralized to a decentralized authority structure.[1312] This would be characterized by a change from a vertical, top-down authoritarian pyramid-style leadership framework to a more horizontal, side-by-side system of working groups as suggested by the term 'plurality of leadership.'

Following the trend in society, the church provided activities designed for members of a generational stratum or affinity group such as ministries for children, teenagers or adults. In the process of concentrating on this model of ministry, they lost the integrative nature. Contrary to the biblical pattern, parents lost the opportunity to worship with their children. Although resources such as Christian books are readily available, mothers and fathers have defaulted to the local church as the sole delivery system of spiritual truth.[1313] As MGT Family Church designs a culture change, they will concentrate on the cultivation of the role of families in spiritual formation.

Authentic Relationships

Modernity teaches church leadership to respond to the needs of humanity by creating a program.[1314] This would imply that individual and Kingdom growth is a direct result of more and better programs. Growth, in the new paradigm, is about the increased role of experiences and relationships, both qualitative and quantitative. To insure this is the case, the leadership at MGT Family Church desires to move away from a programmatically based church to a church of small groups.[1315]

[1312] George Barna, Second p. 177.

[1313] George Barna, Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2003. Barna's thesis is that parents and the local church must minister together to children. One without the other causes a lack of balanced spiritual development and the resources are available for both settings; home and church.

[1314] Howard A. Snyder and Daniel V. Runyon, Decoding The Church Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2003, p. 70-71. Snyder believes this is directly related to the adoption of business models for the church, and a characteristic of linear thinking inherent in modernity.

[1315] It is important to note that the word 'of' has great significance. A church 'with' small groups simply adds small groups on as another program. A church 'of'' small groups changes its orientation of every activity to be constructed around a small group model.

One could more accurately cast the traditional term 'Christian fellowship' as the 'cycle of transformation' in the assertion that when one is part of a small group, significant and intimate relationships with others form as one participates in prayer, Bible study, support and accountability.[1316] Students of the principle of accountable relationships may extrapolate said principle to the ministry setting inside and outside the church walls.

> The "Next Church" is redefining the nature and role of community itself by excelling at five basic practices; an emphasis on leadership and leadership development, peer learning networks, cultural relevance, an emphasis on meeting individual needs within the context of community and mobilization of the laity...[1317]

as opposed to 'The Board Culture' where energy for Kingdom is internally directed in the church setting.[1318] A change from a ministry department focus to a relationship focus will enable the pastor of the church to function as an equipper and the people of the church to develop in areas of their giftedness. While not discounting the role of preaching and teaching in public services, the pastor and other leadership will de-emphasize prophetic and priestly roles in favour of teaching and equipping congregational members with a view to empowering and releasing them to interact with each other.

If the focus of the church is life-change, the power of the church needs to be in its small groups. One author has suggested that the missional church will have seventy-five percent fewer programs and more time for relationships.[1319] While MGT Family Church has had some form of small group ministry for fifteen years, the challenge has been to elevate community beyond 'just another program.' The transition will be from a church *with* small groups to a church *of* small groups, and ultimately where the church *is* small groups.[1320] This will

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[1316] Anthony B. Robinson, Transforming Congregational Culture Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003, p. 79.

[1317] Frances Hasselbein, Marshall Goldsmith, Richard Beckhard, Richard F. Schubert, eds. The Community of the Future San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publications, 1998, p. 42.

[1318] Anthony B. Robinson, Transforming p. 76.

[1319] Beth Hawn, Missional Leaders Explore Missional Churches http://www.wfn.org/2001/05/msg00164.html, p. 1, January 1, 2005.

[1320] Group Director Models http://smallgroups.com/groupdirector/models.html, p. 1, January 25, 2005.

necessitate two things: all present ministries will be reoriented around the small group model and an articulation of the church-wide expectation that everyone will be a member of a small group. To maximize the effectiveness of small groups, MGT Family Church will facilitate a process of choosing which ministries to retain, which to abandon and which to initiate. They will not be all-purpose, but specialized, based on the envisioned needs such as ministering to those with addiction problems or helping single parent families.

Church leadership will change the way it views the MGT Family Church volunteer. Instead of viewing a person as a resource to make a program function or fulfill a cause, leadership developers will invest in them so they can reach their full potential in kingdom work. The focus will be on beneficial relationships that build into the life of the volunteer. Sandro Di Sabatino, CORE groups pastor at MGT Family Church, tells of an incident that changed his outlook on this aspect of church life. While visiting another church, he was waiting for the food services to open up its kiosk. At the appointed hour the volunteers came out, gathered in a circle, shared for a few minutes, prayed together and then joyously proceeded to their places. What was the point? In those few moments the leaders conveyed to each participant that they were more important than the task they performed.[1321]

New Testament church leadership emerged from the rank and file of the local church. Jesus recruited The Twelve from family businesses and government. For three years he lived with his disciples and trained them in a highly relational setting. The church has sacrificed the values of relationship and community in the training of leadership by adopting educational models focusing on the formal acquisition of knowledge, resulting in leaders who produce ministries instead of more leaders. While recognizing that leadership emerges as a result of giftedness, it is important also to understand that spiritual gift

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[1321] Sandro Di Sabatino, CORE Report Joint meeting, March 29, 2005, held at the conference room at the Shell Service Centre on the eastbound 401, Mississauga, between Winston Churchill and Mississauga Rd.

development is a responsibility of each local assembly. For this reason a model to develop leaders will be proposed that will take place in a learning community in which practitioners engage in peer learning, mentoring and coaching for greater missional effectiveness.[1322]

Leadership at MGT Family Church has traditionally been skill-based. Ministry leaders recruited a person to perform a ministry task. They were shown how to do it, and then were virtually abandoned until they were burned out a year or two later. At times, a board or deacon expressed an artificial appreciation at an end-of-the-year banquet. The MGT Family Church definition of a leader is one who, by serving others, multiplies the SAM[1323] culture in the lives of people. This necessitates a change in the philosophical basis for training leadership. The goal of leadership training at MGT Family Church will be to create a culture of serving in the context of a relationship with others. For example, high value will be placed on the ability to be authentic and transparent. Optimally leaders and ministry personnel will function in the realm of a well disciplined, tightly knit team.[1324]

Leaders of leaders will be expected to resource and serve those who are in leadership positions. This will take the form of coaching in such a way as to increase the SAM quotient in leaders and prepare them as people for Kingdom work. The emphasis on skill development will be lessened, although not ignored, and a concerted effort will be made to establish relationships in which each person can be personally prepared in the SAM culture as they engage in ministry in both the local church and the world. The structure of leadership training will include the raising up of a level of coaches, leaders of leaders, who will, by example and function, become integrally involved in the forming and promoting of SAM culture into the church, community, marketplace and world.

[1322] Reggie McNeal, Helping p. 2.
[1323] SAM (Spiritual Formation, Authentic Relationships and Missional Activity)
[1324] Brian D. McLaren, Reinventing pp. 114-121.

One should not believe that relationships are church inclusive and world exclusive. Local congregations should consider measuring impact as opposed to attendance.[1325] While Mississauga pastors consider MGT Family Church the largest evangelical church in Mississauga, a more accurate assessment concerning the fulfilment of God's commission for the church is the measure of influence of the congregation and its members upon society. This is a shift from a primary emphasis on an inwardly directed communal life of the church to a balanced emphasis on community for missional purposes.[1326] As the culture of the church changes, leadership will place a high emphasis upon the congregation as a whole, and individuals in particular, for the development of relationships with people and organizations in the community to increase Kingdom impact. The pastoral staff will introduce a measuring tool (survey) to assess personal and congregational development.[1327]

Missional Activity

A paradigm shift is taking place in Pentecostal circles were one's local missional activity has traditionally been considered a personal function[1328] and the church has been viewed as an inwardly focused sanctuary for the redeemed. The church has the potential to convey the gospel through its life and witness.[1329] As early as 1975, some noted one should measure the impact of his or her inward journey by its capacity to transform one's character and their daily actions of Christian in their neighbourhoods, schools and offices.[1330]

[1325] Eric Swanson, Ten Paradigm Shifts Toward Community Transformation Dallas, TX: Leadership Network, September 2002, http://www.leadnet.org/resources/docs/bookelt.pdf, p. 5, January 1, 2005.
[1326] E. Stanley Ott, Transforming p. 24.
[1327] This thesis deals with the initial stages of culture change at MGT Family Church. In 2006 and 2007 there will be a concerted effort to engage the congregation in the process of developing a SAM portfolio. Included will be personal assessment tools, teaching notes and mentor guidelines for recipients and teachers.
[1328] Described as personal evangelism or witnessing.
[1329] http://spacebetweenmyears.blogspot.com/2004, p. 1, March 3, 2004.
[1330] Elizabeth O'Connor, Journey Inward, Journey Outward New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 1975. The entire thesis of this book deals with this subject matter.

Communicators convey the gospel, not only through beliefs and ideals, but also through transformed communities of people.

This is in stark contrast to the 'building of walls.' Church members must choose to be transformative salt and light in the world by building bridges.[1331] The desired missional approach changes from a 'come to us' methodology to a 'go to them' mindset or to change the culture from being focused on church numerical growth to a focus of being incarnational and reproductive.[1332]

> In our increasingly secular, post-Christendom, postmodern world, it is clearly time for the followers of Jesus Christ to deconstruct the church for ourselves in order to begin building churches that genuinely exist for the others in our midst. It is time to start building churches for all those who are either outside the margins of faith, as well as for all those who are either on the outside or on the margins of social acceptance. For far too long the church has existed primarily for those who belong to it.[1333]

God's people and the church are in the world to bear witness to those who have not found faith.

Structure and form defined the church of modernity. Effective contemporary churches understand that church ministry must have a centrifugal orientation in addition to inwardly focused activity. In relation to these competing entities,

> Our detailed analysis of the church and its mission obviously will have to address the particulars of churchly reality. It will be helpful when we seek to be specific about the church, to recognize that the church exists in the world in two overlapping and interdependent spheres of action. I call these the inward and outward dimensions of the church.[1334]

Leadership must be able to understand the difference between basic scriptural principles and the functions in the local church.[1335] For instance, the public declaration of biblical precepts is the function; preaching is the form. Function is fixed, form is open to creativity and is determined by the cultural

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[1331] Eric Swanson, Transformation p. 4.

[1332] Paul Thaxter, http://sijohnston.blogs.com/sijohnston/2004/10/ January 2004, p. 2. Kim Hammond, Characteristics of Missional Church http://jmm.aaa.net.au/articles/567.htm, January 16, 2006, p. 1. Hammond uses the terms 'attract' versus 'submerge.'

[1333] Walt Kallestad, Turn Your Church Inside Out Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1989, p.11.

[1334] Darrell L. Guder, Be p. 107.

[1335] As we have done in our theology sections.

setting in which the facilitator finds him or herself. In this present world the church cannot be content to 'do business as usual.' Congregational members must be incarnational, modelling the message of Christ while communicating in a culturally relative manner. The team must create a cooperative effort by inviting people into a journey or process and guiding them to the truth found in the Scriptures.[1336] The successful contemporary church will be carefully defined by its specific functions.[1337]

> Perhaps the big difference (is) where the boundary markers are being placed as we define the church. What is in-bounds? What is out-of-bounds? I am proposing that the boundary markers for the church should be determined by where the gifts and callings of God's people take them. If believers were encouraged and enabled to seize the opportunities God brings their way in the neighbourhood and across society, and if they could proceed confident of support from others in the body, the church would be redefined. It would change from being a bounded set to being a centered set.[1338]

Missional effectiveness includes crafting the ministry of a local church to be culturally relevant. Lesslie Newbigin refers to this as, "...the discipline of becoming culturally bilingual, learning the language of faith and how to translate its story into the language of its context, so that others may be drawn to become followers of Jesus."[1339] There is a need to create an awareness and understanding within MGT Family Church concerning the culture(s) of the Peel region with an inferred congregational willingness to adapt ministry accordingly.[1340] This may mean creating contemporary worship experiences without compromising biblical principles or standards.[1341] MGT Family Church

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[1336] Jim Peterson, Church without Walls Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1992, p. 163.
[1337] Ibid. pp. 189-193.
[1338] Ibid. p. 173.
[1339] http://www.bethelcupertino.org/worship/MissionalChurch/Week7/Missional Church7.html, January 1, 2005, p. 3.
[1340] Cowden. Baseball. p. 2.
[1341] Don Koening, The Seeker Friendly Purpose Driven Church Growth Movement http://www.thepropheticyears.com/comments/Seeker%20friendly.htm, May 6, 2006, p. 1. It must be recognized that there are those who vehemently disagree with the notion that church services should be 'evangelistic.' Darrell L. Guder, Be p. 107. Guder says, "Worship services, if they are what they should be, will seldom function well as evangelistic offerings to an unbelieving world. They are, rather, special times and experiences where the community of faith receives the equipping needed in order to carry on as the witness of the world." MGT Family Church

does not desire to be tradition bound but rather engagement oriented while keeping in mind that some traditions have great meaning and are rooted in the scriptures. Church practitioners will biblically examine such service elements as a regular time of communion or baby dedication and adjust methodology accordingly.

For a church to be more culturally relevant, it is important to understand the demographics of its context. The culture of Mississauga and region continues to become more multiethnic. Because of this racial change, MGT Family Church wishes to change to be reflective of its community.[1342] As noted in the 2001 census, the religious/cultural diversity is illustrated by a non-Christian population consisting of 7% Muslim, 4% Sikh, 5% Hindu, 2% Buddhist, and 1% other, for a total of almost 20%.

Characteristics	Mississauga		
	Total	Male	Female
Religion			
Total - Religion	610,815	301,530	309,290
Catholic	257,440	125,585	131,855
Protestant	133,205	61,980	71,220
Christian Orthodox	19,090	9,640	9,455
Christian (non-denominational)	17,990	8,580	9,410
Muslim	41,845	21,590	20,245
Jewish	1,905	955	950
Buddhist	11,600	5,495	6,105
Hindu	29,165	14,620	14,540
Sikh	23,425	12,035	11,385
Eastern religions	1,690	790	900
Other religions	380	145	230
No religious affiliation	73,085	40,105	32,980

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would suggest that non-believers can be impacted by worship and that equipping can and should take place in a venue other than worship services.

[1342] This does not mean that MGT Family Church wishes to become 7% Muslim. Rather, the desire would be that people of Muslim religious background would find faith in Jesus Christ through the ministry of the church and its congregational members.

[1343] Mississauga Census
http://www12.statcan.ca/english/profil01/Details/details1rel.cfm?SEARCH=CONTAINS&PSGC=

Not reflected in these statistics are the numerous immigrants who have come to Canada as Christians due to economic hardship or religious persecution, and have settled into a Christian religious community. In 1972, immigration was minimal and Mississauga was predominantly Canadian born whites. Mississauga Gospel Temple was reflective of the community. Today, that is not the case and the church wishes to reflect the rich diversity of culture found within the neighbourhoods of this region.

At the same time the city/region continues to grow as illustrated by the projections found in the following chart. [1344]

Year	Mississauga	Peel
2001	613,000	989,000
2002	629,000	1,024,000
2003	638,000	1,054,000
2004	645,000	1,080,000
2005	652,000	1,102,000
2006	658,000	1,123,000
2007	663,000	1,143,000
2008	667,000	1,161,000
2009	672,000	1,179,000
2010	676,000	1,198,000

Not only should church leadership understand the cultural makeup of their community but also the means of communication or 'language.' For example, one of the areas that speak loudest to our cultural times is musical style or the "ritual of our time."[1345] "We are the most musically diverse age in the history of humanity."[1346] Without attempting to discount or trivialize the controversy that surrounds church music, one must recognize most church music is irrelevant to a large number of people in Canadian communities. Most I Pods are not playing

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35&SGC=3521005&A=&LANG=E&Province=35&PlaceName=Mississauga&CSDNAME=Mississauga&CMA=&SEARCH=CONTAINS&DataType=1&TypeNameE=City%20%2D%20Cit%E9&ID=6840, p. 1, April 7, 2005.

[1344] Ibid. Based on Forecasts Approved by Peel Regional Council on March 6, 2003.

[1345] William Easum, Dancing with Dinosaurs Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993, p. 85.

[1346] E. Stanley Ott, Transforming p. 7.

classical hymns. Churches that feature choral music may relate well to those who were formerly part of a congregation and are seeking to return to faith in the church of their youth. Church musicians must consider what people listen to in the normal course of their lives. Realizing that there have been churches which have experienced 'war' over worship music, MGT Family Church endeavors to establish a musical genre(s) that conveys this as a church that is engaging while continuing to utilize selected forms, traditions, and liturgies which bring meaning to services. This is not unlike Charles Wesley and Martin Luther who adapted bar tunes by penning spiritual lyrics to attract the outsider to church.[1347] MGT Family Church will create musical worship environment(s) characterized by excellence, a definite focus on God, marked times of celebration and reflection and indicative of our time.

The teaching style of the church must also become engaging. One characterizes communication or public declaration of biblical principles (preaching) by style, content and length. Contemporary culture disseminates messages using differing methodology. The proliferation of movies, marketing and literature attests to this. The evangelical church of the 1960s and '70s stated that entertainment had no place in the church. Worship services were to be serious and totally focused on God. Church members frowned upon incidental experiences of human pleasure. Those who strategize at MGT Family Church do not wish to create an atmosphere of entertainment for entertainment's sake alone. It is the intention of church leadership to create a relevant, engaging and interactive setting so people can clearly hear and understand the message of the gospel.[1348] In a world that is highly engaged in the world of movies and television, the Bible may be presented in what is referred to as "the biblical metanarrative."[1349] At MGT Family Church preaching will highlight the principles found in the scriptural narratives. Additionally, a

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[1347] William Easum, Dancing p. 86.
[1348] Ibid. p. 89.
[1349] J. Richard Middleton and Brian J. Walsh, Truth Is Stranger Than It Used to Be Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995, p. 87.

proposed use of arts, drama and technology is not simply for grabbing attention grabbing but for facilitating growth through creative communication.

For some evangelical churches the role of worship services has been centered on the mistaken outlook which views Christianity as conquest or winning an argument[1350] and church activity as apologetic in nature. MGT Family Church, by its very name, wishes to be a place where people can 'check out God' without fear of reprisal or condemnation. MGT Family Church will constantly proclaim the good news without denying the separation between God and humanity as caused by man's sinfulness.

One of the defining aspects of a culture is what it wears. In some cases congregational members have defined church culture by 'dressing up.' MGT Family Church desires to be an accepting culture and encourages a business casual atmosphere reflective of community expectations.

There are some standards for evaluation of culture change when responding to society in transformation.[1351] While a congregation may be striving for relevance, they should undergird such efforts with leadership's determination to be faithful to God as illustrated in an openness to the Spirit's leading. The model and culture of ministry proposed by church leadership must afford individuals and the church body the opportunity to live and minister in faithfulness.

Although missional activity may encompass a 'come to us' strategy, the desire of MGT Family Church is to be as effective outside the walls of the church as inside. The challenge for leadership is to de-emphasize the church as being a building where Christians worship to being a tool to reach the community, while simultaneously challenging members of MGT Family Church to 'be the church' in the community, a 'go to them' strategy. The congregation must not be defined solely by the building in which it meets. "When we define church as a place we

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[1350] Brian D. McLaren, <u>More Ready Than You Realize</u> Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 2002, p. 66.

[1351] Ronald Osborn, <u>Creative Disarray</u> St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1991, pp. 183-187.

visit, a program we attend, a pastor we follow, or by our personal preferences, I believe we miss God's intentions."[1352]

Being a Church without Walls means much more than conducting programs in the community. If Jesus has promised to be, "where two or three are gathered" (Matthew 18:20) and these people who are believers can be considered "the Church," then church is 'out there' anywhere these types of gatherings take place. Without negating the importance of the corporate gathering, the functionality and purpose of church best fulfils the "Go ye therefore" mandate as it exists and impacts its community. Practically speaking, this means that the small group meeting in a home, or a couple who invites their unbelieving neighbours in for a meal, or an ALPHA gathering in a neutral location, or the book club which discusses a recent literary release in relation to the meaning of life, or the volleyball league which consists of both believers and seekers, is in reality the church in action, without walls.

At MGT Family Church, leadership has viewed missions[1353] as a separate endeavor. Speakers challenge each person and department a few times a year to consider what he or she can do to resource missions, financially or with their time, perhaps as part of a short or long term missions trip. The church should, "subsume missions in mission,"[1354] meaning that missional activity must be viewed, processed, contextualized and expressed holistically as opposed to local activity being labelled "witnessing" and cross-cultural engagement being termed 'missions.' Local church personnel can facilitate missions work as a project that has a particular life span and supported by money that is raised in new ways for a particular distant cross-cultural context. Habitat for Humanity is such a "one-time approach to mission."[1355] Projects such as this provide opportunity for

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[1352] Jennifer Ashley, Mike Bickle, Mark Driscoll, Mike Howerton, eds., The Relevant Church Lake Mary, FL: Relevant Books, 2004, p. 111.

[1353] Church missions is usually defined as supporting a full-time missionary in another culture, usually on another continent.

[1354] Brian D. McLaren, Reinventing p. 114-125.

[1355] Kennon L. Callahan, The Future That Has Come San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishing, 2002, p. 85.

parishioners to experience the exhilaration of missional activity in a controlled setting, oftentimes resulting in the development of a missionally active parishioner. Missional activity can be creative and unique and carried out by both those in the prime of life and the emerging and greying generations.[1356]

The pattern for missional activity must mirror that of the New Testament, moving away from competition and toward collaboration. While each believer is missionally engaged in the sphere of his or her influence, the desire of MGT Family Church is to move away from a "we can do this on our own" methodology. Strategic missional partnerships are alliances with other churches in the immediate community, social organizations in the community, missions organizations, churches around the world and missionaries who are called to the uttermost parts of the world. An effective model asks operative questions concerning how one prays, strategizes, and works with all believers toward establishing the body of Christ in one's communities[1357]

Conclusion

Organizational culture change is a difficult process at the best of times. Defining the proposed culture is half the challenge. For MGT Family Church, there is an agreement that an ideal church culture should promote and instruct in areas of spiritual formation, engage people in authentic relationships that encourage the corporate ministry of God's people, and missionally respond to the needs of the marginalized while confronting society with both biblical justice and grace. The vision of MGT Family Church is to be a "Church Without Walls." It is the desire of MGT Family Church leadership for the church to be a group of holistic believers who understand and exhibit personal spiritual formation, develop authentic relationships and engage in missional activity while contributing to the formation of a biblical missional faith community.

[1356] Brian D. McLaren, Reinventing pp. 138-174.
[1357] Reggie McNeal, Helping p. 2.

Culture Change At Portico

Introduction

A church-planting leadership team may have the luxury of defining and creating an organizational culture before the congregation begins to meet. Leadership can define each decision, function, and plan and carry it out accordingly. Existing church leadership has a much greater challenge. Not only does an embedded culture exist, either by previous design or default, but also it can be a long and arduous journey to gain agreement on a new and different culture. Furthermore, leaders must decide at what point to initiate the process of culture change and the foundational work that needs facilitation, not to mention the challenges that may emerge during the implementation.

This chapter will examine these foundational elements and the strategic examination, formation and realization of a culture that focuses on promotion and implementation of Spiritual formation, the facilitation of Authentic relationships in community and instruction and enactment of Missional activity. (SAM) In the case of Portico, leadership's development of an identifiable and desired culture took a period of time. This chapter chronologically reports the manner in which leadership integrated SAM principles into Portico's congregational life.

The Process of Change

Prior to 2001 there was little or no discussion regarding the identification or development of a church culture. Leadership viewed most program initiatives as independent and isolated and employed a linear 'cause and effect' methodology. They facilitated church culture formation by instinct and default. No long-term strategic plan, with or without due consideration to culture formation, had ever been put into place. Prior to this time the mission statement was, "To be a living example of the compassionate care of Jesus Christ, to win the lost, and to make disciples."[1358] The vision statement was, "To be a relevant

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[1358] Eldon Wright, Life Development Course Published internally for use at MGT Family Church, Fall 2003, Saddleback Church, Class BASIC Courses http://www.pastors.com/pcom/class/101.asp

community modeling Jesus Christ through caring relationships, encountering God in worship and empowered by the Holy Spirit in Evangelism and Discipleship."[1359] Although there were some inherent weaknesses in these statements, this was not the greatest problem. Leadership, rarely if ever, publicly articulated these statements with the result that they had virtually no correlation to church strategic development.

The discipling of believers, new or otherwise, solely consisted of The Life Development Course.[1360] It consisted of four levels, Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum, with a total of twenty-one lessons including such topics as "What does it mean to be a Christian?" sacraments, evangelism, missions, tithing and spiritual gifts. The fundamental premise of the course was admirable; the weakness was in the amount of material covered in such a short period of time with little or no correlation or support from the various departments and ministries of the church. Leadership confined the process of discipleship to this short-term 'fix' while emphasis and resources were deployed to grow the church quantitatively. On a positive note, a portion of this material became the basis for renewing the culture at MGT Family Church.[1361]

In the fall of 2000, the pastoral staff sounded a call concerning the need for a greater understanding of discipleship. The assistant pastors began discussions[1362] by defining the term "disciple" in relation to personhood, response to the Gospel, submission, relationships, and maturity.[1363] In October 2000, the senior pastor resigned and in the vacuum of senior pastoral leadership, the pastoral search committee discussed the leadership need for MGT Family Church.

February 25, 2006, http://www.pastors.com/pcom/class/201.asp, p. 1, February 25, 2006, http://www.pastors.com/pcom/class/301.asp, p. 1, February 25, 2006, http://www.pastors.com/pcom/class/401.asp, p. 1, February 25, 2006.

[1359] Ibid.

[1360] Ibid.

[1361] In this chapter MGT Family Church will be used to denote anything that took place prior to January 9, 2005. The name Portico will denote any activity that took place subsequent to the aforementioned date or an activity or value that continues to the present time.

[1362] This study group was called The Discipleship Forum.

[1363] Marc Gauvreau, Discipleship Forum Distributed notes from discussions, December 13, 2000.

From these conversations emerged a commitment to the long-term process of changing the culture of the church.[1364]

As the congregation installed a new senior pastor in July 2001, this was clearly the mandate. As a consensus style leader, he began to meet with the pastoral staff and soon came to understand the weaknesses of the church concerning discipleship. It became apparent that the church needed a plan for articulating a mission and vision that would impact the strategy of the church including the congregational life expression. The Discipleship Forum continued to meet into 2001 and provided a foundation for an emphasis and implementation on 'intentional discipleship,' serving as an intermediary step and impetus in the formation of a suitable church culture.[1365]

Very early in the culture change discussions leadership realized that the church in general, and specifically MGT Family Church, is a complex organism.[1366] As has been previously articulated, a church is more than a series of linear elements. It is a dynamic system. It would be counterproductive and foolhardy to isolate one aspect of church life, reconfigure that department, ministry or operational methodology, and then move on to the next aspect of church life. Church culture change is a 'delicate dance' demanding leadership savvy, sensitivity and determination.

This task would consist of two steps, an initial design, complete with mission and vision statements and proposed related changes, followed by consistent, ongoing monitoring of the established church culture.[1367] Leadership

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[1364] In the 2001 senior pastoral transition process, after consultation with current pastoral staff, the selection committee searched for a leader who could facilitate a culture change process. Tyrell Clark, (chairman of the pulpit committee) Personal Notes from a Conversation p. 1, Spring 2000. It was the arrival of Rev. Douglas Rhind as senior pastor that proved to be the catalyst.

[1365] Marc Gauvreau, MGT Pathway to Spiritual Maturity: Overview and Proposal Distributed notes from discussions, June 19, 2001.

[1366] Howard Snyder and Daniel V. Runyon, Decoding the Church Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2002, pp. 35-48.

[1367] The cultural design for Portico (formerly MGT Family Church) was examined extensively in a previous chapter.

believed that if a New Testament church culture[1368] could be established, relevant to the culture in which it was located, long-term growth[1369] would follow.

The first step was to examine the current culture in relation to biblical principles and societal needs, and clearly define the desired culture and an appropriate pathway. The organizational mission and vision would provide the trajectory and facilitate two parallel pathways.[1370] The leadership team would alter the culture of MGT Family Church through the development of shared values, shared practices and the personal internalizing of individual behaviours. Simultaneously, they would develop a strategic pathway through initiatives, goals and tasks.[1371] Church cultural development referred to what MGT Family Church was/is 'becoming' while the strategic side of congregational life referred to what the congregation was 'doing.'

One of the members of the pastoral team formalized this process in a document entitled "Developing a Strategic Roadmap – Bringing MGT's Vision to Life."[1372] The pastors and board agreed that strategic planning would take the form of initiating the process, gathering research, analyzing research, planning and consolidation of the findings into a document, which would formalize the church's mission, vision and values and ultimately guiding the congregation into the future. They would follow up by disclosing a plan for communicating and implementing the proposed culture change.

The next step was to craft and articulate a church mission statement. Although one previous leadership had established one, it appeared that few people could quote it. The impetus behind the development of a new mission

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[1368] As further study was facilitated, it was determined that a New Testament church culture was marked by intentional spiritual formation, the development of community and personal and corporate evangelism. See section on Restorationism pp. 29-30.

[1369] Qualitative (spiritual) and Quantitative.

[1370] Organizational Culture and Strategic Planning.

[1371] Some of these strategies were macro, part of the overall church strategy, while others were departmental or ministry specific, with a view to complementing the cultural pathway.

[1372] Aubrey Tozer, Strategic Roadmap: Bringing MGT's Vision to Life An internal, unpublished document, October 18, 2001.

statement was the lack of inherent and intentional missionality in church activities and in the lives of the congregants. This awareness and conviction began to form in 1989 when Portico's current senior pastor and the author were ministering at Abbotsford Pentecostal Assembly. The pastoral staff and deacons made a trip to Portland, Oregon to hear Bill Hybels of Willow Creek Community Church[1373] and his staff talk about creating a missional church culture based on Acts 2:42-49. It was during this conference that an awakening took place resulting in the realization that the church does not primarily exist for its own welfare but as a community that declares God's grace and mercy to the world.

In the mid to late 1990s a number of leaders in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada were instrumental in raising awareness for the need for increased missional activity. Dr. Irving Whitt and Jim Craig called for missional believers who were "intentionally engaged with their cultures living out the values of God's reign as growing Christ-followers and journeying with those outside the body of Christ towards faith in Jesus."[1374] They extrapolated this call to the local church setting. "The missional church understands it is sent by Christ into the world as a visible expression of the reign of God in communion with the global body of Christ, an alternative community and culture called to embody and proclaim the Good News of Christ from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth."[1375]

With these words and experiences ringing in the ears of church leadership, the pastoral staff modified the mission statement of the church at a 'day away' in the early fall of 2001 to "Leading seekers into a fully devoted relationship with God through Jesus Christ."[1376] The staff intended to create a statement characterizing Christian faith as a seamless journey from one's

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[1373] http://www.willowcreek.org/ p. 1, April 4, 2006.

[1374] It was from conversations and preliminary papers that these thoughts were formed. However, a formal presentation was created for the General Executive of the PAOC. James D. Craig and Irving A. Whitt, Theology and Philosophy of Missions (Unpublished CD- Rom) February 2004, pp. 97-98.

[1375] Ibid.

[1376] The word "seekers" was later changed to "people" to be more inclusive and overcome the negative emotions and controversy associated with "seeker-sensitivity."

searching for relationship with God to spiritual maturity. This was a definitive departure from the normal Pentecostal expression, which highly valued spiritual decisions and experiences, equating them with Christian maturity as opposed to viewing the life of Christian faith as a journey in which the church and its people are called to equip. This marked the beginning of the most significant cultural change and renewal MGT Family Church had ever seen. Further discussion enabled participants to develop criteria for what MGT Family Church valued through the creation of a set of 'E-Values.' This became the basis of a Fall 2001 preaching series by various pastoral staff.[1377]

During this same time period the administrative board and pastoral staff traveled to Cobourg, Ontario to meet for a Friday evening and all day Saturday.[1378] While the 'Foundational Values' sermon series served as a catalyst for culture change, the purpose of this meeting was to set the tone. For purposes of discussion, the moderator posed two formative visionary questions: "Can you imagine what MGT Family Church could look like in ten years?" and "What will it take to get us there?" To facilitate this 'dream phase' the senior pastor divided the participants into four groups to discuss the themes of The Great Commandment (Authentic Relationships with God and others), The Great Confession (Spiritual Formation), The Great Commission (Missional activity -

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[1377]Our Foundational Values
 1. Engaging People Through Intentional Evangelism
 2. Encouraging Loving Relationships
 3. Experiencing Community In Small Groups
 4. Embracing Holistic Spirituality
 5. Expressing Spirit-Led Worship
 6. Enabling People To Function In Their Spiritual Giftedness
 7. Empowering People To Become Servant Leaders
 8. Elevating The Biblical Standard Of Excellence

Value #8 was added approximately one month later by the board of deacons. Based on Christian A Schwarz, Natural Church Development Winfield, BC: The International Centre for Leadership Development and Evangelism, 1996, pp. 22-37. It should be noted that "Spiritual Giftedness" was a 'cornerstone element' of the formation of culture at Portico. This was to 'serve notice' to the church that it was not to be a pastor-led congregation, but a church where every person could find 'their place and purpose.'

[1378] Pastor/Board Retreat Cobourg, ON, October 2001. All data concerning this two-day meeting is derived from handouts and personal notes.

local) and The Great Commission (Missional Activity - regionally, nationally and internationally.)

Members of The Great Commandment team felt that in the ensuing year an emphasis should be placed on the corporate re-education of the philosophy of evangelism by encouraging congregational members to develop servant's hearts, expressing God's love in practical ways and inviting non-Christians to programs such as Alpha.[1379] The group defined 'three year success' by the observation of service to the Mississauga community, key evangelism events inside and outside of church facilities and the building credibility and visibility in the community. Similarly, the group felt that after the five-year point, the corporate culture should be characterized by increased relationship evangelism and teaching that encouraged each congregant to continue to refine and optimize his or her spiritual gifts. These themes continued into the 'ten year discussion' with little variance other than stressing the need for developing a suitable church facility to facilitate growth.

Those taking part in 'The Great Confession' discussion emphasized the formation of the believer's spiritual life.[1380] The discussion centered on "product and process."[1381] The formative questions became: "What does the church need to accomplish in the lives of members of the congregation?" and "How do we accomplish this?" The response came in a statement: "Fully devoted followers (disciples) should be produced through biblically informed changes in personhood, lifestyle, and relationships."[1382]

[1379] Early in the culture change process, leadership continued to think in terms of 'church programs.'

[1380] This was not a surprise as the pastor responsible for monitoring Spiritual Formation was the moderator.

[1381] At first glance this term, used initially by Marc Gauvreau, may appear to be more marketplace oriented. However, his point was that MGT Family Church had not developed any criteria or metrics concerning the success of a congregation. No one seemed to agree on what a local church was to 'produce.' This discussion ultimately led to the term 'fully devoted followers' as found in the mission statement. Likewise, a comprehensive 'process' and plan for discipleship was non-existent. Hence, MGT Family Church had a crisis of 'product and process.'

[1382] Personal notes from Pastor/Board Retreat, Cobourg, ON, October 2001.

Members of The Great Commission (local) discussion team felt MGT Family Church should be involved in the following endeavors: developing a community focus while establishing Portico as a training (equipping) center for congregational members and leadership from other churches, transitioning present facilities or build new state-of-the-art facilities for drama and music, developing more effective Children's Ministries facilities, becoming a resource center for those needing help with their marriages, employment needs and other life skills, developing a catering facility for conferences and social interaction of the congregation, discharging existing debt and fostering an increased commitment to release lay people to do the work of the ministry.

The Great Commission group discussed what has been traditionally referred to as 'missions,', referring to missional involvement regionally, nationally and internationally. The focus of this conversation concerning the gravity of lost humanity was two-fold. Through immigration, Mississauga is very multi-cultural,[1383] and this must not be lost in knowing that there are many unreached people in the world's population of six billion.[1384]

It was the desire of this group that MGT Family Church be viewed as a "missions church" with an open pulpit allowing missions alumni to preach regularly, to have missions visuals in church, to develop a missions resource center and establish an effective missions strategy through such methodology as seeking a relationship with a twin city in a country such as Japan. This discussion group also suggested that the church increase its effort to send short-term missions teams to various locales[1385] under the direction of a full-time missions pastor.

The Great Commission discussion group wished to increase MGT Family Church missions giving to designate a $500,000 budget for a missions pastor and

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[1383] This is an awareness that "the world is coming to us." This group's focus was on the qualitative as opposed to the quantitative. Therefore precise statistics were not discussed. As 'homework' from these discussions, they investigated the ethnicity of the Peel region.

[1384] For those in other cultures, the local church must make provision to fulfill the Great Commission by "going to them."

[1385] 100 people and $300,000 budget.

staff, full-time appointed missionaries, a highly organized missions convention, increased support for missionary families and relationships with three overseas churches. The five-year window increased all of the above by 50% with the addition of a missions training school, for both Canadians and other indigenous nationalities. After ten years the desired level of missions support was a $1,000,000 budget, twenty full-time missionaries, and direct involvement in five churches in other regions or countries.

One notes that many of the comments made during this 'dream session' and subsequent reporting times, concerned programmatic and numerical growth. Other than 'The Great Confession' group, participants gave little attention to the development of an organizational structure or culture. In a later session, the senior pastor strategically moved the discussion toward mission and vision to address these needs.[1386] Three words became descriptors for our strategic vision development; 'Reach, Restore, Release.' The pastoral staff added the word 'Regionalize' in the following weeks.

Reach	...seekers with the life-changing message of God's Outrageous Grace.[1387]
Restore	...individuals in the spirit and life of a culturally relevant, biblically authentic, community of faith.[1388]
Release	...Spirit-empowered servant-leaders for the purpose of achieving maximum kingdom impact.[1389]
Regionalize	...by becoming a Church without walls, meeting the needs of the individual within the context of their immediate community.[1390]

[1386] November 2001.
[1387] 'Reach' served as the beginning discussion point for both Missional Activity and Spiritual Formation.
[1388] 'Restore' served as the beginning discussion point for both Authentic Relationships and Spiritual Formation.
[1389] 'Release' served as the beginning discussion point for Spiritual Formation, Authentic Relationships and Missional Activity.

While there was comfort with this expression of vision development, leadership agreed that these statements were activity inclined as opposed to cultural descriptors. They would serve the purpose in an intermediary period but would not be the final statement(s) for a MGT Family Church organizational culture. If one peruses the notes from this retreat, it is uncanny how aligned the 'dream stage' has aligned with reality. The investment of this day-and-a-half session has proven to be one of the more fruitful leadership exercises in the last five years.

While 2001 served as a year to assess the church and its inherent challenges, the years between 2002 and 2004 proved to be foundational in the establishment of a renewed church culture. It was normal practice for the leadership of all departments to meet one Sunday evening a month for instruction and development. Pastors began to design these meetings for discussion around the core philosophies of our church. During this time period, they also examined the mission statements, values and strategies of other churches. Willow Creek Community Church (Barrington, IL) had chosen five words as cultural descriptors. In a similar fashion, Saddleback Community Church (Lake Forest, CA) organized their philosophy around Five Purposes.[1391] Although leadership agreed that MGT Family Church needed similar cultural identifiers, they did not implement a succinct model until early 2004.

Although a program to engage people in discovering their spiritual gifts, passions, abilities, personality and experiences was in place,[1392] there was a renewed commitment in 2002 to work with the church family in the discovery, and engagement of their gifts, abilities and passions. It was the intention of MGT Family Church leadership to abandon old paradigms which based church involvement and position on such criteria as willingness, energy or popularity,

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[1390] The discussion concerning 'Regionalize was oriented toward strategic development.

[1391] See Appendix 2, p. 391.

[1392] Eldon Wright, Development p. 1.

propelling the congregation toward being a gift-based church.[1393] A significant practical example of these values was the appointment of an Executive Pastor, responsible for Ministry Resources and Stewardship. He is an executive with CIBC Aerogold Visa (and has retained his position with that organization) and has been instrumental in the development of MGT Family Church governance, infrastructure, policies and procedures as well as the development of church mission, vision, and methodologies for the management of staff.

This appointment also signalled another major change. A hierarchal structure inadequately represented the cooperative nature of lay and pastoral roles. As pastoral leadership further developed a 'gift-based' church, there was an ongoing movement toward making the differentiating terms 'laity,' 'pastoral' and 'clergy' irrelevant in favour of positionally gifted people emphasizing role or ministry descriptions. Anytime a discussion is undertaken that includes references to paid or unpaid positions, terms such as 'full-time,' 'part-time' and 'volunteer' are used. Organizationally the senior pastor and two executive pastors are responsible for the following:

Senior Pastor	Executive Pastor-Operations Committee	Executive Pastor – Ministry Team
Worship	Corporate Governance	Children's Ministry
External Relationships	Policy Development	Student Ministries
Fine Arts	Finance	Adult Ministries
Ethnic Churches	Administration	Missions
	Facilities	Congregational Values Development

[1393] This was a driving principle in the culture formation discussions as part of the discussions concerning Spiritual Formation.

In the spring of 2002, through the Natural Church Development Inventory,[1394] the pastors and board recognized that the small group quotient had diminished to an extremely unhealthy level suggesting that the development of community had stalled.[1395] Because a high degree of spiritual growth takes place in small group relationships, and since the MGT Family Church level of these gatherings (quantitatively and qualitatively) was very low, the board designated budget surpluses to search for a 'Small Group Champion.' Shortly thereafter, the church welcomed a young businessman and integrated him into the full-time staff. He would be responsible for marshalling the congregation toward becoming a church of small groups, and provide settings for the development of community in accountable relationships. By the end of 2002 his work was prompting a significant philosophical change. MGT Family Church was moving from a church 'with' small groups to a church 'of' small groups.[1396]

With the vision of MGT Family Church being "A church without walls expressed through small groups," the church expended a great deal of energy and resources to create an infrastructure of small groups. They consist of a variety of sizes and types, all of which foster true community in the church.[1397] A number of 'seeker' groups function as the church in the community.[1398] 'CORE

[1394] Christian A. Schwarz, <u>Natural Church Development</u> Winfield, BC: International Centre for Leadership Development and Evangelism, 1998. After identifying the eight characteristics of a healthy church an inventory was developed and is available through the services of an approved facilitator from the Willowcreek Center for Leadership in Winfield, BC.

[1395] This marked the beginning of an earnest discussion concerning the formation of Authentic Relationships.

[1396] Although the optimization of small groups directly addresses the need for Authentic Relationships, the need for Spiritual formation and Missional activity were also high considerations. Discussion concerning the integration of these three cultural values was also a high priority.

[1397] Small groups 'in the church' refer to those which consist mainly of people who call Portico their church home and may have an 'open chair' to welcome newcomers, or those who have yet to find faith in Jesus Christ.

[1398] Groups that function as the 'church in the community' are those which are founded specifically with nonbelievers in view.

small groups'[1399] refers to the entire network of MGT Family Church small groups.[1400]

Although the outgrowth of small group is the formation of authentic relationships (community), not all small groups look the same. Presently, the greatest number of small groups at Portico fit into the category of 'CORE groups.'[1401] They provide a conducive environment for members to achieve their full potential as fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. Ideally, these small groups of three to ten people gather regularly in a variety of locations to practice the presence of God by developing authentic relationships, engaging in missional activity and becoming spiritually formed.

Second, there are 'Service Teams that share a common desire to serve others while building community. These teams can range anywhere from four to twenty-five people. They gather around the fulfillment of a task or volunteer ministry in order to build Christ-like community while working together.

A third category is 'Gateway Groups' where people of like interests or felt needs gather to have fun and discover God in the midst of living life to the fullest. These small groups of four to twenty people include seekers and a few Christian leaders who gather regularly in a wide variety of venues and times to build relational bridges and discuss the interests of the group.

The fourth type of group is called a 'Bridge Group.'[1402] Members of these gatherings share a common interest for a period of time and are missionally oriented. They come together for a specified period of time and specialized

[1399] CORE initially was an acronym for 'Christians On the Road to Excellence.' More recently this term has been used to denote that small groups are a core value of congregational life at Portico.
[1400] The team responsible for the development of the CORE small group structure at Portico consists of the Senior Pastor, the Executive Pastor (Ministries), the Small Group Pastor/Champion and the 'Church Without Walls' Pastor. The ensuing paragraphs serve as a report of the work of this committee for the past two years.
[1401] At first glance there seems to be a contradiction between 'CORE' referred to as the entire network and 'CORE' referred to as the small groups, which engage in Bible study, prayer and fellowship. This has been intentional from the perspective that the promotion of a SAM culture is best facilitated in a group as described, as opposed to a group of people who are volunteering or socializing together.
[1402] The term 'Bridge' is used in relation to crossing into a life of Christian faith or into the life of the church as defined by full integration into a CORE group.

instruction with the long-term goal of starting new groups or strengthening existing CORE groups.

The Small Groups Champion considers a number of factors when forming a CORE group. The first is proximity. Groups sometimes form according to the region, city or town where the members live, providing a level of convenience and potency for mission. The second guideline is purpose. Some groups may emphasize authentic relationships, some spiritual formation, and others missional activity. However, the core goal is to emphasize all three of these interdependent cultural values equally with the purpose of becoming fully devoted followers of Christ. The third characteristic is passion. Groups often meet together according to shared interests or felt needs, such as gender, life stage, activities, hobbies, work, areas of service, or major life events.

As the CORE group structure began to form in early 2002, leaders became aware that integrating people into small groups was a high maintenance process. For this reason, a service team of four to ten people gathered together regularly to create a variety of opportunities and implement ways for people to find community in the church through involvement in one of the many small groups. CORE personnel calls these people, who actively participate in the connection process by initiating conversations with Portico people and assisting them to engage in small groups, 'ministry connectors.'

In the fall of 2002, after further discussion, the pastoral staff determined that another 'blind spot' in the culture change process was the tension between 'doing' and 'being.' Strategy had moved ahead of organizational culture development. CORE personnel sounded an open call to congregational members to become involved in one of five roundtable discussions. They were The Strategic Mission Focus Team, The Communication Team, The Governance Team, The Operations Committee Team and The Prayer Team.

The Strategic Mission Focus Team, proved to be the foundation for the cultural re-formation process. Much of the ministry work had emphasized the role people would play in local church ministry. The Strategic Mission Focus

Team found the highest degree of comfort for Portico leadership in the five cultural descriptors from Willow Creek Community Church.[1403] They studied these words[1404] and their relationship to the desired culture. There was a measure of success and some cultural development as a result of this exercise, but some discussions seemed to bog down. However, in the mind of church leadership there continued to be dissatisfaction with simply 'doing church' without purpose and direction. A commitment to establish ministry purposes, philosophy and culture was priority number one for this committee and ultimately the leadership as a whole.

Also emerging from this discussion was agreement concerning the values of community, spiritual growth and the personal role of the Christian in the lives of those who have yet to find faith in Jesus Christ. The participants recognized the overarching need to design the culture of the church that would produce these qualities and competencies in the lives of those who were part of the congregation. This was a giant step toward changing the renewal of MGT Family Church.

The Communications Team met to determine the best methodology to communicate values and programming information to the MGT Family Church congregation. They established priorities of uniformity and consistency which would provide the basis for choosing the types of media, printed and audio/video, and associated designs.[1405]

The Governance Team began to work closely with the senior pastor to study, plan and implement a change from a board-led church to an elder-led church. They searched the scriptures for principles, sought legal opinions and outlined a process which later resulted in full implementation.

[1403] The Five G's https://www.willowcreek.org/SpiritualFormation/Membership/FiveGs.asp, p. 1, February 23, 2006.
[1404] Grace, Growth, Groups, Gifts and Good Stewardship.
[1405] This became more specific as time progressed with the choosing of fonts, corporate colours and templates for both the entire church and specific departments.

Up to this point, the organization of the support ministries was a loose association under the Executive Pastor and an Operations Committee. (OPS) The formalization of this group took place through an articulation of purpose(s), an establishment of regular meetings and an identification of work necessary to complete the process. Leaders in hospitality, ushering, parking lot facilitation, finances and other related items began to meet together. Early in 2003 this group assumed the responsibility of day-to-day church communications, although special project committees continued to meet separately as necessary.

The Prayer Committee met to pray for God's leading in the culture change process, design an ongoing process to facilitate prayer as part of congregational life and implant the value of prayer in the forefront of the minds of congregants. Regular prayer meetings, prayer teams, intercessory teams, the facilitation of prayer requests and prayer lists continue to be the outgrowth of the work of this committee.

Looking back at the culture development of Portico, one can point to 'watershed moments.' One such moment was the Pastor/Board Planning Day held on April 26, 2003. The theme of the discussion of this meeting was the Organizational Alignment Model, Values and Vision. For the first time leadership overtly broached the topic of 'culture change' by identifying and describing the inherent process. The group discussed the topic of regionalization and becoming a 'church without walls' at length. They agreed that the characteristic of church growth should not be a 'bigger and better box' along the lines of the American mega-church model,[1406] but rather a missional model that would lead to the establishment of congregations throughout the Peel region. Ensuing discussion centered on the development of a strategy that would enable this to take place.

Planners would assess each church event according to the missional nature of the church and its people. Early 2003 marked the unveiling of Mel

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[1406] For example, the American banking model has been characterized by a main, stand alone location while the Canadian banking system approach is to locate branches within as many communities as possible.

Gibson's "The Passion."[1407] With a heightened awareness and some controversy in the community, MGT Family Church hosted a premiere for regional pastors. Representatives from Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, Focus on the Family and other likeminded organizations challenged pastors to encourage Christ-followers to use the movie to engage non-believers in conversation. Because the pastoral leadership of MGT Family Church was determined to raise the missional component of the people in the church, platform personnel emphasized this media presentation and made accompanying tools available. A multitude of reports emerged from people who had connected with people who were seeking faith and relationship with God.

Church leadership revisited the strategic roadmap in the fall of 2003. They reaffirmed the direction of long-term vision development as established beginning in 2001, and continuing into 2003, and identified next steps. This examination included discussion regarding spiritual life development. The pastoral staff realized a catalyst was necessary for the development of both spiritual formation and authentic relationships and recommended The Purpose-Driven Life (PDL)[1408] as a congregational emphasis in September and October of 2003. In the last ten years of MGT Family Church congregational life, this seven-week event has had the single most impact in unifying and aligning the congregation. Each congregant was responsible for intensifying their personal journey, their journey in community (small group) and attendance at the Sunday morning service. The Journey of Purpose[1409] was a 'kick-start' to the formation of small groups. Before this campaign began only about fifteen adult small groups were in existence. That number grew to eighty almost overnight. Following the conclusion of the Forty Days of Purpose campaign the number of ongoing small groups, not including children's and teens, remains at sixty.

[1407] The Passion of the Christ http://www.thepassionofthechrist.com/splash.htm, p. 1, February 25, 2006.
[1408] The Purpose Driven Life www.purposedriven.com, p. 1, October 29, 2005.
[1409] 40 Days of Purpose http://www.purposedriven.com/en-US/AboutUs/About_PD_Homepage.htm, p. 1, February 23, 2006.

Another benefit of the PDL project was the determination of the people of our church family to become more missional. The ARTS department, which usually produced a major musical/dramatic production for Christmas, changed the format to a dinner theatre conducting one-hour performances. Not only did the people of the congregation rise to new levels of volunteerism,[1410] but also PDL 'graduates' welcomed a high degree of conversational engagement with non-believers.

Although programming gave a great deal of attention to the adult demographic, the pastoral staff observed that the Student Impact (SI) department was 'limping.' Leadership replaced one of the team members who was not in agreement with the overall direction of the church. The Executive Pastor of Church Ministries recommended reorganization of the SI department and invited a new director to be part of the pastoral team. His mandate was to begin to develop the organizational culture of the student demographic (Grades 6 – University) to mirror what was taking place among the adults.

During the process of changing the culture of an organization, there were times when leadership put the process on hold for a time of reflection and contemplation to discern the next steps. This gave them opportunity to ensure that all understood what had taken place and where the church was going.

Leadership undertook such an exercise in June of 2003. The elders prepared a document for congregational distribution entitled A Journey of Purpose. It began with the words, "Can you imagine a community of faith ..." and articulated the biblical passages that informed the congregation of the culture change process. In addition to the mission, vision and values statements, the key sentence was, "Our current facility can be reconfigured to serve both as an expression point and a center for ministry development."[1411]

[1410] There were over 400 volunteers for this event.
[1411] Elder Statement, A Journey of Purpose June 19, 2003. Published as a congregational document.

The elders served notice that they were positioning MGT Family Church for something greater than its present role.

In preparation for evangelism and church growth church and denominational leadership approved a project to plant a church in Brampton in the fall of 2003 and brought a church-planting pastor onto the pastoral staff. He began to meet with stakeholders and developed a strategy to realize the establishment of a new church with similar cultural values to MGT Family Church. Interestingly enough, as discussion continued, the question of methodology arose concerning engaging in traditional church planting methodology as opposed to other more effective strategies.

During the latter months of 2003 and 2004 the consensus was that the small group structure of Portico would be the most effective means for reaching the communities of Mississauga and the surrounding region. The focus of this church planter became developing the 'outside the walls' ministry of MGT Family Church. For purposes of neighbourhood focus, he divided the Mississauga region into quadrants with the center point located at Britannia Road and Erin Mills Parkway, Mississauga. Within this framework small groups were/are encouraged to reach out to their neighbourhoods. As these small groups strengthen, a number will meet together to form a 'clustering' for further outreach effectiveness and ultimately create some form of church expression decentralized from the 1814 Barbertown Road campus.

The year of 2004 saw a certain degree of culmination in the major cultural development of ministry philosophy and life at MGT Family Church. Leadership had brought clarity through the establishment of mission, vision, values and strategy. Strategic thinking had centered on what MGT Family Church ought to look like in the future. After all the formative philosophical investigation and work which had been informed by churches such as Saddleback Church (Lake Forest, California), North Point Community Church (Atlanta, Georgia), and Willow Creek Community Church (Barrington, Illinois), leadership felt that, because of

our culturally specific suburban Canadian context, they would need to articulate aspects unique to the church's situation.[1412]

In the spring of 2004, leadership began to distil all of this thinking into three characteristics represented by the acrostic SAM[1413] and based on Matthew 4:19.

		Context	Scriptural Reference: Matthew 4:19
S	Spiritual Formation	Personally, In community, and corporately	I will make you ...
A	Authentic Relationships	In small groups, our working and living spheres, and around the world.	Come follow me ...
M	Missional Activity	In our working and living spheres and around the world.	...fishers of men

This SAM model, influenced by the templates of Willow Creek's Five G's and Saddleback's Five M's, is complementary to the E-values penned in the fall of 2001. Operative questions such as, "What does a fully-devoted follower of Jesus Christ look like?" "How can I become more fully devoted?" and "What are the considerations that need to be made to design church life at MGT Family Church?" arose from the mission statement.[1414]

[1412] See Appendix 3, p. 392.

[1413] Marc Gauvreau, Elevate and Equip Rationale Unpublished working paper concerning MGT Family Church culture, September 21, 2004.

[1414] During this time period, the pastor primarily responsible for Spiritual Formation (Marc Gauvreau) created a compendium of articles on Spiritual Formation. These included the following: Dallas Willard, Spiritual Formation: What it is, and How it is Done www.dwillard.org/articles/artview.asp?artID=58, October 31, 2005, Dallas Willard, Spiritual Formation in Christ: A Perspective on What it is and How it Might be Done www.dwillard.org/articles/artview.asp?artid=81,October 31, 2005, Dallas Willard, Idaho Springs Inquiries Concerning Spiritual Formation www.dwillard.org/articles/chrislist.asp, October 31,

As the year (2004) progressed, leadership examined the church evangelism strategy. Christ-followers were encouraged to develop a personal strategy to lead their friends and family to faith. Corporately, the church had been adhering to a church-planting model. Disagreements with district leadership regarding their expectations for the Brampton site caused church leadership to re-evaluate its involvement. Simultaneously, the small group network (CORE) was flourishing as an end in itself. However, with limited capacity in the present facilities, broader missional thinking was not in place. Sensing this, the elders entered into additional discussion to determine how to facilitate congregational growth.

The present building's sanctuary, office and support facilities were overtaxed. Various levels of leadership began to discuss expansion and relocation. Property in Meadowvale (an old brick manufacturing plant and related quarry) was a possibility. However, during a summer session, the Ontario Municipal Board rejected re-zoning application and this possibility disappeared. The development committee investigated other models of congregational expansion to respond to the cost prohibitive nature of relocation in Mississauga. As these conversations progressed, participants challenged the traditional definition concerning church operations. In North America, a church congregation is normally associated with a building. In other regions of the world a congregation is associated with a tree or a home or a school building. The emphasis is on what takes place in congregational life as opposed to the type of facility in which they meet.

After considering the possible costs of developing a complex to support future ministries, leadership realized a new type of thinking had to occur for the

2005, Spiritual Disciplines in a Postmodern World www.faithmaps.org/praxisarticles.htm, October 31, 2005, Dallas Willard, Spiritual Disciplines, Spiritual Formation and the Restoration of the Soul www.dwillard.org/articles/chrislist.asp, October 31, 2005, Dallas Willard, The Human Body and Spiritual Growth www.dwillard.org/articles/chrislist.asp, October 31, 2005, Dallas Willard, Why Bother with Discipleship? www.dwillard.org/articles/artview.asp?artID=71, October 31, 2005, Dallas Willard, How to be a Disciple www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=336 October 31, 2005 and Excerpts on Spiritual Formation Leadership Resources, Christianity Today, www.BuildingChurchLeaders.com, October 31, 2005.

future development of MGT Family Church.[1415] If the church is based on people meeting and forming relationships, then its location and size can be inconsequential. It also became increasingly evident that a union between small groups and missional thinking had to be forged. After intense leadership discussions a strategy emerged; MGT Family Church is becoming a church without walls expressed through small groups. This means missional thinking must be personal, corporate (as an entire church family) and an expression of each small group.

The design for small groups around demographical, generational or geographical reference points is to develop cooperative efforts between the members of small groups and lead people to a life of faith. For this reason the leadership team made a major alteration in the role of the 'missional pastor.' Presently his job description is to work closely with the CORE Groups Champion (Pastor) to network and facilitate small group missional activity. He continues to target certain areas (as described above) to establish a variety of diverse local church expressions and work closely with the small groups pastor to insure that people are missional in their communities as individuals but, most of all, as a function of their small groups. To impact neighbourhoods and specific marketplace settings, he promoted the establishment of small groups based on geography.[1416] A second, not as effective, criterion is affinity. People do enjoy meeting with others who share similar lifestyles and values. Some groups meet both of these criteria. It is not uncommon to find a group of a dozen '40-somethings' in a small group where all of them live within a ten-minute radius.

Leadership discussions at the macro level have begun to impact the various ministries and departments of the church. As the culture of Portico

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[1415] In the present form it would result in an indebtedness of thirteen million dollars.

[1416] Dave Travis, Multiple Site/Multiple Venues and Campuses http://www.leadnet.org/resources/docs/multisitereport.pdf, p. 5. Larry Osborne, pastor of North Coast Church in San Diego refers to 'new neighbourhoods' as the groups of people that are both affinity and geographically joined. Specialized sports such as 'rep' hockey or arts groups fit into these categories. This is also important for suburban people who do a lot of commuting.

continues to unfold, the CORE team will establish templates and metrics to guide MGT Family Church into greater missional capacity and fruitfulness.

In the fall of 2004 the leadership team undertook an evaluation of the connecting process and observed a critical flaw. Although the participation of people in small groups had significantly increased, there remained approximately fifty percent of the adult demographic of the congregation that had not yet connected.[1417] The ensuing discussion revealed that for some, integration into a small group where there was no pre-existing relationship, was intimidating. In stark contrast to the large group dynamics, participants expected others to be transparent, vulnerable and accountable. The difficulty of expecting a person to move from the large church gathering to a small group led to the addition of two additional steps in Portico's integration strategy. The CORE Team established mid-sized groups, smaller than the church services of eight hundred people but larger than the small group of twelve people around geographical, demographic or interest criteria.[1418] They referred to these varying types of entrance points as gateways, funnels and bridges. [1419]

While developing the integration system of the church, the board simultaneously initiated a change concerning the governance of the church.[1420]

[1417] This figure was determined by the percentage of people in small groups as noted in attendance records and reported by CORE group leaders as compared to Sunday service attendance.

[1418] Carl F. George, The Coming Church Revolution: Empowering Leaders for the Future Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 1994. Carl George, advocate of the Meta-Church Model, has labelled these as 'fishing pools.' As relationships are built, people can be invited to a small group.

[1419] A 'Gateway' is an entrance point. A person can enter into the Portico community directly through the larger church gathering, the mid-sized group, a CORE group or in relationship with a member of the congregation. A "Funnel" is an activity or event that serves as a catalyst to prompt an integrating person to take the next step. For example, a Welcome Café is conducted from time to time to meet with people who are new to Portico. A "Bridge" refers to the movement of a person from one type of gathering to another. For example, a person who attends the Sunday services at Portico may become a member of a small group. On the other hand they may "cross a bridge" to a mid-sized group gathering, meet some people and then "cross another bridge" and join their small group. See Appendix 4, p. 393.

[1420] This was taking place between the spring of 2003 and the fall of 2004 and culminated in the annual meeting, October 2004. Source Documents: Notes from Willow Creek Elder seminars from two conferences, October 2003, Agincourt, ON and February 2002, Barrington, IL., Church Strategy/Board Retreat Restructuring for Maximum Effectiveness Personal Notes, p. 1, February 2002.

To this point the organizational structure remained similar to the early days when the church was on a much smaller scale. The diversity of roles for the pastoral staff and deacons, including the development of mission and vision, the day-to-day business of stretching and balancing the resources and the care of people consumed them. Pressing business and administrative needs of church ministry often drew attention away from longer range planning needed to identify ministry needs and to provide for sufficient resources including volunteers, facilities and possibly paid staff to support these ministries. The leadership and management structures that served Portico so well in the formative years were now showing signs of stress in the attempt to deal with the growth in size and in activity. They simply were not sufficient for continued growth.

In relation to the desired cultural values of Spiritual Formation, leadership felt inadequate attention was given to engaging people in the areas of their spiritual giftedness and inherently expecting them to bear the responsibility for both the business and spiritual aspects of the congregation. As a result, there was a constant operational tension in the lives of the leadership and during their meetings. Discussion of matters of vision and mission engaged approximately half of the board members. The other half eagerly participated when matters of finance and resourcing were the topic of conversation. As the board observed and discussed this dichotomy they moved to align church leadership into three groups, one to care for the spiritual matters of the church, another to help in the area of congregational administration and day-to-day operations, and a third to give oversight to the ministry of MGT Family Church.

There is some background to this discussion. At the 1995 Board Retreat, they recognized the need to revitalize the governance structure[1421] and made a recommendation to establish an Elder Board as a spiritual resource base for MGT Family Church's spiritual health and ministry. This would allow for an expansion

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[1421] Evon Horton, Board Retreat Report PowerPoint presentation to the congregation, May, 1995.

of those caring for the spiritual well being of the body of Christ. The 1996 board affirmed this resolution at their annual retreat.[1422]

The church made no progress on this change until 2002 when governance structural change became a focus of study. The leadership of MGT Family Church facilitated a governance change from one led by a pastor/pastoral staff/deacon board to a structure based on the biblical principle of spiritual gifts. In the fall of 2002 a nomination committee selected elders from the church membership[1423] through an interview process with final affirmation of the congregation. While these men and women act as representatives of the members of the congregation, their primary charge is to discover and represent the will of Christ as they oversee the spiritual life and ministry of Portico. They are not to be a board wielding power over the church. (Luke 22:25-26; I Peter 5:2-3) Legally, the elders have final accountability as the "controlling body" and ultimate decision-making authority in faith, practice and financial matters within the local body at Portico. In consultation with church leadership, both remunerated and volunteer, they shape the strategic ministry direction and affirm the philosophy of ministry of Portico the creating operating policies.[1424] These men and women work to ensure consistency of MGT Family Church mission, ministry initiatives and board policies, and continually evaluate all ministries to see that the church family members are being appropriately shepherded.

The elders also act as advocates for the Ministry Team and use their collective wisdom, discernment, pastoral or 'shepherding' and prophetic gifts to ensure the church remains on a true Biblical course while fulfilling its mission and vision. The Senior Pastor is a member of the Elder Board. The remaining elders work alongside the Senior Pastor to help the church deepen and recall its fundamental vocation and values, remember its history, care for its common life, and support those who are engaged in church programs. The elders will deal

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[1422] Evon Horton, Board Retreat Report PowerPoint presentation to the congregation, May, 1996.
[1423] Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord in whom they had put their trust. Acts 14:23.

[1424] As opposed to detailed procedures.

with conflict resolution, correction and church discipline, guarding the body against harmful influences, confronting and restoring those who are contradicting or acting contrary to the Board's understanding of biblical truth.

The elders appointed and empowered a second group, the Operations Committee,[1425] from the membership of the congregation. Operating within the policies established by the Elder Board, the Operations Committee (OPS) oversees day-to-day business operations of the Church. Members of this group provide operational planning and oversight for all human resource, legal, accounting, financial, administrative, and compliance aspects of the ministry of Portico. OPS may establish projects or sub-committees relating to budgets, equipment, buildings, facilities and property. Members of the OPS committee serve the church using their marketplace expertise and administrative gifts in the following areas:

o Financial/Legal – The Operations Committee has a Finance Committee responsible for the development of budgets and ongoing fiscal control which reflects the vision and decisions of the Elder Board.

o Human Resources – the consistent application of human resource policies and administrative responsibilities.

o Property and Facility – the maintenance of the physical plant in a manner befitting the standard of excellence desired and the provision of the physical plant for the programs and services determined by the Pastors.

o Audio Visual – the provision and maintenance of audiovisual equipment.

o Information Technology – the provision and maintenance of IT equipment.

In consultation with the Elder Board and the Executive team,[1426] the Senior Pastor appoints people into key ministry leadership and staff positions

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[1425] Formed a few years earlier, but optimized in 2002. This group, referred to as 'deacons' in the scriptures, is called OPS due to the history of the use of the word 'deacons' at MGT Family Church. To differentiate this group of men and women from the elders, it was felt that a new term should be used even though they, in fact, are the deacons.

[1426] Two Executive Pastors, one who gives leadership to the Ministry Team, the other to OPS.

according to their spiritual gifts and abilities.[1427] This Ministry Team[1428] is responsible for teaching the Word of God by precept and example in order to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. They direct and attend to the day-to-day affairs of the various ministries of the church in full cooperation and relationship with the other leadership bodies. Members of the Ministry Team devote their efforts to building and coordinating ministries and empowering teams of volunteers to facilitate ministry in alignment with the vision, strategy and policies of the church as set forth by the Elder Board.

The elders designate key leaders or Directors, a sub-group of the Ministry team,[1429] to lead and manage the activities of the Ministry Team. They are responsible for insuring that each ministry flourishes by providing departmental vision[1430] complementing the future direction of the 'big picture' of church ministries and giving leadership to departmental staff. The Directors are responsible for recruiting, training and mentoring volunteer staff and the overall management of the ministry team.[1431] Church leadership expanded this model to delineate the various working groups in each circle and their interaction with each other.[1432]

The need for continued team unity, healthy relationships, and an equal sharing of responsibility is vital. This has often been enhanced both during times of success and extreme difficulty. Leadership first observed the power of a unifying project in 2001 when MGT Family Church hosted a Willow Creek Association, Canada (WCAC) conference. Hundreds of volunteers engaged in activities that contributed to the most successful conference WCAC had ever

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[1427] This includes paid positions. The appointment of pastoral staff is facilitated by the Executive Team (or in the case of Executive pastors, the senior pastor.) Not active in the process, the Elder board does meet with the candidates for final approval once they have been selected by the Executive Team.

[1428] Made up of part-time, volunteer and full-time personnel.

[1429] The Management Team is made up of Directors, the key leader/pastor from each department.

[1430] In concert with the mission and vision of the church as a whole.

[1431] See Appendix 5, p. 394.

[1432] See Appendix 6, p. 395.

experienced. MGT Family Church has hosted conference projects twice in subsequent years.

Two members of the Portico staff suffered physical challenges in 2004. At the time of this writing the Children's Ministry director is preparing for her third surgery as a result of a car accident.[1433] One of the accounting staff recently passed away due to inoperable cancer. In both cases the MGT Family Church staff team rallied around these members fostering greater unity.

Since 2001 the staff has been re-organized a number of times. At the outset of the change process the staff structure clearly delineated between pastoral and support staff. Over the last four years leadership has modified the structure to reflect task and values. The working ministry teams are ARTS[1434], Student Ministries and Children's Ministries. Serving these groups is the CORE team, those who promote the values of spiritual formation, authentic relationship and missional activity.

One of the greatest threats to team unity during a time of cultural transition is a member or members who are unable to understand or adjust to the culture change. Over the last four years leadership has asked one pastor to leave, and four have left on their own volition. With one exception,[1435] these pastors departed due to the conflict created between the new church culture and their inability to minister within the new reality.[1436] Still, in some of these cases staff transitions have been times to celebrate while others have been more

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[1433] This staff member subsequently resigned to take another position and a new Children's Ministry Director was named.

[1434] All staff members (full, part-time and volunteer) who are responsible for Sunday services.

[1435] One of the chief architects of SAM has assumed duties in another Mississauga church, not because of philosophical differences, but because this new setting desperately needed someone with his gifts and abilities as well as providing an opportunity for personal ministerial development.

[1436] These challenges were a result of philosophical differences. These pastors were hired by the previous senior pastor who outlined certain job descriptions. As the new SAM culture was established, the differences were not in areas of Spiritual Formation, Authentic Relationships or Missional Activity; it was in the expectations around operational and leadership methodology. Pastors who were used to doing it on their own, as opposed to empowering others, or had developed a tightly-knit leadership group and were being asked to expand their base of leadership, were extremely uncomfortable. At Portico this discomfort is referred to as "chemistry" and when it begins to suffer a departure is usually imminent.

painful. Interviews for new staff have centered largely on Portico's mission, vision and organizational cultural issues to insure that the emerging staff is in tune with the church's direction.

In terms of volunteerism and leadership training, the congregation warmly received a Spring 2001 initiative which successfully increased the number of gift-based ministry volunteers. The CORE team offered a six-week training course, entitled SHAPE, allowing each participant to explore one's Spiritual gifts, Heart (passion), Abilities (natural gifts), Personality and Experiences and how each of these elements contributed to one's uniqueness for Christian service. After three years of a successful program, including an all-church small group curriculum, leadership abandoned this endeavor because it was 'just another program.' If the church needs to optimize volunteerism and leadership development, the ministry team must reintroduce a training element in the context of relationship. The CORE team will integrate this into the abovementioned connecting strategy.

Ongoing practical training takes place within the various strata of the church. With the institution of the Elders Team, the practical work formerly undertaken by their predecessors, the deacons, was now under the purview of the newly formed Operations Team. In early 2004, the Executive Pastor (OPS) met with an implementation team and began to review the mission, vision and culture of MGT Family Church and how they could be positively affected by support ministries such as facilities management, communication and marketing, financial services and a hospitality team. With the success of these information and training sessions, the OPS began to function in a renewed capacity by the first week of March 2004.

Because MGT leadership has spent so much energy over the last four years in alignment activities, leadership development has largely been a by-product of the organizational culture change. Each project or endeavor has required the challenging and empowering of existing volunteers to greater development and the influence and integration of new volunteers into an ever-

growing ministry picture. Other than a formal course[1437] or two, the Ministry Team has largely neglected leadership training. The next major Portico initiative has to focus on the development of its leaders. The Ministry Team will propose an approach based on a discipleship model with both relational and formal instructional approaches.

In April 2004, a comprehensive review and consolidation of church values was necessary. To this point all previous consultation and discussions were productive yet somewhat disjointed. In June of 2004, the elders appointed a Values Team consisting of two pastors, two elders, one staff member and two members of the congregation. The elders charged them with the task of establishing and articulating the three main values of MGT Family Church, suggesting a new name for the church and creating a plan for branding. The three values, as proposed and accepted by church leadership (in order of importance) are:

SHARING the message of God's redemptive love

GROWING together in the context of biblical community and

SERVING others through Spirit-led obedience.[1438]

These will serve as a metric for the prioritization of church programming and activities for years to come.

During this time frame leadership engaged in a re-examination of the MGT Family Church mission statement. The elders had expressed concern that "Leading people into a fully devoted relationship with God through Jesus Christ" was simply not strong enough and lacked passion. For this reason they altered the mission statement to, "Reaching people far from God and leading them into a fully devoted relationship with God through Jesus Christ."[1439] The church will evaluate every plan and activity with the metrics of this mission statement.

[1437] Ken Blanchard, Lead Like Jesus
http://www.leadlikejesus.com/common/content.asp?PAGE=340, February 18, 2006.
[1438] Portico Communications Team Mission, Vision and What We Value. An internal church document created and published September 2005.
[1439] Ibid.

With the realization that people, other than leadership, are not in the habit of memorizing mission or vision statements, the Values Team sought to establish an easily remembered "tag line"[1440] that would describe everything in which the church is involved. The phrase "Living Above, Loving Beyond" was proposed and accepted. Living Above is indicative of the expectation that each person at MGT Family Church is involved in a life of spiritual formation based on biblical principles. Loving Beyond represents the relationships in which one engages, both inside the church community and in the world, with a view to missional living.

On Sunday, January 9, 2005 the congregation met in one service for a vision casting session lasting nearly two and a half hours. The senior pastor led our church family through a service that focused on the three primary moments of "Our Story!" The first moment focused on "Our Story: A chapter worth remembering!" The congregation celebrated God's faithfulness beginning with the moment the first group of believers gathered together in 1970 to formally meet as a church in a home on the corner of the QEW and Hurontario.[1441]

The second moment focused on "Our Story: A chapter worth knowing!" Various elders updated the congregation on where God had been leading the leadership for the past three and a half years. The senior pastor gave a full explanation of church mission, values and vision. Expressed in a 'sound bite,'[1442] the leadership called MGT Family Church to be a church that is committed to Living Above, Loving Beyond.

In the third moment, leadership focused on "Our Story: A chapter yet to be written!" Previous church names (Mississauga Gospel Temple & MGT Family Church) served the congregation well in their eras. Recognizing that the Mississauga community is changing, as evidenced in the extreme diversity of

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[1440] This technical term was introduced by members of the committee who are active in the marketing industry.

[1441] Doug Rhind. Revolution Day PowerPoint Presentation, January 9, 2005.

[1442] This is a technical term introduced by marketing personnel who have stressed the importance of using short memorable phrases to describe the mission and vision of the church.

cultures and continuing influx of new immigrants into our region, church leadership determined that it was time for change. The new church name, **PORTICO, a community church**, means 'entrance' or 'a welcoming place.' A portico is often a columned area that gives shape to outside space. "It is the place where people from all walks of life, at all stages of life, can be ushered into a greater understanding of what God has in mind for them."[1443]

There is also an interesting biblical connection to Solomon's porch (portico) where people entering and leaving the temple met and connected. They formed relationships which impacted their lives. This is *apropos* in that Mississauga is referred to as a gateway for the nations of the world. Church leadership desires that Portico be a place where all are welcome to worship, grow in faith, experience community and be inspired to touch the lives of those who continue to find faith in God.[1444]

Portico leadership understands that the culture of Mississauga is characterized by 'busyness.' CORE personnel created a seasonal church calendar[1445] to provide church programming with a basic annual rhythm for planning specialized training and leadership events, as well as a suggested guideline for CORE[1446] small groups to customize their activities for optimal health and balance.[1447]

Open discussion of financial issues[1448] in Pentecostal circles has often been taboo, contrary to biblical precedent, which addresses the topic of money with a high degree of regularity. With this in mind, the Portico Operations Committee took a proactive approach. They offered a course entitled Good

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[1443] Ibid.
[1444] A direct reference to SAM culture.
[1445] See Appendix 7.
[1446] CORE represents the core value of community as championed by Portico's small group ministry.
[1447] See Appendix 8, p. 397.
[1448] Including charitable giving and the usage of money.

$ense [sic][1449] a number of times in various venues and established guidelines and a process for benevolence.

By the spring of 2005 Portico had completed two years as an elder-led congregation. It was time to evaluate the effectiveness of this new governance structure. The seven elders[1450] met to determine, by peer and self-evaluation, if they had retained their standing in such things as personal commitment to Jesus Christ as Saviour, fulfillment of spiritual qualifications for eldership, agreement with the church constitution and an attitude of servant hood. As the final authority in matters of mission, vision, values and culture, the elders invited the Executive Pastors to join them for a day-long evaluation concerning progress over the previous two years.[1451] They determined that the application of mission and vision was somewhat successful. The weakness of the congregation was determined to be in the lack of assimilation of missional and community values.

Programmatically, the Sunday service, small group alignment campaigns[1452] and special events[1453] were successful. The infrastructure of the church and the services it offers were gaining in effectiveness. However, some aspects of Portico church life not working well were some small group curriculums,[1454] the lack of proficient small group leadership and a downturn in volunteerism. As a result of this evaluative discussion Portico leadership began to address these areas. The Ministry team, under the direction of the elders,

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[1449] Dick Towner, Good Sense Ministry www.goodsenseministry.com, October 29, 2005.

[1450] Six of the elders are members of Portico. The seventh member, by virtue of his role, is the senior pastor. The membership of this group was a major topic of conversation during governance discussions. Canadian government regulations stipulate that a paid staff member can not be a member (or chairperson) of a governing board. However, arguments have been made that due to the spiritual nature of the church and its unique governance, that this practice is acceptable. This, of course, changes the way a Board of Elders function. At Portico, the elders, including the Senior Pastor, are seen as a team working together for the betterment of the church, as opposed to an independent board acting on behalf of the membership.

[1451] The work of the pastoral team (Executive Pastors, Ministry Directors, Program Directors) is to lead the ministries of the church with a view to carrying out the mission and vision of the church, as established by the Elder Board. Ongoing formal and informal dialogue is integral to this process.

[1452] Forty Days of Purpose http://www.purposedriven.com/en-US/Home.htm, p. 1, October 4, 2005.

[1453] Such as Sunday evening Jazz Café, Christmas musical and Worship Celebrations.

[1454] Mainly due to poor planning, communication, coordination and timing.

coordinated a renewed emphasis on prayer, a re-engaging of the mission statement in the various demographics of the church, a study of current facilities and the possibility of a future relocation and the conducting of a stewardship campaign.[1455]

In June 2005 the Ministry Team invited pastors, elders, ministry staff and the OPS to participate in a one-evening Volunteer Summit. In 2003 and 2004, one member of the Operations Committee infrastructure led a team of approximately twelve people through training for the purposes of empowering 'new to Portico' people into areas of service and/or long-term congregants into positions of greater responsibility. Unfortunately this group of trainers developed a reactive 'come to us' methodology as opposed to a proactive 'we'll go to them' approach. During this discussion, the Ministry Team determined that engaging people in their areas of giftedness worked best in relationship. Although training may be skill-based, the majority of mentoring should be around church mission, vision and strategy. Practical solutions included teaching existing leaders how to empower others, a recommitment to an instructional course on spiritual gifts, creative marketing associated with possibilities for ministry involvement, connecting people in service teams for purposes of community and recognizing there are optimal times on the church calendar for recruitment.

The CORE team has strengthened the small group structure with the introduction of a Coaching Staff to elevate the quality of leadership.[1456] This began in May and June of 2004 with a high degree of enthusiasm. Leaders were excited about the support network that was growing up around them. Unfortunately this group of people has not been easy to maintain and coaching activity has ground to a halt. A re-examination of the philosophy, methodology and implementation of gift-based ministry is essential. The formalization of this initiative may have led to its undoing. People recruited by CORE to act as

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[1455] At the time of this writing all four of these initiatives are being enacted.

[1456] Sandro DiSabatino and Ted Brown, The Coach in the Classroom A PowerPoint teaching for MGT Coaches, November 18, 2004. It is the partnership between a Servant-Leader and a Coach that takes discipleship to the next level.

coaches in the small group network viewed their role as honorary, as opposed to being integral to the future development of small groups' development. Again the apparent need for a relationship-based leadership training, complete with some formal classroom or teaching time, is understood to be necessary for the entire ministry infrastructure. This work continues.

Although the organizational cultural agenda has garnered much of the energy over the last five years, the Ministry Team has not neglected the programs of the church. On Palm Sunday 2005 the Executive Pastor (Ministries) preached a sermon to over 1600 people on the perceptions of the different characters present for the Triumphal Entry. At the end of the sermon the ushers distributed a family activity sheet with different age appropriate options. In the following weeks Information Center personnel rewarded families[1457] who completed the exercise with a Cadbury Easter Crème Egg for each member of the family. They distributed less than one hundred eggs indicating that participation in spiritual activities in the home is minimal. In coming months the Ministry Team will create an initiative that will communicate biblical expectations associated with spiritual formation in the family accompanied by resources that assist in communicating spiritual truths to all generations.[1458]

As Portico leadership continues to design the future of the church, each initiative and event must possess some connection to the mission, vision, strategy and goals of the church. They continue to discuss the development of a corporate and personal model for ministry. The four words being considered are Explore, Experience, Equip and Empower.[1459]

Portico must confront other realities. Leadership recognizes that present facilities are taxed to the limit; relocation is a major undertaking and an unrealistic expectation. Real estate agents characterize the Mississauga real

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[1457] The executive pastor created a broad definition of 'family.'
[1458] This will be left to the new Children's Ministry Director who became part of Portico staff on January 1, 2006.
[1459] Sandro DiSabatino. CORE Compass. An internal one-page document for small group leaders. Thursday, May 19, 2005.

estate market by high prices for land and few available or suitable large tracts.[1460] Limited resources have led to a serious consideration of different options. A Christian consortium[1461] has embarked on an investigation of a joint venture on a fifty-two acre piece of municipally-owned land in west Mississauga with the understanding that development will include services, such as sports fields and a seniors community center.

Since May 2005, the pastoral staff has gathered information concerning the multi-venue movement. Across North America, where real estate costs are prohibitive and people have an appetite for different worship styles, from traditional to contemporary, congregations have chosen to meet in different settings while maintaining commonality in mission, vision and values and teaching. Practitioners align these 'expressions' demographically or culturally.[1462] A development committee continues to search for a parcel of land that may lead to relocation. Realizing that in all probability, this process may be anywhere from three to five years in duration, a committee is in the process of assessing present physical structures to determine what modifications could be made to increase program effectiveness.

In the spring of 2005, the elders discussed the possibility of a stewardship campaign to fund the Portico vision. The elders felt the fall season was the best window for this endeavor. However, after a time of prayer, they opted to redesign and elongate the campaign as a congregational spiritual journey from September 2005 to April 2006.

The congregation has not accepted the culture change without protest. There has been collateral damage. Since September of 2004 a number of families have left Portico. Subsequent discussions and exit interviews have

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[1460] Meeting Notes-Portico Development Committee May 26, 2005. The Development Committee believes that fifteen acres are needed and the current market price is approximately $500,000 per acre. A committee does remain in place for the purposes of long-range planning. This Development Committee is divided into two sub-groups; one to continue to look for land and the other to redevelop the existing site. These two tasks are not mutually exclusive. Rather they are time oriented; the latter for now and the former for later years.

[1461] This consortium is made up of two evangelical churches and a Christian school.

[1462] For instance, a young adult congregation and/or a Filipino congregation may be developed.

determined that two factors have contributed; a discomfort with the multi-cultural character of the congregation, and disagreement with the Portico vision of becoming a missional church. The name change may have proven to be the 'final straw' for some.

On the other hand, those who are supportive of the vision have engaged to a greater extent. A large number of people have stepped forward to create a team of greater depth. This has provided opportunity to give more attention to the development of existing and emerging leaders by creating an intentional discipleship process, which identifies potential and underdeveloped leaders.[1463] Leadership development at Portico has traditionally taken place as an event. The Ministry Team invited positionally defined leaders to impart information or establish a new direction. If there has been a blatant weakness in the culture changing exercise it has been the failure to persist in healthy leadership development. With the cultural value of Authentic Relationships held high, ministry leadership has encouraged the development of community through small groups while failing to engage the same model for equipping and empowering existing and emerging leaders.

The elders and Executive Team are committed to the training of emerging leadership. The Executive Pastor (Ministries) is responding with a new model for leadership development characterized as relational, strategic and long-term. He will urge the Ministry Team to facilitate leadership development through formal and informal coaching relationships. Although the invitation is open to this initiative, the Executive pastor will target the following groups for implementation: the CORE team, Directors, Elder Team, OPS Committee, CORE Group leaders/hosts, and selected ministry leaders. Each leader will be responsible to develop their *protégés* in a relational context. Skill development,

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[1463] Rowland Forman, The Leadership Baton Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 2004. pp. 145-156.

while remaining important, will become secondary to whole life development,[1464] as dictated by SAM, with the expectation that the outcome will be an increasing amount of Portico mission and vision focused leaders.[1465]

With the understanding that the future growth of the kingdom depends on missional leaders, the elders propose a midweek meeting (Wednesday) for purposes of leadership development. In adherence to the ministry philosophy of authentic relationship,[1466] small groups consisting of a coach, an apprentice coach and a group of leaders-in-training will meet to journey together. Over a meal, informal discussion will take place that will include sharing around topics of mission, vision, values, SAM culture and leadership.

While the church has experienced success in the development of mission, vision, values, and organizational strategy, goals, and tasks, leadership has not articulated a strategy for personal or corporate SAM development. Willow Creek Community Church has developed a seven-step strategy which acts as a template for the individual who is trying to implement and maximize the 5 G's[1467] in their life.

1. Build an authentic relationship with a nonbeliever.
2. Share a verbal witness.
3. Bring the seeker to a service designed especially for them.
4. Regularly attend a service for believers.
5. Join a small group.
6. Discover, develop and deploy your spiritual gift.
7. Steward your resources in a God-honoring way.[1468]

[1464] This training will be rooted in the development of ones 'being' as expressed by the biblical SAM culture: Spiritual Formation, Authentic Relationships and Missional Activity.

[1465] Some may question the role of democracy in this leadership development structure. Straying from the Portico mission and vision is unacceptable. Various approaches to the fulfillment of mission and vision are celebrated.

[1466] Portico wishes to become a church OF small groups.

[1467] Grace, growth, groups, gifts, good stewardship.

[1468] Bill and Lynne Hybels, Rediscovering Church Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1995. pp. 169-179.

Portico is in need of a similar, yet distinct, personal strategy that will relate to the SAM cultural mandate.

One of the questions that is often posed around Portico concerns the formality around engaging Portico people in the areas of their giftedness. Although not all would agree, many are looking for a structured way to gage progress and development in their spiritual formation and service opportunities. In 2002, Jim Craig, a church consultant, proposed a Portfolio Model for Learning Assessment [1469]based on Jeff Reed's *The Paradigm Papers, New Paradigms for the Postmodern Church*.[1470] This process would give structure to members of the Portico congregation as they engage in the process of discovering God's overall plan for their lives.[1471]   While categorizing personal development and ministry under the umbrella of SAM, exercises such as creating a timeline of one's life, assessing one's gifts, abilities, roles and responsibilities and determining what areas of exposure and education are still needed will be facilitated. The findings will form the basis of portfolio creation and management.

In the 1970s church growth proponents lauded the advantages of identifying a target demographic[1472] which flew in the face of the Biblical principle of inclusivity and unity. A church in Mississauga, a multi-cultural city, must consider the facilitation of a multi-ethnic congregation. Portico is a reflection of the community by virtue of its multi-ethnic representation in the congregation. Although two cultural churches[1473] meet at Portico on Sunday

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[1469] Jim Craig, Overview of the Portfolio Model for Learning Assessment An unpublished proposal presented to the Overseas Missions Department of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. August 16, 2002.
[1470] Jeff Reed, The Paradigm Papers, New Paradigms for the Postmodern Church Ames, IA: LearnCorp, 1997, paper entitled Church-Based Christian Education: Creating a New Paradigm, Part II: Adulthood, 7, n. 11.
[1471] The strength of the Portfolio system is its foundation, which is based on Experiential Learning. A SAM person can only continue to grow in areas of Spiritual Formation, Authentic Community and Missional Activity as they are engaged personally and corporately.
[1472] Ralph H. Eliot, The Dangers of the Church Growth Movement http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1723, p. 1, April 7, 2006.
[1473] The congregations are Indonesian and Chinese (Mandarin).

mornings, and certain cultural groups[1474] conduct small group meetings, church leadership must continue to address the specific needs of our rich multi-cultural community, both inside Portico and those remaining untouched.[1475]

Leadership has recently conducted discussions focused on two additional demographics that may be best served by the creation of unique and targeted missional initiatives. Leadership must target the significant ARTS[1476] talent base of Portico and deploy not only to bring relevance to the services and special events, but also to reach the arts community in our region. The church has experienced some progress as Portico operates a School of the Arts (SOTA) which trains children and adults instrumentally and dramatically.

The second area is the business community. The worlds of the Pentecostal church and business have traditionally kept their distance. Clergy have felt threatened by business leaders, and perhaps vice versa.[1477] Because the office worker spends so much time at the office (often in excess of forty hours a week), this has become their 'defacto community.' Tools such as ALPHA in the Workplace[1478] can optimally serve as missional facilitators. The CORE team will consider the best way to equip business executives to reach their seeking colleagues.

As previously mentioned, a stewardship campaign is currently underway to fund new ministry initiatives. This includes a major renovation of the current facility to house additional venues and add multi-purpose space. Two preparatory sermon series (fall 2005 and winter 2006) have been instrumental in opening the discussion with a conclusion in May 2006.

[1474] Cultural small groups include the Filipinos, Urdu and Caribbean immigrants.
[1475] M Ministry Conference Notes November 14-16, 2005. In 2005 a number of training events and roundtable discussions took place concerning the Muslim demographic in the Peel region and beyond.
[1476] ARTS is the name of the department which coordinates all artistic expression in church services.
[1477] Due to the emphasis on spiritual gifts and spiritual values, the Pentecostal church has viewed business or marketplace expertise or experience as irrelevant and therefore has been unsuccessful in relating to, or integrating with businessmen and women.
[1478] Alpha in the Workplace http://alphacourse.org/workplace/default.htm, p. 1, February 22, 2006.

While leadership at Portico has been establishing the SAM culture, cross-cultural missional activity has become minimal. In the fall of 2006, the Executive pastor will make a concerted effort to 'drive mission down to the CORE group level.'[1479] This will involve developing strategy to take our church culture to other cultures within Canada (Quebec) and around the world.

Requests for assistance and guidance come weekly from churches of different denominations across Canada. Portico church leadership has attempted to meet with as many pastors and boards as possible to assist in their culture change process. At some point in the future church leadership will offer consultation services in the form of conferences and church assessments and consultations.

Conclusion

At first glance some observers might suggest the leadership of Portico has "made it up as they went along." In 2000, the Ontario government embarked on the reconfiguring of the Highway 427 and QEW interchange.[1480] During the next few years traffic continued to flow all the while the construction process was taking place. That is how the leadership of Portico has felt for the last four years. We have inherited a plane that is in the air. It is in need of a major cultural retrofit, but landing it on the ground and taking it out of commission for a period of time is simply not an option. In reality, making significant changes while it continues to fly is the major challenge.

Portico is committed to a process of organizational culture change and formation. Leadership introduces each program, project, initiative or campaign with the intent of positively impacting the system known as Portico. Every change has been carefully and prayerfully considered and accompanied by a communication format characterized by the word 'cascading.' This is an attempt to be inclusive in the discussion with all those who 'need to know' when they

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[1479] Ongoing discussion at Ministry Directors' meetings as strategy for the 2006-2007 ministry year is formulated.

[1480] http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/news/regional/2000/2000-0080.htm April 7, 2006.

need to know and engage them in the fulfillment of the vision. Ultimately, Portico church leadership will measure success by how well the congregation reaches people far from God through the creation of a church without walls.

Appendix 1

2001 Cultural Demographics - Mississauga

Visible Minority Groups	Mississauga
South Asians	91,150
Blacks	37,850
Chinese	35,955
Filipinos	24,615
Arabs	11,415
West Asians	4,200
Latin Americans	9,265
Southeast Asians	10,015
Koreans	5,175
Japanese	1,980
Visible Minority	9,950
Multiple Visible Minorities	4,755
Total Visible Minority Population	**246,325**
Total Population	**610,815**

[1481]

[1481] Census 2001 – Immigration and Place of Birth Bulletin
http://www.region.peel.on.ca/planning/bulletins/PDC12-Immigration.pdf, p. 1, April 22, 2006.

Appendix 2

Willow Creek Community Church	Saddleback Church	Scriptural Reference
Grace	Magnification	Matt 22:37-40
Growth	Maturity	Matt. 28:18-20
Groups	Membership	Matt. 22:37-40
Gifts	Ministry	Matt. 22:37-40
Good Stewardship	Mission	Matt. 28:18-20

1482

[1482] More On Groups http://www.christnotes.org/-/_groups_0310220769.asp, p. 1, January 23, 2006, Rick Warren, Shaped for Serving God http://www.saddlebackfamily.com/maturity/fullstory.asp?id=5143, p. 1, January 23, 2006.
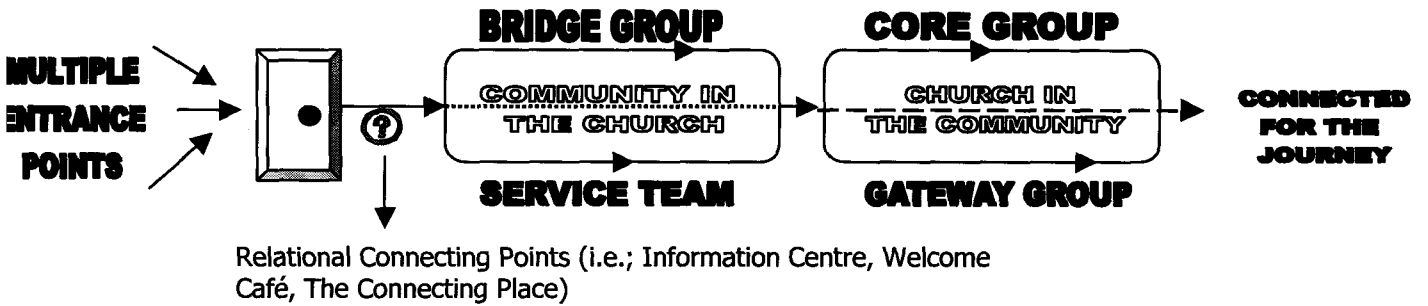
Appendix 3

Establishing a Biblical Church Culture[1]

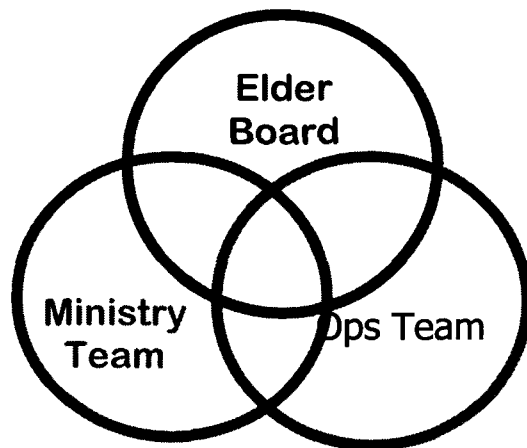| Acts 2:42-47	Purpose	Task	Willowcreek (5 G's)	Saddleback (5 M's)	Northpoint (Environments)
"…added to their numbers daily those who were being saved."	Outreach	Evangelize	Growth	Mission	Foyer
"They devoted themselves to … breaking of bread and prayers … praising God."	Worship	Exalt	Grace	Magnify	Living Room
"…devoted to the fellowship …all believers were together … they ate together."	Fellowship	Encourage	Groups	Membership	Kitchen
"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching."	Discipleship	Edify	Growth	Maturity	Living Room
"They gave to anyone as he had need."	Service	Equip	Gifts, Good Stewardship	Ministry	Kitchen

Acts 2:42-47	NCD (Christian Schwarz)	The Three R's	Neil Cole (DNA)	Queensway (Philosophy of Ministry RDM)	PORTICO (SAM)
"…added to their numbers daily those who were being saved."	Intentional Evangelism	Reach	Apostolic Mission	Ministry	Missional Activity
"They devoted themselves to … breaking of bread and prayers … praising God."	Spirit-led Worship, Passionate Spirituality	Restore	Divine Truth	Discipleship	Spiritual Formation
"…devoted to the fellowship …all believers were together … they ate together."	Loving Relationships, Holistic Small Groups	Restore	Nurturing Relationships	Relationship	Authentic/Accountable Relationships
"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching."	Inspired worship service	Restore, Release	Divine Truth	Discipleship	Spiritual Formation
"They gave to anyone as he had need."	Gift-oriented ministry, Empowered Leadership	Release	Divine Truth	Discipleship	Spiritual Formation

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[1] Owen Black, <u>Carpooling</u> Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, General Conference Handout, May 10, 2006.

Appendix 4

CORE Connecting Process

MULTIPLE
ENTRANCE
POINTS

BRIDGE GROUP

COMMUNITY IN
THE CHURCH

SERVICE TEAM

CORE GROUP

CHURCH IN
THE COMMUNITY

GATEWAY GROUP

CONNECTED
FOR THE
JOURNEY

Relational Connecting Points (i.e.; Information Centre, Welcome
Café, The Connecting Place)

Appendix 5

Elder Board

Ministry Team

Ops Team

[1483] Aubrey Tozer, <u>Organizational Leadership: Implementing the Operating Committee</u> Internal Portico document, May 2003, p. 4.

Appendix 6

	Ministry Teams
Operating Committee	Communications
	Facilities Management & Development
	Finance
	Hospitality Services
	Ministry Resources
	Member Services
	Organizational Leadership
	Projects & Events Planning
	Stewardship

Arts	Childrens Ministries	CORE Groups	Missions	Multi Site	Spiritual Life Development	Student Ministries

Appendix 7

CUSTOMIZE YOUR CORE GROUP

Worksheet

SEASONAL OPTIONS

Authentic Relationships
Deepen your relationships discover true community. Host fun social events and expand your relational circles of influence.

Spiritual Formation
Cultivate a Biblical perspective and focus for your group. Practice the presence of God and the priority of others.

Missional Activity
Develop a heart for your neighbours, your country, and the world. Share your life with Jesus...everyday with others.

Season 1
September to November

Winter Break
December

Season 2
January to March

Spring Break
April

Season 3
May to June

Summer Break
July to August

BREAK OPTIONS

REST
Relax... and do nothing!

EQUIP
Attend a specialized training event or conference.

RETREAT
Go away with your group to refresh, and balance the chaos of everyday life.

PRAYER
Devote a special period of time to pray together as a group, or prayer walk in your community.

SERVE
Take on a one-time service project in the church or community.

Appendix 8

	Purpose of Event or Initiative	Type of Gathering/Function	Type of SAM engagement
Explore	To provide multiple opportunities for a person to belong before they believe. To give a level of comfort to a person who is exploring their spirituality and the possibility of life as a Christ-follower	The creation of mid-sized connecting opportunities. Develop a "Connecting Team" who will interact with ministry directors and service teams. The creation of events/services where the seeker can remain anonymous or investigate connecting to their level of comfort.	Spiritual Formation, Authentic Relationships
Experience	To connect in a meaningful way to others in the Portico congregation to further discover relationship with God leading to a "crossing the line of faith" experience	Without compromising the opportunity to develop relationships, these events would be more instructional in nature. The ALPHA program is a prime example.	Spiritual Formation and Authentic Relationships
Equip	To develop the believer in the areas of their giftedness for service and	An intentional strategy will be developed to use gift-	Spiritual Formation, Authentic

	missionality	based methodology to recruit, train and motivate workers and leaders.	Relationships and Missional Activity
Empower	To fully release the believer in the areas of their giftedness for service and missionality	Christ-followers, whether new to faith or for a long period of time, will be encouraged to "multiply" by being engaged missionally in their personal lives and ministry.	Spiritual Formation, Authentic Relationships and Missional Activity

It should be noted that this chart is from the perspective of a Christ-follower, to assist them in understanding the purposes of church organized events.

CHAPTER VIII - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
Report: A Survey to Assess the Ministry of Portico

Introduction

Over the last five years, the leadership of Portico (formerly MGT Family Church) has intentionally sought to change the culture of the church. Leadership describes this adjustment as an installation and affirmation of three core values, Spiritual Formation (discipleship), Authentic/Accountable Relationships (community) and Missional Activity, (evangelism) affectionately known as SAM.

After four years of strategic development and activity, church leadership wished to determine whether philosophical and organizational change has resulted in an increased evidence of SAM in the lives of individual congregants. With this in mind, the CORE team created a survey to determine the effectiveness of SAM's implementation over the last four years. Each question in the survey began with the statement, "Over the last four years" for purposes of 'targeting' those who have observed, participated in, or designed the culture change at Portico.

Organizational change, as noted earlier in the thesis, is often divisive. In part, the intent behind the construction of this survey was to measure positive or negative personal change and compare that to the reaction to structural change within the church. The intention was to measure simultaneously culture change effectiveness[1484] and whether it met with congregational approval or disapproval.

Responses

Over 550 surveys were distributed on two Sunday mornings (January 15, 2006 and January 22, 2006) and available at the church information desk for a third Sunday (January 29, 2006). The total number of respondents was 79. This is an extraordinarily low response for a congregation of 2000 adults with a regular Sunday attendance of 1200.

[1484] As it pertained to SAM

On a typical Sunday, the church service attendance consists of 54% females and 46% males.[1485] The respondents to the survey were as follows:

Male	Female	Unclear
30.3	68.4	1.3

Because the topics of SAM are gender universal, the imbalance between male and female respondents may be of no concern.

Age Demographics

Age Span[1486]	Respondents by %
14-18	2.6%
19-23	0 %
24-29	1.3 %
30-39	6.6%
40-49	28.9%
50-59	44.7 %
60+	14.5%
Non-respondents	1.4 %

The age demographics of those who filled out the survey are not indicative of the Portico church family. 3.9% of the respondents were in the combined demographic of people aged 14-29. The percentage of people in this age span, who make Portico their church home, is approximately 17.5%.[1487] The next three categories (30-39, 40-49) are more realistic in terms of percentage

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[1485] Actual counts were conducted during Sunday morning services.
[1486] For analytical purposes the 14-39 age span was collapsed.
[1487] The Student Ministries department works with approximately 350 youth, by actual count, to age 25. With a total adult demographic (age 14 and above) of 2000 people the percentage should be approximately 17.5% to be representative.

representation. However, the number of responses from the 50-59 and 60+ demographics is significantly higher than the number of people in these age categories that attend the church. For example, because it is an economic challenge for retired people to live in Mississauga, the number of 60+ people in the congregation would be less than 100, or approximately 5%. The total number of respondents in this age group represents 14.5%, three times the actual number.

Place of Birth

Canada	Elsewhere	Non-respondents
47%	50%	3%

Over the last seven years there has been a marked influx of immigrant families to Portico. Many traditional Canadian-born families have left the church. This response is reflective of the remaining congregation as a whole.

Attendance

Under 4 Years	10.5%
4-10 years	46.1%
10-20 years	32.9%
20+	10.5%

Because 'culture change' was the topic of this thesis, it was determined that the intent of the survey was to measure change and the reaction to change. For this reason, it was necessary to solicit responses from those who had been present for some, and preferably all, of the culture change.[1488] These imposed limitations were largely successful in that 89.5% of respondents have been part of Portico for in excess of four years. It would follow that these people have

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[1488] It should be noted that people who have come to the church in the last two to three years may have chosen to do so based on the culture of the church. It would seem to be true that they have chosen to remain as part of the congregation 'due to the culture' instead of 'in spite of the culture.'

observed the culture change in its totality and can accurately share their feelings and responses concerning it.

Familiarity with SAM

The last question on the demographic page concerns the familiarity with SAM. Sixty percent of the respondents said they were somewhat or very familiar with this acronym and its representation of Portico's core values. The number of people who recognized SAM set the tone for the entire survey.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION (SF)	
Question[1489]	% increase
Over the last four years the amount of time I read the Bible has _____.	63.2
Over the last four years my times of personal focused prayer has _____.	64.4
Over the last four years the times my family has had a focused spiritual activity has _____.	40.8
Over the last four years the way I have used my time (24 hours a day/7 days a week) in accordance with scriptural principles has _____.	59.2
Over the last four years the times I have viewed my possessions in accordance with scriptural principles has _____.	51.4
Over the last four years knowledge of my spiritual gifts has _____.	64.5
Over the last four years the use of my spiritual gifts to serve others has _____.	68.4

[1489] The number recorded in this column represents the percentage of participants that responded either 'increased' or 'significantly increased' on a five point scale. Those who responded 'decreased,' 'decreased significantly' or 'remained the same' make up the remainder.

Over the last four years engaging in worship to God as part of my lifestyle has _____.	63.1
Over the last four years the understanding of my vocation as a reflection of God's plan for my life has _____.	67.1
Over the last four years, in the matter of spiritual formation, the progress of my overall journey has _____.	80.3

Generally speaking, the survey seems to say that respondents have experienced significant increase in the area of their Spiritual Formation. The most revealing statistic was the response to the 'summary question.' Over 80% of the respondents stated progress relating to their Spiritual Formation had either increased or significantly increased. However, in all other questions concerning individual indicators no category scored over 67% and the average was 60.2%.

The survey seems to indicate that people think they have progressed significantly in their Spiritual Formation but in specific matters or practices they do not measure as highly. In most areas of questioning, over 60% of those surveyed recorded an increase.

Three areas seemed to score higher than the others; spiritual gift deployment, engaging in prayer and marketplace integration of faith-based principles. This may be a direct response to an emphasis in teaching, small group curriculum and organized activities in these areas.

The survey indicates that congregational members facilitated Spiritual Formation in their lives, and while that is admirable, it is necessary to address the above disparity. The areas that scored the lowest were family engagement in spiritually formative activities and stewardship of life.[1490] Interestingly

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[1490] Resources in general; time, talent, spiritual gifts and finances. A recent stewardship emphasis was conducted including a 'Power of One' Sunday. As part of this campaign, every person was encouraged to bring a tithe of their salary to church on February 5, 2006, whether or not they were accustomed to doing so. Average Sunday offerings were $36,000. On this day over $86,000 was collected.

enough, these statistics confirmed 'hunches' held by the pastoral leadership and elders. Plans to meet these needs were 'in the works' prior to the conducting of this survey.

AUTHENTIC/ACCOUNTABLE RELATIONSHIPS (AR)	
Over the last four years my attendance at a small group has _____	67.2
Over the last four years the amount of time I pray for other members of my small group has _____	65.8
Over the past four years the number of social activities my small group has enjoyed together has _____.	46
Over the past four years the number of times I have communicated with small group members by phone, email, cards, or letters to encourage them has _____.	56.5
Over the past four years my understanding of transforming power of authentic relationships as experienced in my small group (forgiveness, transparency, intimacy, accountability, commitment to each other, meeting outside of group times) has _____.	72.6

In 2002 church leadership responded to the lack of community, as evidenced by the small number of small groups, by hiring a 'Small Group Champion.' Since his arrival the number of small groups has increased from less than 20 to in excess of 60, not including students and children.[1491] It appears that transparency and authenticity have increased significantly on the part of survey participants. However, participation in social activities (just 'hanging out') is not a high priority. This may be due to a slow transition from, or a balancing of, previously established social groupings which involved no spiritual formative activity. Small group members may view gatherings as 'just another church

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[1491] Community among children aged 0 – 13 was not assessed. Surveys were not distributed to this age group for obvious reasons.

meeting' as opposed to being culturally integral in the life of Portico and its members.

Below is a list of possible outcomes for Christian community. Rank each of the following as 3 - very important, 2 -important, 1 – not important.[1492]	
____ To be alert to the needs of others in the community	96
____ To find the meaning of life	82.9
____ To solve personal problems	82.9
____ To strengthen my faith and devotion	96
____ To foster greater understanding of the Bible	96
____ To foster greater understanding of Christian doctrine	90.8
____ To equip myself to assist my family in their spiritual formation	86.9
____ To provide a place for seekers to belong before believing	90.8
____ To provide a personal impetus for evangelism	86.8
____ To increase my concern for world evangelization	81.5
____ To increase my sensitivity to social issues	75

Responses to the above categories were relative. Each of the values is valid in their own right. However, the purpose of this exercise was to determine which were highest and lowest in priority in the perception of the participants.

The four highest scores in the evaluation of Christian community were in the traditional expressions of Spiritual Formation and Missional Activity. The lowest category was 'sensitivity to social issues' reflecting, rightly or wrongly, the lack of emphasis on this in Portico congregational life.[1493] Slightly above this

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[1492] The percentage response, as recorded, represents those who responded very important or important.

[1493] Engagement in social action has not been a high priority for the leadership at Portico as more foundational cultural elements (SAM) were in need of attention. However, feeding the world's hungry by way of world missions, dinners for the homeless and other activities, social in nature, have been facilitated by the congregation.

category were the non-traditional categories, such as 'personal problem-solving,' 'finding the meaning of life' and 'world evangelization.'

Which of the following words best describes the type of small group you attend:	
Service (Working with a group of people in the church on a project or in an area of ministry)	0
Bridge Group (a group that shares a common interest for a period of time such as the Marriage Course or a Recovery Group)	0
CORE Group (a group in which the sole purpose is to create an environment to help you achieve your full potential as a follower of Jesus Christ)	38.2
Gateway Group (a group of people of like interests that meet together to have fun and discover God in the midst of living life to the fullest)	3.9
I do not attend a small group.	3.9
Non-respondents	54

This section elicited the most disappointing response in the entire questionnaire. There was no response from 54% of participants. While the terminology for the type of small groups is commonly recognized and used among the leadership, it has not taken root among the congregants. Given that church leadership attaches no 'stigma' to any of the types of groups, and that the survey is trying to determine to which of the existing types members belong, the high rate of confusion is significant. People know they are in a CORE group but they do not differentiate between that type of group and others. This is a 'flag' for members of the CORE team in terms of their communication and establishment of new groups.

MISSIONAL ACTIVITY

Over the last four years the times I have personally engaged in caring for others, outside the church, through building relationships has _____.	57.9
Over the last four years the times my small group has engaged in caring for others, outside of the church, through building relationships have _____.	48.6
Where do you build relationships that will care for people and bring them into community?	
In the home	55
In social circles	60
At work	64.5
At play	38.2*
At school	18.4*
During leisure time	56.6
Over the last four years the number of times each week I have prayed for the salvation of seekers with who I am in relationship has _____.	56.6
Over the last four years my genuine care for people has _____.	71
Over the last four years my personal involvement in taking the gospel to my community, nation and world (e.g., mission trips, volunteering at local ministries, etc.) has _____.	39.5
Over the last four years my missional activity has _____.	39.4

The initial impetus in the facilitation of culture change at Portico was a desire for increased personal missionality. Over the last four years, a great deal

of the renewal effort has specifically targeted this area. While it is gratifying to note that missional activity increased in the workplace and social circles, it is disappointing that only 39% of respondents felt that their personal missionality increased. When compared to the previous statistic concerning Spiritual Formation[1494] there seems to be 'a disconnect.' While experiencing spiritual growing there was a significant lack of impact upon their personal context. This may be reflective of personal guilt in association with non-involvement in the traditional art of 'witnessing.' Respondents may have improved but not enough to fulfill what they perceive as the expectations as outlined in SAM curriculum and teaching.

For those who responded, keeping in mind it was an older demographic, this may be the most challenging area of SAM to experience a marked improvement. Engaging in activities that result in increased Spiritual Formation and Authentic/Accountable relationships are desirous and natural. Missionality, on the other hand, if not part of one's previous lifestyle, may appear threatening and onerous.

*The rates for the expression of missionality at 'school' and 'play' may be a result of two things; the low number of respondents of school age and the misunderstanding of the word 'play.' The primary school student would think of recess time. The CORE Team used this word in the survey to refer to recreational activities which produced a direct conflict with the 'leisure' category. They could have articulated these statements in a clearer manner. A more accurate reading of missionality might result from a combined number consisting of 'play' and 'leisure.'

Having said all of the above, it appears that personal missionality has increased. There is danger in creating missional church events and activities thereby absolving church members of evangelistic activity.

[1494] 80% of respondents felt their Spiritual Formation had increased over the last five years.

Intersecting Points

Spiritual Formation & Authentic/Accountable Relationships

Over the last four years the amount of time my small group spends in prayer has _____.	50
Over the last four years my openness to hearing and applying constructive criticism and feedback that others might have for me has _____.	61.8
Over the last four years my openness to share freely about my emotions, and feelings in my small group has _____.	61.8
Over the last four years the expectation for group members to lead a group at some point in the future has _____.	50
Over the last four years the number of individuals or couples in your group that have attended a leadership development event has _____.	38.1

Spiritual formation does not take place in a vacuum. Holistic spiritual formation is an 'iron sharpens iron' function. (Proverbs 27:17) For the majority of respondents it appears that there is recognition of this factor and a willingness to engage in faith formation in community. The one anomaly is associated with leadership development. Generally speaking, small group leaders do not see their need to train with others for more effective small group leadership.

Authentic Relationships/Missional Activity

Over the last four years the number of times a month my small group prays for those who do not yet have faith in Christ has _____.	51.4
Over the last four years the number of social events my small group has planned that have included seekers has _____.	28.9
Over the last four years the ability for my group to understand that the power of missional community is more effective than individual missional effort has _____.	**50**

From 2004 to 2005 the CORE Team dialogued with leaders regarding the power of missional activity arising from a small group. Many of the small groups responded to Christmas and Summer Adventures.[1495] The interesting observation in this connection is that, generally speaking, small groups do not see the potential for inclusive[1496] social gatherings in the area of missionality. This is a mindset that CORE continues to attempt to change.

Spiritual Formation/Missional Activity

Over the last four years the realization that my group is part of God's mission to reach others has _____.	65.8
Over the last four years the understanding that my spiritual formation is for a purpose beyond myself has _____.	86.8
Over the last four years my effort to build loving and caring relationships with others on their journey towards God has _____.	79
Over the last four years my small group's willingness to make room for seekers, and allowing them to belong before believing	53.9

[1495] The name of the initiative encouraging small groups to engage missionally as a group.
[1496] Seekers and believers.

has _____.	

The responses in the above part of the questionnaire were gratifying. Even though the results in previous missional sections may have been less than ideal, particularly when compared to Spiritual Formation and Accountable Relationships, there is an understanding that Spiritual Formation and Missionality go 'hand in hand.' The last question reveals the most difficult aspect of missionality. In a church structure which had traditionally believed that 'you need to become like us to be one of us,' belonging before believing is a difficult concept to understand.

Responses in the above three categories seem to suggest that there is some decrease in 'life compartmentalization.' However, there is a need to break down the prevalent understanding that a SAM lifestyle consists of three separate components with little or no interaction, and efforts to present a holistic interactive view of SAM has met with measured success.

In the category of intersection between Spiritual Formation and Accountable Relationships, some of the challenges concerning the culture change appear. Leadership development within the structure of the church is a high needs area. Similarly, the exercise of prayer within the small group structure may not be as meaningful and active as it should be.

Small group attendees may view their gathering as an event similar to a midweek service. Involvement in social and missional activities, as a group, does not seem to be a high priority. On the other hand, acknowledgement that one's spiritual formation has a correlation in one's responsibility for others has increased. However, respondents noted that they struggle to integrate those who do not have faith into faith-based activities such as small group meetings.

Reflections on Portico

What are the <u>three</u> most important or core values at PORTICO?

Value	# of people out of 79 respondents	%
Missionality	60	75.9%
Spiritual Formation	56	70.8%
Authentic/Accountable Relationships	42	53.2%
No response	12	15.2%

The magnitude of the respondents who successfully identified one or more of the SAM values was gratifying. Although the respondents did not use specific SAM terms, the majority of responses expressed core cultural values of Portico.

However, the responses to this question uncovered a major fault in the church culture change process. Over the last four years there has been a usage of a multiplicity of terms and applications in connection with SAM. Most recently three core value statements have been established which begin with the words 'sharing,' 'growing' and 'serving.' These are delineations of the SAM culture. It should be noted that in this 'write-in' question participant's utilized a variety of terms to describe the basic tenets of SAM.

The fact that 15% of the participants did not respond causes concern. If this is the case in a group of people who voluntarily took the time to fill out the questionnaire, the level of understanding in the general Portico population may be significantly lower. The restrictions placed upon the administration of the questionnaire may be at fault here.

What is one key difference that you perceive between PORTICO and other churches?

Key Difference	# of people	%
Greater community	13	16%
Greater equality/ethnic diversity	12	15%
Greater missionality	11	14%
Higher quality of teaching	10	13%
Freedom of worship	7	9%
Openness to change	5	6%
Greater focus and vision	4	5%
Sub-standard worship	2	3%
Size of congregation	2	3%
Lack of depth of teaching	1	1%
Lack of community	1	1%
Lack of Holy Spirit	1	1%
Lack of democracy	1	1%
No response	10	13%

The responses to the perceived 'key difference' question were fascinating. Forty-nine responses were positive, six responses were negative and two were neutral.

There was a marked differentiation between functional operations and cultural values. The top two responses (Community, Missionality) directly relate to cultural aspects of SAM. The next one (Ethnic Diversity) is an implied value as illustrated by congregational demographics. The experience of worshipping together in unity in a multicultural congregation is illustrative of the correlation of both factors.

Teaching and freedom of worship are functional. Respondents are open to the refined focus and vision and are aware of the culture change that has

occurred over the past four years. Personal preferences and expectations, rather than community values, impacted the responses. For example, people hold certain ideas of what worship services or church organizational structure should entail. On the other hand, one might interpret comments concerning the 'Lack of Holy Spirit' and 'Lack of democracy' (write-in responses) as the opposite end of the spectrum. For others, they may overlap.

The next sections of the survey solicited responses concerning corporate congregational life and the ministry functions as directed by the Portico leadership team.

Spiritual Formation

Over the last four years the quantity of people at PORTICO discovering prayer as a powerful resource for living has _____.	68.4
Over the past four years the quality and quantity of instruction on how to discern the difference between the prevalent culture in which we live and the culture of Christian faith has _____.	75
Over the last four years at PORTICO the process of teaching me how to develop a Christian worldview has _____.	69.7
Over the last four years demonstration that the scriptures inform the ways we live, work, witness, and worship has _____.	81.6

Generally speaking, the respondents felt that spiritually formative activities, as outlined in the questions above, quantitatively increased. The highest scoring questions concerned worldview and integration of the scriptures for everyday living. People recognized prayer as a resource, and scored it lowest on this section of the survey. The elders have noted this challenge.

Accountable/Authentic Relationships

Over the last four years the corporate life and public witness of Portico, which consciously seeks to conform to the Lord instead of the culture in which it finds itself, has _____.	71.1
Over the last four years evidence that PORTICO intentionally supports the diversity of giftedness in the community has _____.	80.3
Over the last four years a willingness to transcend racial, ethnic, age, gender, and socio-economic barriers has _____.	72.4
Over the last four years the openness to welcome newcomers to Portico has _____.	80

One of the strengths of a questionnaire is that one can ask the same question in different ways in different places. When examining the write-in notes concerning lack of community and lack of democracy with the above responses, respondents affirmed that, generally speaking, Portico has significantly improved in the facilitation of authentic and accountable relationships within the church and social context. There may be a subjective disconnect in people's minds concerning what biblical community is and how it affects them.

Missional Activity

Over the last four years, the ability for PORTICO to convey our church as a representative of God's kingdom offering an alternative way of life to the world has _____.	72.3
Over the last four years the number of times the congregation has been told that proclaim the gospel is the primarily the responsibility of church leadership has _____.	48.7
Over the last four years the number of opportunities to be equipped to tell the story of the gospel in our own words has _____.	67.1
Over the last four years I believe Portico's resistance to change has _____.	34.2

Twelve questions assessed the effectiveness of the ministry of Portico. Generally speaking, it appears that the respondents ranked the church higher than their personal advancement in areas of SAM. Scoring highest were questions concerning spiritual gifts and openness to newcomers.

Two questions stated in the negative, as directed by the McMaster Research Ethics Board (MREB), may have resulted in some misunderstanding. The response to the first, concerning evangelism being primarily the responsibility of church leadership, suggests that 48.7% believe that this has increased over the last four years when all public teaching and operational activities are designed in direct contradiction. Results concerning this question might be invalid due to a grammatical error.

Respondents to the second, concerning change, seem to indicate that resistance has declined. The inverse of the response is 65.8% which is in line with the remaining three values in this section of the survey.

The new name of the church (PORTICO) better reflects who we are as a congregation.	55.3 (Yes)

Comments

Comment	# of people	%
Expresses Who we are	13	16%
Hard to explain the name	11	13%
Lack of History	5	6%
Does not Matter	4	5%
No response	46	58%

Of all the changes at Portico this seems to be the issue of greatest contention; Fifty-five percent support. While 16% suggested that the name expresses who we are, 20% expressed difficulty with the name change because they find it hard to explain or they feel it is a denial or undermining of congregational history. Forty-four people did not respond or stated 'it does not matter.'

All respondents to the survey have been part of Portico for at least four years. The name change has been the 'lightning rod' issue in the process of culture change. Even though personal development and church effectiveness generally score high, changing the name of a church has an emotional price tag. For those who remember Mississauga Gospel Temple or MGT Family Church with fondness, a name with no similarity evokes a negative response. This question resulted in the highest percentage of non-responses in the entire questionnaire. Although it is hard to make any conclusion on 'what is not there' it may be argued that those who did not comment may indeed approve.

| The new organizational structure of the church (elders, operations committee, and ministry team) better suits our church culture. | 69.7 (Yes) |

Comment	# of people	%
Not familiar or connected with leadership structure	9	11%
Works better	7	9%
Less Democratic	2	3%
Reflects biblical organizational structure	1	1%
No difference	1	1%
Terminology flawed (OPS)	1	1%
Desire for a more autocratic structure (senior pastor-led)	1	1%
No response	57	72%

According to the survey respondents received the governance change at Portico (elder-led congregation) with sixty-nine percent approval. Four people registered negative comments concerning this restructuring.

General Comments:

Comment	# of people	%
Approval of Portico's missionality	8	10%
Discontent with changes including lack of traditional pastoral care, no preaching on 'the blood,' no altar calls, no prayer for the sick, pastors not identified and pastors need to visit homes once per year.	7	9%
Worship not suitable	6	8%
Lack of connecting	6	8%
Approval of biblical teaching	5	6%
Worship is great	4	5%
Facilitation of Spiritual Growth	4	5%
Youth Department Needs	1	1%
Lack of Democracy in structure	1	1%
Pastors' casual dress	1	1%
Lack of understanding regarding membership	1	1%
Pastoral staff changes	1	1%
No response	47	59%

Note: These comments add up to more than the number of respondents due to the fact that a number of people made multiple comments.

Uncategorized comments are always insightful and may be indicative of pockets of opinion within a group. Although the greatest number of respondents commented on church missionality there were nineteen comments from people

who were disappointed in the practices of the church or that, from their perspective, discerned a lack of community. This may be due to expectations from their country of origin or previous church experiences. The remaining negative comments varied.

The impetus for culture change at MGT Family Church was the desire for a missional church. While agreeing that Spiritual Formation and Authentic Relationships are necessary parts of the culture, Missionality is the characteristic most closely examined. When considering the comments one must determine if there is any relationship between the respondent's understanding of missionality and the model of missionality promoted by the Ministry Team. Almost 60% of the respondents were over 50 years of age. In this demographic missionality may be understood as functional as in 'preaching the blood,' wearing a suit and tie, altar calls and home visitation as opposed to a mindset that leads to relational evangelism. For these people, the missional focus may have been lost through the culture changes at Portico.

Observations

While it is important to conform to the rules as set forth by the MREB, it appears that the defined process undermined the effectiveness and reliability of the survey and may have been at odds with Portico's culture organized around an 'ask' methodology. With a large congregation, members usually respond to general requests with a 'somebody else can do it' mindset due to the 'busyness' of the Mississauga suburban lifestyle. The lack of response to this survey is indicative (79 of 600 returned). Had a knowledgeable third party been commissioned to issue invitations according to representative demographics, (i.e. a stratified random sample) and invited them to a specific response session to fill out the questionnaires, response would have been more representative, particularly in the various age categories. Traditionally, the congregation is lax in returning any distributed forms or surveys. Surveys facilitated in the service or at a special by-invitation function are reasonably successful. Furthermore, generally speaking, the ages that did respond were older and may have had

more disposable time. In connection with this, the motivation for filling out the surveys may be suspect. People may have had 'an agenda' as revealed by some of the written comments.

The first sheet of the survey[1497] is very detailed concerning purpose, process, risks and benefits. This was very intimidating to those who received the survey as they left the services on January 15 and 22, 2006.

Having said that, Kevin Shanahan (Environics) employed the ALPHA Factor concerning reliability and all scales were tested and were reliable.

Recommendations

The following corporate recommendations are presented in order of priority with a view to increasing SAM quantitatively and qualitatively within the lives of congregational members:

1. Institute a Leadership Development strategy. Culture formation is facilitated through an organization's leaders. To date, leadership development has been confined to small groups of pastoral and lay leaders[1498] and there has been no plan for expanding the size of this group.

2. In the area of Community there are two recommendations:
   a. Continue the present emphasis of holistic community by integrating Spiritual Formation, Community and Missionality as opposed to small groups' simply being 'another program of the church.'
   b. Develop a strategy to integrate missional concern for those who are socially marginalized in the local context and cross-cultural settings around the world.

[1497] Kevin Shanahan of Environics refers to this as the 'scare sheet.'
[1498] The leadership team at Portico (particularly 'lay' leadership) has not grown in relation to the size of the congregation. Additionally, the leader vs. size of congregation ratio is less than ideal.

3. In the area of Spiritual Formation there are three recommendations:

    a. Develop a personal 'portfolio system' to help church members track their SAM development. This portfolio system, in a binder format, would consist of self-administered spiritual gift surveys, personality tests, small group curriculum, journal pages and sermon notes. Leaders will use these tools to direct the future development of the ministry of 'their people' when they meet.

    b. Develop teaching and supporting activities and applications concerning the integration of spiritually formative activities and stewardship of life with intent to assist congregational members to view holistically as opposed to compartmentally.

    c. Prepare an equipping plan for family-based Spiritual Formation.

4. In relation to the core value of missionality, there is one recommendation; more emphasis will be placed on corporate and small group missional activities with an equipping track for personal evangelism.[1499]

5. In the area of church terminology there is a need to clarify, streamline and repeat terms for easy reference for the congregation.

6. In terms of methodological restrictions associated with the survey, consideration will be given to repeat the study/survey, apart from a thesis study, in such a way as to consider Portico's congregational culture and increase the size of the sample thereby gaining an accurate representation of the diversity of age demographics. A comparison of these two (or more) studies will be made.

[1499] One course that has been used effectively at Portico is <u>Contagious Christianity.</u> http://www.willowcreek.com/product.asp?action=details&invtid=PR05397&sid=3, May 25, 2006, p. 1.

Acknowledgements

Appendix 1

November 12, 2005

Dear Members of the McMaster University Research Ethics Board;

Re: Rationale for Survey

The title of this Doctorate of Ministry thesis project is **"Changing the Culture of the Local Church: A Case Study, Portico, Mississauga, ON"**

Every organization, including a church congregation, possesses a unique culture. In 2001 Portico (formerly MGT Family Church) facilitated a senior pastoral change. Previous leadership was non-consensus and non-consultative and avoided creating an articulated vision and strategy. An emphasis was placed on the numerical growth of the church through event-oriented evangelism and, as a result, there was an absence of strategy regarding discipleship, congregational community and missional thinking or activity.

Over the past four years, leadership at Portico has worked to counter the "bigger is better" mindset by guiding the church into a renewal process based on scriptural principles. The goal has been to establish a church culture based on three components or principles, these being **S**piritual Formation, **A**uthentic Relationships, and **M**issional thinking and activity (**SAM**).

It is important to know if the established theory for the proposed church culture, and associated organizational and structural changes, has resulted in a church more in line with congregational ideals as outlined in the New Testament. The

aim of this survey is to conduct a sampling of individuals at Portico, 100 out of a congregation of 1650 (average Sunday morning attendance), to determine at what level SAM principles have impacted their lives and how effective the leadership and ministries of the church have been in modeling, implementing and enculturing them in the lives of the congregants.

Portico is a multi-ethnic, multi-generational congregation. The survey will be made available to every congregational member thereby including people of various cultures and generations who have been part of Portico for at least four years, and who have had the opportunity to observe the implementation of SAM culture.

Each survey question begins with, "Over the last four years ..." in an effort to prompt the adherent to consider how Portico has changed, and what impact the newly established culture has had on their lives. Although there is a place for church leadership to provide to members of the congregation a tool for personal spiritual evaluation, the focus of this questionnaire is the success or failure of the ministry and programs of the church. To this end the survey is divided into two parts, questions regarding each participant's acceptance of the new culture as reflected by their personal integration of SAM principles and activities, and a direct evaluation of the corporate culture at Portico.

As the culture of Portico has been changed, church leadership needs to know how successful they have been and what might have been done differently. From this survey, the strengths and weaknesses of the formative activities and direction of the last four years will be noted and reported with a view to develop ongoing strategy for Portico, and ultimately advising other Canadian churches as they propose culture change within their congregations.

The following documents are attached:

- ✓ A completed MREB Application to Involve Human Participants in Research form
- ✓ A Survey to Assess the Ministry of Portico
- ✓ A cover Letter of Information for potential participants
- ✓ Consent letter from Senior Pastor (Chairman of Board of Elders)

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

R. Owen Black

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Mississauga, ON

L5N 6B6

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(905) 824 2165 (H)

(905) 826 9612 (O)

Appendix 2

If you have attended PORTICO for at least four years, could you give some feedback?

Letter of Information

For the Survey to be Administered at
PORTICO (formerly MGT Family Church)

Survey Supervisor:

Dr. Michael Knowles
McMaster Divinity College
Hamilton, ON
905 577 4782 (27088)

Purpose of the Survey: For the last four years one of the goals of Portico has been to become a community where the core cultural values of **S**piritual Formation, **A**uthentic/Accountable Relationships and **M**issionality (SAM) are taught, modeled and become inherent in the lives of people in our congregation. In this study Pastor Owen Black (Executive Pastor of Church Ministries and student at McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, ON), as part of his Doctor of Ministry Dissertation (Changing the Culture of the Local Church), is hoping to learn about areas of strength and weakness at Portico, in relation to these key values. This research is not part of his work as a pastor at the church and participation is completely voluntary.

Procedures involved in the Research: Participation in this survey is completely voluntary. If you wish to participate, please take this survey home, complete it, and return it to the sealed box at the information desk in one week. If you forget to do so, extra forms will be available at the information desk next Sunday to fill out and return on the same day.

Potential Benefits: This survey offers you a personal "spirituality inventory," providing a current "snap-shot" of your spiritual life. As well as contributing to a doctoral research project, the results from this survey will assist our church to plan future teaching and related activities for the congregation.

Possible Risks: The intent and design of this survey is to ascertain the success of SAM in our congregation. However, there may be instances when completing this survey that you may feel your are not living up to perceived expectations. Please be assured the primary purpose of this survey is to assess the effectiveness of the ministry and programs of Portico.

In the days following the completing of the survey you may discuss the survey among your acquaintances and inadvertently convey guilt on those who did not participate or did not score themselves consistently on the "increased" side of the scale. Please be sensitive in your conversations. Furthermore, feel under no obligation to discuss the survey or share your responses with anyone.

If it is your feeling that faith is a private matter and that the survey violates your personal principles, please feel under no obligation to complete the survey.

.

Please refrain from discussing the survey until you and the other party have completed the questionnaire. Keep in mind there may be disagreement among your congregational peers regarding survey responses. The intent of this survey is not to foster congregational discord. It is simply to determine which areas of SAM demand further development and teaching.
If you find any questions too personal or upsetting, please do not feel obligated to answer those questions or you may decline from completing the questionnaire.

Should this survey raise significant questions concerning your life, members of the PORTICO pastoral staff would be pleased to meet with you to assist in creating and realizing realistic spiritual goals.

Payment or Reimbursement: We are asking that participants complete this survey without monetary reimbursement. Your participation is appreciated.

Confidentiality: Your privacy will be respected. We will not be asking you to provide your name or any personal information, other than your age and gender, for study purposes. Your

anonymity will be carefully guarded. The surveys will be destroyed in June of 2006 after the study is completed. Neither the researcher nor any other pastoral staff member will have direct access to the completed surveys, only information associated with accumulative responses.

Legally Required Disclosure: Information obtained will be kept entirely confidential, and is subject to researcher-participant privilege.

Consent: Filling out the attached survey will imply your consent.

Teens: If you are a teenager, please discuss participation in this survey with your parents.

Parents of Teens: Should it be your desire that your teenager not participate in this survey, please communicate your wishes to him/her.

Participation: What if I change my mind about participating in the study? There is no obligation for you to participate. Your involvement in this study is voluntary. If there are questions to which you do not wish to respond, please leave the response space blank. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. Once you submit the survey you will be unable to retrieve it.

Information About the Study Results: Tabulation of the survey results will be completed within 90 days of your participation. At that time one copy of the results of the study will be available for viewing in the church office.

Information about Participating as a Study Subject: If you have questions or require more information about the study itself, please contact Dr. Michael Knowles. (905 577 4782 X27088)

This study has been reviewed and approved by the McMaster Research Ethics Board. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, you may contact: Michael Wilson

McMaster Research Ethics Board Secretariat

c/o Office of Research Services

Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142   E-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

Appendix 3

Feel free to detach this page from the rest of the survey.

Key to Responses

1 = decreased significantly

2 = decreased marginally

3 = remained the same

4 = increased somewhat

5 = significantly increased

For definitional purposes:

A seeker is someone who is actively searching for meaning to life and may be contemplating the merits of Christian faith.

Believers are those people who have made a decision to be a Christ-follower, and use the Scriptural record as their guide for life.

A Survey to Assess the Ministry of PORTICO

The New Testament outlines clear expectations regarding how the church should equip its members. It is important to know whether or to what extent the church is accomplishing this goal in the life of each believer.

Please complete this anonymous survey to give an indication of how well PORTICO has nurtured or provided resources for your journey.

Please do not discuss the questions with other parishioners until you have completed the survey.

Demographic Information

Age:
- ❑ 14-18
- ❑ 19-23
- ❑ 24-29
- ❑ 30-39
- ❑ 40-49
- ❑ 50-59
- ❑ over 60

If you are between ages 14 and 18 (high school students) do you have parental consent?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

If No, please do not continue responding to this survey

- **Born in Canada**
- **Born Elsewhere**

Gender:

- M
- F

How long have attended services at PORTICO (formerly MGT Family Church)?

- under 4 yrs
- 4–10 yrs
- 10–20 yrs
- 20+ yrs

How familiar are you with the concept of SAM? (Spiritual Formation, Authentic/ Accountable Relationships and Missional Activity?) Circle one.

1	2	3	4	5

Not Familiar Somewhat Familiar Familiar Very Familiar Extremely Familiar

Note: Please remove the first page of the survey to serve as a guide for your responses in the following sections.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

1. Over the last four years the amount of time I read the bible has

    _____.

2. Over the last four years my times of personal focused prayer has

    _____.

3. Over the last four years the times my family has had a focused spiritual

    activity has _____.

4. Over the last four years the way I have used my time (24 hours a day/7

    days a week) in accordance with scriptural principles has _____.

5. Over the last four years the times I have viewed my possessions in

    accordance with scriptural principles has _____.

6. Over the last four years knowledge of my spiritual gifts has _____.

7. Over the last four years the use of my spiritual gifts to serve others has

    _____.

8. Over the last four years engaging in worship to God as part of my lifestyle

    has _____.

9. Over the last four years the understanding of my vocation as a reflection

    of God's plan for my life has _____.

10. Over the last four years, in the matter of spiritual formation, the progress

    of my overall journey has _____.

AUTHENTIC/ACCOUNTABLE RELATIONSHIPS (AR)

11. Over the last four years my attendance at a small group has _____

12. Over the last four years the amount of time I pray for other members of my small group has _____

13. Over the past four years the number of social activities my small group has enjoyed together has _____.

14. Over the past four years the number of times I have communicated with small group members by phone, email, cards, or letters to encourage them has _____.

15. Over the past four years my understanding of the transforming power of authentic relationships as experienced in my small group (forgiveness, transparency, intimacy, accountability, commitment to each other, meeting outside of group times) has _____.

16. Below is a list of possible outcomes for Christian community? Rank each of the following as 3 - very important, 2 -important, 1 – not important.

   _____ To be alert to the needs of others in the community
   _____ To find the meaning of life
   _____ To solve personal problems
   _____ To strengthen my faith and devotion
   _____ To foster greater understanding of the Bible
   _____ To foster greater understanding of Christian doctrine
   _____ To equip myself to assist my family in their spiritual formation
   _____ To provide a place for seekers to belong before believing

_____ To provide a personal impetus for evangelism

_____ To increase my concern for world evangelization

_____ To increase my sensitivity to social issues

17. Which of the following words best describes the type of small group you attend:

□ **Service** (Working with a group of people in the church on a project or in   an area of ministry)

□ **Bridge Group** (a group that shares a common interest for a period of time such as the Marriage Course or a Recovery Group)

□ **CORE Group** (a group in which the sole purpose is to create an environment to help you achieve your full potential as a follower of Jesus Christ)

□ **Gateway Group** (a group of people of like interests that meet together to have fun and discover God in the midst of living life to the fullest)

□ Other: _____

□ I do not attend a small group.

MISSIONAL ACTIVITY

18. Over the last four years the times I have personally engaged in caring for others, outside the church, through building relationships has _____.

19. Over the last four years the times my small group has engaged in caring for others, outside of the church, through building relationships have

_____.

20. Where do you build relationships that will care for people and bring them into community?

In the home	Yes ☐	No ☐
In social circles	Yes ☐	No ☐
At work	Yes ☐	No ☐
At play	Yes ☐	No ☐
At school	Yes ☐	No ☐
During leisure time	Yes ☐	No ☐

21. Over the last four years the number of times each week I have prayed for the salvation of seekers with who I am in relationship has _____.

22. Over the last four years my genuine care for people has _____.

23. Over the last four years my personal involvement in taking the gospel to my community, nation and world (e.g., mission trips, volunteering at local ministries, etc.) has _____.

24. Over the last four years my missional activity has _____.

Intersecting Points

Spiritual Formation & Authentic/Accountable Relationships

25. Over the last four years the amount of time my small group spends in prayer has _____.

26. Over the last four years my openness to hearing and applying constructive criticism and feedback that others might have for me has _____.

27. Over the last four years my openness to share freely about my emotions, and feelings in my small group has _____.

Authentic Relationships/Missional Activity

28. Over the last four years the number of times a month my small group prays for those who do not yet have faith in Christ has _____.

29. Over the last four years the number of social events my small group has planned that have included seekers has _____.

30. Over the last four years the ability for my group to understand that the power of missional community is more effective than individual missional effort has _____.

Spiritual Formation/Authentic Relationships

31. Over the last four years the expectation for group members to lead a group at some point in the future has _____.

32. Over the last four years the number of individuals or couples in your group that have attended a leadership development event has _____.

Spiritual Formation/Missional Activity

33. Over the last four years the realization that my group is part of God's mission to reach others has _____.

34. Over the last four years the understanding that my spiritual formation is for a purpose beyond myself has _____.

35. Over the last four years my effort to build loving and caring relationships with others on their journey towards God has _____.

36. Over the last four years my small group's willingness to make room for seekers, and allowing them to belong before believing has _____.

> The first part of this survey was a self-assessment. From this point on you are requested to assess the ministry of PORTICO.

Spiritual Formation

37. What are the three most important or core values at PORTICO?

   1.

   2.

   3.

38. What is one key difference that you perceive between PORTICO and other churches?

39. Over the last four years the quantity of people at PORTICO discovering prayer as a powerful resource for living has _____.

40. Over the past four years the quality and quantity of instruction on how to discern the difference between the prevalent culture in which we live and the culture of Christian faith has _____.

41. Over the last four years at PORTICO the process of teaching me how to develop a Christian worldview has _____.

42. Over the last four years demonstration that the scriptures inform the ways we live, work, witness, and worship has _____.

Accountable/Authentic Relationships

43. Over the last four years the corporate life and public witness of PORTICO, which consciously seeks to conform to the Lord instead of the culture in which it finds itself, has _____.

44. Over the last four years evidence that PORTICO intentionally supports the diversity of giftedness in the community has _____.

45. Over the last four years a willingness to transcend racial, ethnic, age, gender, and socio-economic barriers has _____.

46. Over the last four years the openness to welcome newcomers to PORTICO has _____.

Missional Activity

47. Over the last four years, the ability for PORTICO to convey our church as a representative of God's kingdom offering an alternative way of life to the world has _____.

48. Over the last four years the number of times the congregation has been told that proclaim the gospel is the primarily the responsibility of church leadership has _____.

49. Over the last four years the number of opportunities to be equipped to tell the story of the gospel in our own words has _____.

50. Over the last four years I believe PORTICO's resistance to change has _____.

51. The new name of the church (PORTICO) better reflects who we are as a congregation.

Yes   No   (circle one)

Comments:

52. The new organizational structure of the church (elders, operations committee, and ministry team) better suits our church culture.

Yes   No   (circle one)

Comments:

Is there anything you feel you want to say but were not asked? (use the back of this page if necessary)

CHAPTER VIII – CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

When church leadership makes the decision to address or embrace the concept of renewal, it is important to do so in chronological order to reap the greatest effectiveness. Culture change agents must give significant attention to the unfolding of a step-by-step process while recognizing that the life and activities of a congregation are systemic and can be characterized at times as chaotic. Failure to do so will result in wasted effort and congregational confusion.

At Portico this lesson was learned the hard way. At the time of this writing, five years into the journey, the process of changing a church culture seems to be unfolding in an orderly fashion. However, early in the process much energy was expended in the attempt to make the 'pieces of the puzzle' fit. The following conclusions represent a recommended pathway for local church renewal:

The local church must have an understanding of its ecclesiology.

One hundred years ago the Azuza Street, Los Angeles revival took place. The inception of Canadian Pentecostal churches was the result of mainline church pastors experiencing Holy Spirit baptism and the outgrowth was the planting of churches and ultimately the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada denomination. With such an experiential heritage, church leaders from that day to this have lead churches accordingly. Much of church leadership expression is based on observed and inherited methodology.

The most important aspect to consider is whether or not proposed church renewal measures up to the patterns of New Testament prescriptions. With the understanding that there is latitude in ministry expression, the pastor and his leadership team must be able to identify biblical principles and methodology that is applicable across time.

Such a study benefits from two outlooks:

1. Congregational practices inside the church in connection to personal and corporate expression to God and

2.   The way in which individuals and the church relates to its cultural context including people who have yet to find faith in Jesus Christ.

Current understanding concerning congregational missionality appears to be deficient and is necessary for any church renewal.

Change agents must understand and appreciate a local church's history and culture.

The topic of conversation among pastors in new pastoral charges often centers on the merits of immediate broad sweeping change as opposed to waiting for a period of time before cautiously implementing any adjustments. The first mindset is, "Hit them hard and let the chips fall where they may" while the second is more thoughtful and collaborative.

For church renewal to be effective, the leader must have a full appreciation for the history and culture of his or her church. This mitigates the former methodology. Past successes and failures need to be understood. An investigative period will enable the leader to ascertain the gifts and passions of those who are part of the congregation.

During this time period the pastor can begin to communicate the need for renewal in a generalized and non-condemning way. Using the history and culture of the church he or she can utilize the highlights and lowlights as conversation starters in the change process. The congregation must be made aware if their church is in the process of a slow death. Their comfort is not the main consideration when determining the future of the local church.

The larger a ship, the longer it takes the captain to turn it. The adjustment in course is more effective when there is full congregational understanding concerning where the church has been and what it has accomplished.

Change agents must have a clear understanding of the cultural context of the Canadian church.

Society has and continues to experience radical change, not only as a whole, but among age and cultural demographics. This has occurred due to such trends as sweeping changes in technology and increased immigration and urbanization. Government statistics over a period of time can be a good indicator of local patterns.

These developments should impact the way in which a church organizes its ministry. Current ministry effectiveness cannot be realized in the same manner as ten years ago. If the church is to be missional it must understand the needs of its members in their societal context in order to prepare a church culture change model.

The ways and means of missional cultural engagement are both personal and corporate. Because the local church consists of people and it ministries, these separate, yet interactive entities should be designed to be symbiotic in their purpose and expression. This can be accomplished through leadership training which equips people to be missional.

The leadership team must design a change process for the local church.

It must be recognized that the church is an expression of God's kingdom. As such, local church leadership must consider a change in orientation from an emphasis on growing a church to expanding God's kingdom. This change in perspective enables the pastor and his or her team to focus on the higher value of missional effectiveness as opposed to a church-centered approach.

Effective leaders are never satisfied with the status quo. They are constantly seeking greater effectiveness. As part of this appetite they continually ask 'the hard questions.' They are quick to act concerning those programs and ministry activities that are qualitatively or quantitatively marginal. They constantly wonder aloud if a certain action would result in increased discipleship or evangelism.

Often the emphasis in the change process is on the 'what' as opposed to the 'how.' To be effective, change agents must have a firm grasp on culture change methodology including a theological understanding.

The change agent understands that the church and marketplace are different in many ways. However, there are business principles which can be effectively employed in the church setting. Wisdom is in knowing which are biblically appropriate or acceptable.

Discernment concerning the role of leadership is of utmost importance. This may be the most blatant example of ministry malpractice. Jesus' leadership example taught many things including the inappropriateness of dictatorial leadership and the effectiveness of a relational servant leadership style.

A pathway of change is always a work in process. If the church is a system then each and every action will result in a reaction. At times the overall vision and purpose is mistakenly thwarted due to a miscue or misunderstanding. After a full assessment the leadership team can regroup and institute the necessary changes to re-engage culture renewal.

The church leader must be a student of other church cultures and their congregational methodology.

It is presumptuous to think that the wheel needs to be invented over and over again. Churches throughout the ages have benefited by the lessons learned by the Corinthian church.

Western churches have many resources to create renewal principles. The leadership team of a local church can benefit greatly by a critical reading of literature applicable to the local context and engaging the expertise of culture change agents from other churches. As in the case of Portico, there may be five or six churches that have developed some aspects of culture formation that are applicable to the context in question.

Church leadership must define a preferred church culture that is appropriate for its context.

The proposed design of a church culture is critical to its future direction. The pattern is responsible to define appropriate metrics for operational success through the creation and implementation of a congregational mission and vision.

The mission is a one-sentence statement of what the congregation perceives as God's unique call for their church. The vision is a description of what the church will look like at a future point of time. These statements become the 'anchor points' for the creation of a change process.

Congregations establish their values by design or default. Leaders should use the initial stages of a culture change to affirm or reaffirm appropriate value statements. For example, while understanding that renewal has much to do with the redesign of an organization and that God loves the Church, successful assemblies understand that people are God's concern and the congregation exists to serve both members and seekers.

The leadership at Portico believes that the person in the pew needs to have a simple and memorable set of statements to guide their lives. The leadership team adheres to the principles of Spiritual Formation, Authentic/Accountable Relationships and Missional Activity, and uses them as a measuring stick for the adjustment of current ministries or establishment of new ones. Congregational members, on the other hand, simply understand Portico's values as Sharing, Growing and Serving.

Congregational praxis must reflect church philosophy.

Once the philosophical aspects of church culture are established leadership can design the church system. Aspects of church praxis, such as congregational governance, should be examined in relation to the biblical precedent and current social realities. The filling of ministry positions must be carefully considered with a view to differentiating between the positions which are best suited to volunteers and professionals. It should also be noted that

appointments to either type of position necessitates personal agreement on the part of the appointees with aforementioned recommendations.

The design of church ministries is often facilitated around the principle of felt need or because a certain program has always been in existence. If an organization's past successes or shortfalls become the focus of renewal, leadership is doomed to repeat history.

A local church must recognize that it is not able to facilitate the entire spectrum of ministries as identified in the ministry passions of congregational members. Effective churches design ministry for its target audience while allowing other local congregations to address other demographics.

There is a place for missional partnerships. 'Together we are better.' Agreements with like-minded organizations that have a different set of resources allow each group to focus on what it does best which results in a multitude of successes.

Church leaders much have an ongoing commitment to renewal

Church culture change is not a project with start and end dates. It is a continual process that may be more intense at times. The pastor and his or her team must devise methodology to move the congregation forward steadily. Oral and written communication must be constantly available and visible to church members. The local church discipleship process and leadership training are excellent venues. Leaders should empower people in their areas of responsibility to reinforce the mission and vision of the church by strategizing accordingly.

Periodic corporate assessment gives church leadership the opportunity to determine if any progress has been made. The 'wins' can be celebrated. Change agents can conduct post mortems on the 'losses' and strategize appropriate responses. Widespread participation and communication on this part of the process can contribute to congregational commitment to further culture change.

Finally, **Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada leadership and churches must recommit to congregational renewal.**

It is becoming more apparent that the diversity of Canadian culture has rendered many of the 'what works in one place will work anywhere' programs useless. Denomination leadership must encourage local churches to take steps to develop a personalized strategy for their context. Church consultants can assist in forming strategy including the principles of Spiritual Formation, Authentic/Accountable Relationships and Missional Activity. With a careful development and implementation of culture change processes the best days of Canadian Pentecostal (and evangelical) churches are ahead.

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