THE COMMON CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS DETERMINING THE MISSION IMPACT OF THE LOCAL CHURCH - AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

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FOREWORD

I became aware of the Lord's calling as a full-time missionary in February 1993. For more than 4 years I battled with Him - I ignored, I rationalised, I denied, I refused and eventually I surrendered.

At the age of 47, I had no formal theological training. I completed my formal commercial education in 1973 and since then experienced more than average success as financial manager in the corporate environment. Coming to this life-changing crossroad, I was a financial manager in the biggest electricity utility in Africa.

While fulfilling the role of Mission Executive in a fast-growing, dynamic mission organisation, I felt the need for formalised theological training. This, coupled with my exposure to the local Church, led to a growing awareness that the major role-player in the mission task is largely uninvolved. The exciting thought to integrate need, experience and formal study eventually led to this study. My prayer is that Churches will use this research result to accelerate their mission involvement. I further trust that the Lord would use the growing involvement of the whole Church to impact the whole world with the whole gospel.

I would like to express thanks and to acknowledge the inputs of the following institutions, organisations and people:

❑ My wife, Elize, and our three children who supported me, prayed for me, believed in me and created a physical, spiritual and emotional environment in which it was possible to endure.

❑ My parents - you laid the foundation.

❑ My lecturers at the University of Potchefstroom where I started my Theological training - you succeeded in helping me to utilise knowledge and to develop a deeper, more intimate relationship with the Lord.

❑ My team of prayer supporters.

❑ Prof. Alwyn Louw who helped me to understand something of the sociological factors involved.

❑ The Churches who allowed me to analyse and study their involvement in mission.

CONTENTS

Chapter 3

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLICAL MANDATE FOR THE CHURCH-ON-MISSION

Chapter 4

CREATING A BIBLICAL PARADIGM FOR THE CHURCH-ON-MISSION

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION - CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS FOR THE

DIAGRAMS, FIGURES, MAPS AND TABLES

ABBREVIATIONS

AD2000	The AD2000 and Beyond Movement
AFM	Apostolic Faith Mission
CFF(s)	Critical Failure Factor(s)
CSF(s)	Critical Success Factor(s)
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
GCOWE	Global Consultation on World Evangelisation
KJV	King James Version Bible
NEB	New English Bible
NIV	New International Version Bible
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
PGM	ProChristo Global Mission

INTRODUCTION

Can common factors be consistently identified in Churches actively and successfully involved in the task of mission? Are these factors to a lesser or no degree demonstrated in Churches uninvolved in the mission task? If they do exist, can these factors be isolated and described in order to assist us in developing a model to enlarge the mission impact of the local Church?

There is an interesting phenomenon in the universal Church as it steps into the new millennium. On the one hand, internationally acclaimed statisticians like Patrick Johnstone and David Barrett (2001:24) clearly indicate phenomenal global Church growth. In a recent publication by Johnstone, *The Church is bigger than you think*, he indicates that the growth of the so-called Evangelicals are higher than any other religious grouping in the world (1998:112). It is clear that the efforts of ecumenical, mission-minded movements like *AD2000* had a tremendous impact on purposeful strategies to reach the unreached with the Gospel.

In spite of this inspiring facts, it is also a tragic reality that many congregations and Churches are not involved in the process of expanding the Church via missionary activities. This view is supported by Prof. Dons Kritzinger in a report, *"Betrokkenheid van lidmate by sending,"* [Involvement of members in mission] on the mission involvement of members of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa at the general synod of the Church in 1994 (Sinodical agenda:1994). It can be accepted that Prof. Kritzinger's comments are not just applicable to the DRC.

Due to the success of Churches focussing on mission, it should be asked what makes the difference? Are there common factors to be determined in mobilised Churches? If it exist – are these only spiritual factors or can measurable aspects also be determined? Knowledge and understanding of such factors may benefit the Church at large in its functioning.

Personal involvement in mobilising the global Church for mission led to a regular experience of Churches' indifference towards the Great Commission and its missionary implications. Therefore the burning question in the hearts of mission leaders today – how to involve the uninvolved majority of Churches in evangelising the world?

This question gives birth to the research problem which is addressed by this study: "What are the common critical success factors enabling Churches, involved in mission, to impact creation in order to experience growth in God's Kingdom?"

Once such factors are identified, a model can be developed by means of which missionary activities can be planned and impact optimised.

The goals of the study therefore are:
- ❑ to analyse and identify common critical success factors in congregations who are effectively involved in mission;
- ❑ to develop a conceptual model of such factors in these congregations; and,
- ❑ to identify specific areas for further research, as a follow-up to this exploratory research.

Although mobilisation of the Church for mission is a regular topic in popular articles and publications I am not aware of any scientific, analytical study that has been done on this subject. Over many decades missionaries debated this subject, but no conclusive statements could be published based on a controlled study.

Although I test the thesis that there are critical success factors determining mission impact, the study also reflects the nature of an exploratory study. The lack of sound scientifically tested research materials necessarily lead to such an approximation.

International mission executives are convinced that a study of this nature can have an invaluable effect on the mobilisation of the global Church. This statement is supported by the interest of Dr Luis Bush, previously the Executive of the *AD2000 and Beyond Movement*. Dr Bush indicated a need to publish the results internationally as a means to accelerate the involvement of the local Church to reach the unreached.

The value of this study is further supported by a statement released by thirty-five functional leaders and founders of *AD2000* in Colorado Springs on the 12th May 1998. These renowned leaders of the then biggest ecumenical movement in the world stated that "the primary roadblocks to world evangelisation were cited as being disinterest, self-absorption and lukewarmness within the Body of Christ" (Wood, 1998).

The results of this research can directly impact this statement. It can have a positive effect on the mobilisation of the global Church and as a result, the evangelisation of the world in the new century.

Chapter 1
CONCEPTUAL DEFINITIONS

1.1 Mission

What is mission? David Bosch describes it as "a sign in the sense of a pointer, symbol, example or model. It is a sacrament in the sense of mediation, representation or anticipation" (1991:11). In another publication he defines mission as "the Church in the form of a servant reaching out over boundaries" (1979:248). Popular definitions simply describe it as cross-cultural evangelisation.

Definitions for mission and evangelism ranges from a very narrow perspective to a wide, more holistic, ecumenical viewpoint. Two points of departure can be determined:

❑ mission and evangelism are the same concept, and

❑ evangelism can be distinguished from mission.

The first viewpoint focuses on the salvation of as many people as possible. In contrast with this rather narrow and simplistic perspective, the wider definition accentuates "the whole Church taking the whole Gospel to the whole world." In all cases this comprehensive definition includes an appeal for repentance and faith in Christ (Bosch 1987:9).

Missiologists who differentiate between the concepts of mission and evangelism formulate a variety of definitions. Bosch builds on the definition of Stott and concludes that mission is the total task of the Church with the salvation of the world as goal. Executing this task, the Church steps out of its limited existence and crosses geographical, social, political, ethnic, cultural, religious and ideological barriers. To all these different spheres of life, the Church-on-mission carries the Good News of salvation. Eventually mission is nothing less but the way in which the Church gets involved in the salvation of the universe and the glorification of God (Bosch 1987:11). For this study, the holistic definition of Bosch will be used.

In *God's missionary people: Rethinking the purpose of the local Church*, Charles van Engen, uses the definition of Stephen Neill describing mission as the "intentional crossing of barriers

from Church to non-Church in word and deed for the sake of the proclamation of the Gospel" (1991:28).

It must be kept in mind that nowhere in the Bible an exact, clearly defined, unchanging presentation of mission will be find. Such a search will rather highlight a variety of accentuations and approaches within a broader framework interpreting mission as God's involvement in the world for the salvation of mankind (Bosch 1979:47).

1.2 Mission-impact

The Oxford dictionary describes the concept of impact as "to press closely into" or "to impress on something" (Onions 1959:962). This is exactly what the Church-on-mission is doing – "pressing closely into" the world where it should be light and salt. "Impressing" on mankind the Good News of Jesus Christ so that it can have a lasting and changing impression on creation.

It is imperative that an impact cannot leave the "impacter" and the "impacted" unchanged. The thesis of this study is that this impact can be evaluated and that it is the result of certain Critical Success Factors (CSFs) present in the congregation. Being outward directed, actively involved in the world, will necessarily lead to practical outcomes – actions and results that can not be ignored. The Church-on-mission does not operate secretly or unnoticed - it is openly and practically impacting a world in need of God's salvation.

1.3 Church

Van Engen defines the Church as a congregation of believers seeking God's purpose. The Global Church is the body of Christ, purchased by His blood - also called His people in the world. The Church could furthermore be defined as the one holy, universal and apostolic community of the disciples of Jesus Christ, gathered from all the families of the earth, around Word, sacrament and common witness (1991:28).

Figure 1.1 – The Church: A community of the disciples of Jesus Christ

Modern Ecclesiology describes the Church both in its present state and what it can potentially be through faith. The Church is a fully formed community, a living sacrament and a sign before God and those outside this community, but through contextualising, goal setting, planning and evaluation it steps into a process of becoming. This implies that the Church is never stagnant, but changing minute by minute. The gap between what it is in its human, often sinful state and what it should be in its divine, holy and invisible state is ever changing – always becoming, emerging and developing (Van Engen 1991:41).
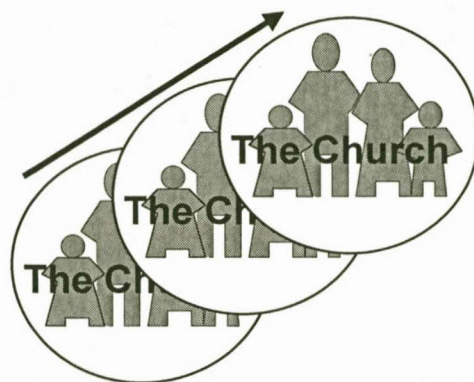
Figure 1.2 – The Church: Becoming what it already is through faith

As people join the Church for different reasons, no one can become part of the Church without being elected, called, justified and adopted by Jesus Christ. This sociological entity with a spiritual nature is thus the mysterious result of His saving grace (Van Engen 1991:41).

It is not by chance that Jesus was simultaneously God, not from this world, but also fully man, in this world. The Church is the body of this God-man, uniquely divine but also human. The Church is therefor also "in the world but not of the world." On the one hand a fallen human institution but also a perfect divine organism (Van Engen 1991:44).

3

The essence and nature of the Church is expressed by the Apostles' Creed as "the communion of saints." Imbedded in this Creed we therefore acknowledge the "Church as congregation, communion, fellowship and people of God" (Van Engen 1991:48). The Church is the mysterious *creatio Dei* finding true expression of its existence in *missio Dei* through the unifying, sanctifying, reconciling and proclaiming activity of Jesus Christ in the world (Van Engen 1991:70).

The local Church or congregation is a locally organised *ecclesia* (religious congregation; community of members; assembly) (Onions 1959:311). Van Engen describes it as the tangible, local, social, relational group of worshipping believers. The local congregation is the basic agent of the Church's mission in the world (1991:31). The "living stones" from which the "spiritual house" is formed (1 Peter 2:5).

Van Engen (1986:105-107) refers to Paul's letter to the Ephesians as a means to define Church. "Paul saw the local Church as an organism, which should continually grow in the missional expression of its essential nature in the world."

Martin Luther detested the old German word *Kirche* because of its institutional and hierarchical associations, preferring such words as crowd, convocation, assembly and congregation. In fact the actual words are not as important as is the Reformation emphasis on the nature of the Church as expressed in the Apostles' Creed - the communion of saints. This emphasis on the Church as congregation, communion, or fellowship was central to Paul's definition of the Church, which was based on the Old Testament concept of the people of God.

1.3.1 The Church-on-mission

I consistently make use of the concept Church-on-mission in this dissertation. In contrast with the generally used Church-in-mission, the concept Church-on-mission conveys a content with vast implications. To be the Church-on-mission implies dynamic action and energy. It does not allow for a passive acceptance of the Church's responsibility to impact the world but it accentuates its active yearning for growth. To be on mission eliminates the possibility of

degeneration or even stagnancy. It reminds us of the military environment in which it is normally used. An army on mission is offensively focused on transforming the *status quo*. Similarly the Church-on-mission will never be satisfied to be passively in mission, but such a Church will dynamically and pro-actively reach out to a world desperately in need of the Good News!

The Church is God's missionary people. The members should understand that the Church is simultaneously a human organisation and divinely created organism. Its mission is both gift and task, spiritual and social (Van Engen 1991:35).

The local congregation does not exist in isolation. Acting as God's people in the world the Church must continuously interpret God's involvement with His body on earth. Because God is involved in His creation He uses His body, the Church, in specific ways to accomplish His goal. The Church "finds its marching orders dynamically described" by God for a missionary presence in the world (Van Engen 1991:84).

Figure 1.3 – The Church: Through the interpretation of God's involvement with His Body finding sense, direction and reason for existence.

The environment also impacts the local congregation. In an ever-expanding universe the influence is not just limited from this world but also from the ever-increasing cyber space. Influences from the political, technological, scientific, social and economical fields are continuously changing the environment in which the Church must be on mission.
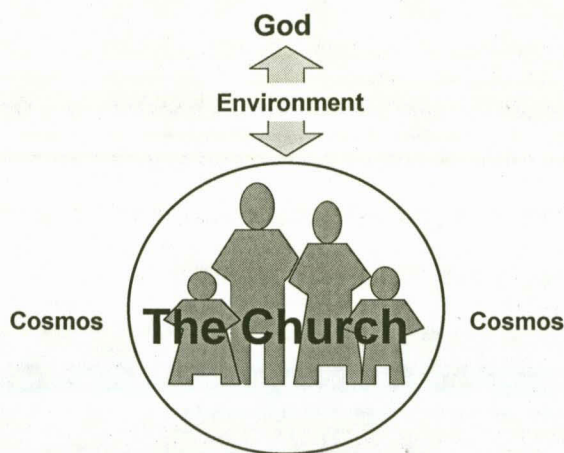
Figure 1.4 – The Church: impacted by the cosmos and its environment

The Church has a certain character and nature when viewed from a Biblical and missiological perspective. These attributes belong to the Church becoming what it is divinely meant to be – what it already is by faith.

Although idealistic, in a sense, the Church cannot conform to any other norms and standards than the Biblical view of the body of Christ. Conforming and settling for anything less will degrade the impact of the Church in a world desperately in need of Christ.

Another reality for the Church-on-mission implies the ability to continually change its mode of expression. The Church must demonstrate the ability to bring its historical orientation into creational harmony with the constantly changing world (Van Engen 1991:74). This element of timelessness and close interwovenness with its Head, Jesus Christ, comes into dialectic tension with the dynamic, ever-changing world in which and to which the Church-on-mission is called.

Being obedient and transforming towards the Biblical image of the Church, it becomes the Church-on-mission. Turned "inside out", existing for and "moving towards" the world. By integrating God's ongoing direction, its Biblical attributes, character and nature, the environmental influence and the context – the Church becomes a vibrant, dynamic and relevant impacter of the world.
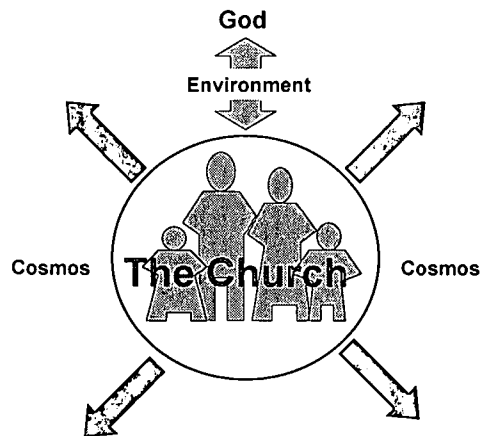
Figure 1.5 – The Church: Impacting the world

The Church-on-mission must interpret its character and nature missiologically. This understanding or interpretation will give rise to certain critical success factors in the local congregation. The existence of these CSFs is firstly the result of the Church's interpretation of its Biblical and missiological role in the world and secondly the origin of the Church's impact in the world.

1.4 Critical success factors (CSFs)

1.4.1 Defining CSFs

The following statements define the concept of CSFs clearly:

- A small number of topics that are influential in determining the outcome of a business activity, and then monitoring those factors for change. Using CSFs normally imply completing certain milestones, and by more sophisticated enterprises, as achieving quality targets as well.
- Those few key areas of activity in which favourable results are absolutely necessary for reaching set goals.
- Those limited number of areas where "things must go right" to ensure success for an organisation.
- Those managerial or enterprise areas that must be given special and continual attention to bring about high performance

7

- Those factors predicting success on projects.
- Events or circumstances that require the special attention of managers.
- Those factors in which success is necessary in order that each of the major project participants in a project has the maximum chance of achieving the goals.
- CSFs are those primary process performance measures that most closely define and track how the process must perform to be considered successful. CSFs are directly related to strategic and business plan objectives and goals. For each critical success factor there must be an associated key indicator that provides the measure and a standard of performance or allowable variance from planned performance. The most effective key indicators are those designed into the process in such a way as to provide a readily available or continuous reading of performance. Many of the instruments on a car dashboard can be considered examples of key indicators (Hill 1983) (Hobbs 1989).

1.4.2 Historical background

The origin of CSFs can be identified as the quest for excellence. Questions giving rise to the development of the so-called excellence-culture were:
- Are you (or the organisation) really good at what you do?
- Can you (or the organisation) be described as a top performer in your field?

Organisations started to develop and implement the "Winning Edge" principle. This states that small improvements in your performance can make huge differences in your results. It applies to nearly every field. The process urges people and organisations to learn from those that are already excellent in their field and model them. Some of the most successful organisations of the previous decade started to learn what has been successful for others and then did the same things.

1.4.3 Application of CSFs

Determining CSFs is a well-accepted methodology for identifying and focusing energy and resources on the aspects that really influence success and excellence. CSFs are the things the individual or organisation have to do well to be successful. There are normally between five

and ten major factors. Weakness in any one of these is critical and limits the performance of the organisation just as a chain is limited by its weakest link.
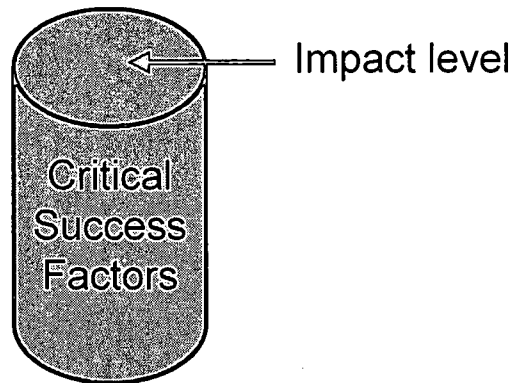
Figure 1.6 – CSFs determining level of impact

1.4.4 Application of secular principles

The dangerous interpretations of exclusiveness imply that the activities of God and man exclude each other – God and man are becoming opponents (Bosch 1979:81). John Deschner states that this "is a perversion because it suggests that God's activity is the enemy of human freedom" and that "in the light of the Gospel ...... the more we recognise that the Church's mission is God's activity, the more we may properly speak of it as our activity" (in Bosch 1979:82).

Bosch cites various scriptural references to support his claim that this rivalry is nothing but a total paradox. To understand it we need to grasp the NT implication to be "in Christ." 1 Corinthians 15:10 is the most powerful affirmation that "by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect." This shed light on the so-called paradox. It would be naïve to deny that there are a dialectic and creative tension between God's work and man's work. To try and explain it by formulas or dogmatic declarations surpass the boundaries of the mystery with which we are confronted (Bosch 1979:83).

It is therefore obvious that utilising secular principles and knowledge can not *per se* be deemed unbiblical. The heritage of the Graeco-Roman worldview is largely responsible for such a misunderstanding. The use of modern technology in the day-to-day activities of our

9

Christian institutions and Churches are seldom debated. In the same way we do not question the enormous effect of technological breakthroughs on the mission endeavours of the global Church.

Ray Anderson states strongly that there is no Biblical support for a worldview creating separate "worlds." Human society is a social order that is linked with the world order (the cosmos). The same creative Word (Jesus Christ) by whom God brought the cosmos into being also established human society. Just as the world and cosmos has its antecedent in God as Creator, so the human social order has its antecedent in God's purpose to create a people for Himself. Jesus Christ is the "essential link" in this structure of reality (1986:22).

Human society, as part of this cosmos, does not contain within itself absolute principles and forms by which it can determine its own destiny. Rather, its principles and forms are provisional and temporal in the light of the eternal reality – the eschaton of God as the final "end" or consummation of all things. From this perspective, we say that human society with all of its forms and structures is under an eschatological tension. That is, the present order of human society, as God created and intended it to exist as part of the world order, is "good." There is no intrinsic evil embedded in the created order, nor is the created order to be despised as unworthy of our attention. Christians sometimes forget this, and make the mistake of thinking that the "business" of the world is basically evil and therefore cannot be "of God" (Anderson 1986:23).

This negative and pessimistic view of the created order would tend to spiritualise the management of the Church and Christian organisations – it leads to a point where prayer is substituted for planning and faith for forecasting. But this is wrong. The spiritual task of managing is first of all a task of managing the Church with full responsibility for its participation in the created structure of this world as God intended it.

This is why the apostle Paul suggested that at least one important qualification for the spiritual leadership of the Church was that one should first have demonstrated competence in "managing a household" (1 Timothy 3:12) and not be "profligate" (Titus 1:6). In Paul's eyes, managing a household and managing one's resources well is a mark of being a good "business person." Even though all of this "business" will pass away in the end, that which will exist

ultimately for the glory of God (when "heaven and earth have passed away") is the people of God.

The created cosmos is intended to serve as an environment of space and time for the preparation of human society to be the people of God. The organisational structures and functions of society can be called into the service of that preparation (Anderson 1986:24-26).

In integrating modern technology and management skills with the activities of the Church we need to take cognisance of the responsibility of the Church leadership to lead with the conviction that Jesus is the head of His Church. Whatever He makes available to support the Church in the execution of its task, must be deemed as His gracious provision to complete His work.

1.4.5 Relevance

How then can the knowledge of CSFs be relevant to the mission task of the Church? Some of these applicable principles are:

- ❑ CSFs put emphasis on quality results. The Church's involvement in the missionary task has enormous practical implications. These activities can have life-changing effects on peoples and nations. Although God, and not the Church, ultimately determines the outcome of the results, it is still the responsibility of the Church to strive for excellence and quality in its missionary endeavours.

- ❑ Goalsetting and the monitoring of progress are integrated in the concept of CSFs. For many years, Churches, especially those with a maintenance mentality, shied away from the concept of goalsetting. The current number of global strategies for evangelising all nations is in stark contrast with the earlier reluctance to set goals. *AD2000*, till recently the largest ecumenical movement in the world, set the pace in terms of professional goalsetting and monitoring.

- ❑ Modelling successes is one of the powerful implications of CSFs. Although we are aware of the fact that God works uniquely through His body and in different ways through every local Church, the aim of this study is to determine if there are CSFs to be identified in mission-minded Churches. The worth of the study lies in creating rolemodels for the Church to follow in its missionary activities.

11

- The drive for improvement and growth, so crucial in CSFs, should be an integral part of our Church and personal lives.
- Missionary leaders are more convinced that mission activities should be "outcome-driven." This concept means that development of action plans, goals and strategies should be build primarily on the expected outcome. This concept is in harmony with the principles of CSFs.
- Measuring results is of utmost importance in the output-orientated society of the 21st century. Although many spiritual, sociological and mental outcomes cannot be measured, there are physical activities in the Church that are measurable.

Chapter 2
TESTING THE THESIS

2.1 Research Methodology

The aim of this study and the nature of the research variables logically lead to a decision to use qualitative research as the basic methodology. There are however certain aspects of the Church's involvement in mission that can be quantitatively measured. To be able to integrate the effects of these realities in the final outcome of the study, it was imperative to include some elements of survey (quantitative) research.

In some way we are researching the "marks of a healthy Church" as seen by Lyle Schaller. Two of the approaches described by Schaller are implemented in this study:

❑   using certain congregations as models for others – the Model Church approach; and,

❑   taking into consideration the Biblical examples, injunctions and truths about the Church (in Van Engen 1991:16).

Quantitative and qualitative methods were combined to reduce field notes to a manageable amount of material while still maintaining the richness and evidential value of field research (Orenstein & Phillips 1978:377). The methodology of field research ensures a comprehensive perspective by going directly to the social phenomenon under study and observing it as completely as possible. Therefore a deeper and fuller understanding of it is ensured. A study of the Body of Christ and its task in the world defies simple quantification (Babbie 1979:206).

The methodology of field research is especially effective for studying "the subtle nuances of attitudes and behaviours, and for examining social processes over time." This method therefore allows for an in-depth understanding of a complex process. Contrary to other research methods, field research is seldom challenged to be "superficial." The methodology allows for flexibility and the research design can be modified at any time (Babbie 1979:227). The complexity of the subject as well as the interdependency and immeasurability of certain variables eventually lead to the specific combination of quantitative and qualitative research employed (figure 2.1).
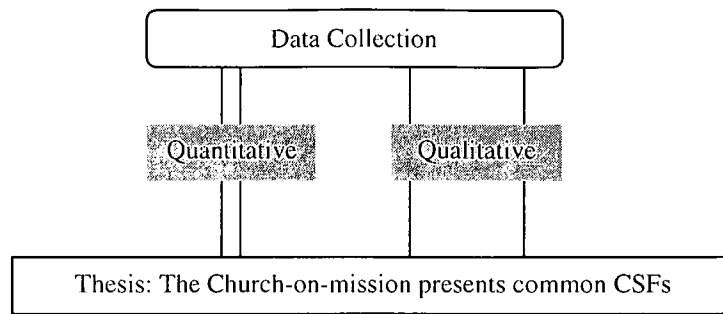
Figure 2.1 – Research methodology

The decision to primarily employ qualitative research, or fieldwork, is further derived from the need for first-hand, face-to-face participation and experience in the naturally occurring social settings of Church life.

In the case of field research, variables are not manipulated to assess their causal significance and it does not involve asking standardised questions to large, representative samples of people. Unlike other research methodologies, the qualitative study allows the researcher to intervene in the setting studied (Orenstein & Phillips 1978:306). All these characteristics of field study logically lead to the chosen methodology.

Field research closely parallels our daily observation of and participation in social behaviour, as well as our attempt to understand such behaviour. It is both a data-gathering strategy and a theory-generating activity. Field research is particularly appropriate for topics that appear to defy simple quantification and that require the comprehensiveness of perspective the field researcher can provide. It is also useful for studying topics and people within their natural settings (Wagenaar & Babbie 1992:170).

Although qualitative research is sometimes seen as "based on quite simple - if not primitive research methods – a reconnaissance - an initial exploration of a community to provide an overview - guided by the cannons of sociological theory and method but not attempting to offer documentation for all the findings", qualitative researchers talk about exploration, plausibility, and low evidential value (Orenstein & Phillips 1978:306).

Apart from the choice between or combination of qualitative or quantitative research, the classical model of science was implemented in this study.

This study uses the inductive approach to theory construction through which I strive to uncover patterns based on actual observation. This approach is also known as grounded theory and is seen most often in field research (Wagenaar & Babbie 1992:17).

THEORY Mission-minded Churches have common critical success factors (relationships between variables)	OPERATIONALISATION Identification to allow measurement of critical success factors	OBSERVATION Collection of data to test hypothesised relationships
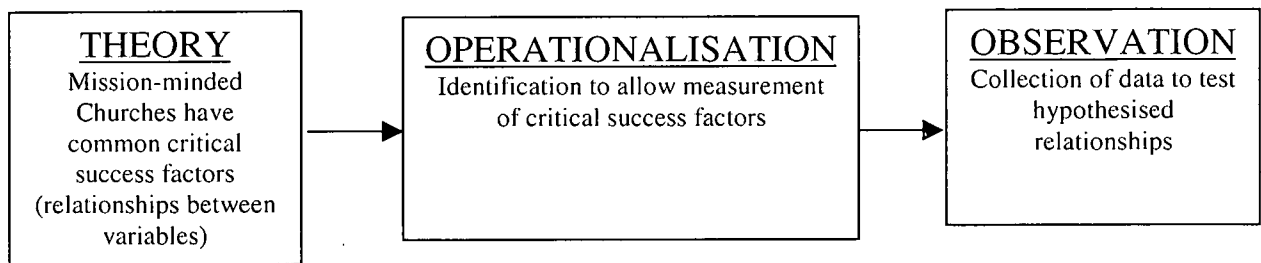
Figure 2.2 – Elements in the traditional scientific research model (Wagenaar & Babbie 1992:16)

The basic assumption imbedded in the thesis is the fact that certain critical factors have a deterministic and causal effect on the mission impact of the Church. Determinism lies at the base of a causal approach to understanding in social science. Determinism means that all social phenomena are the result of prior causes and that these causes themselves are the product of prior causes. I support the belief of most social scientists that all human actions and thoughts are not determined – I also accept the reality that causal patterns are not simple. Therefore it is necessary to take note of probabilistic causal models.

Two models of explanation to account for human behaviour are normally employed:

❑ the idiographic model lists all the specific prior events and conditions (CSFs) that influence a given behaviour (mission impact); and,

❑ the nomothetic model of explanation is used to discover the most important factors (CSFs) causing a given type of behaviour or attitude (mission impact).

The nomothetic model helps identify general patterns of cause and effect and is probabilistic in its approach (Wagenaar & Babbie 1992:30).

This research depicts characteristics of an exploratory study. These studies are often done when a researcher is examining a subject, which is relatively uncharted – as stated in the introduction to this study. But, apart from the element of being exploratory, this is an

explanatory study. Explanatory studies are undertaken to identify possible causal variables of a given social phenomenon (mission impact), thereby contributing to understanding (Wagenaar & Babbie 1992:44).

The greatest strength of the field research method is the presence of an observing, thinking researcher on the scene of the action. Field researchers are in a unique position to examine the nuances of attitudes and behaviours and to examine social processes over time; both contribute to a deeper understanding. Field research also provides a great deal of flexibility for moving between observation and analysis. Because this is a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach, conclusions are seen as tentative rather than definitive. Although field research is often more valid than surveys and experiments, it does suffer from low reliability. Generalisability is a problem for field research because replication is difficult, because comprehensiveness comes at the expense of generalisability, and because those observed may not be representative of the remaining group (Wagenaar & Babbie 1992:172).

2.2 Sampling

2.2.1 Methodology

For this study a method of purposive sampling was used through which the Churches selected are believed to yield a comprehensive understanding of the subject under research (Wagenaar & Babbie 1992:171). To ensure the applicability of the research results it was also important to select Churches from different denominational backgrounds, different cultural, social and geographical settings.

2.2.2 Identification of Churches in sample

The existence of a National Mission Mobilisers Network in South Africa and my involvement with this network as co-chairman created valuable inputs from mission mobilisers consulting with local Churches across the country. These professional people are the best source of information for identifying the Churches having a significant mission impact. I also included people closely involved with the publication of data for the Church in South Africa, for example the South African Christian Handbook.

From these sources a list of Churches actively involved in mission was drawn up. From this list a shortlist was produced to ensure a representative sample of social, demographic and denominational backgrounds.

All the selected Churches were contacted and their willingness to take part in the research program requested.

The following local Churches took part in the research programme:
- DRC Moreleta Park;
- DRC Lynnwoodrif;
- AFM Witbank;
- Lewende Woord; and,
- DRC Bergsig.

2.2.3 Selection of individuals for interviews

	QUANTITATIVE	QUALITATIVE
Senior member of leadership		
Mission committee		
Member of Church board		
Ordinary member		
Missionary		
Missionary in training		
Observer		

Table 2.1 – Selection of individuals for interviews – contributing quantitative and qualitative data

2.3 Data Collection

2.3.1 Strategies and Methodology

The following strategies were included for data collection:

□ Attendance of services, meetings and gatherings as an observant spectator.

□ Informal discussions and visiting with as many different role-players in the Church as possible.

□ Formal and informal interviewing of Church functionaries.

□ Use of informants. Some of the people I interviewed became informants, who kept me up to date with developments in the Church for the duration of the study.

□ Observation. Through carefully observing I tried to pick up as much of the nuances and characteristics of the Church – those aspects that would normally be unobtrusive for the casual observer.

Interviews were used as the primary strategy for data collection. These interviews were not very structured, with pre-set questions and forced-choice answers like the usual survey. Instead, a list of general topics was prepared and the interviews were conducted more like directed conversations, continuously formulating questions based on previous comments. Experience of the subject under discussion often prompted me to pose specific questions concerning the behaviour or reaction I have observed. To ensure optimal inputs during interviewing, I strived for the highest possible rapport. This opened the opportunity to risk asking more challenging and argumentative questions than would otherwise be advisable. The unstructured interviews led to a conversational approach, which also created the opportunity for probing.

The raw data on which the final analysis were based, consist of the events witnessed, the conversations I was part of and the answers I got to questions. Formal interviews were tape-recorded and written notes were taken to enhance the value of the taped interviews.

In writing down incidents, I tried to be as detailed and concrete as possible. As suggested by Orenstein I tried to keep my description of events clearly separate from my interpretation of

what hosts might have meant or felt, from descriptions of my own feelings during the situation and from my conjectures about its sociological relevance (Orenstein & Phillips 1978:328).

Because most concepts are measured through questions and statements, both types of questions were used during interviews:

❑ closed-ended questions – these are easily processed but sometimes overlook alternative answer categories; and,

❑ open-ended questions – they afford a wider range of responses, but they are more difficult to process and may yield irrelevant answers (Wagenaar & Babbie 1992:75).

A field journal contains both my empirical observations as well as interpretations. These observations and interpretations were recorded and kept distinct. Because the field researcher must be particularly alert to the danger of observing only those things that support his theoretical conclusions, the problem was alleviated by the decision to supplement observations with quantitative data.

2.3.2 Structure and content of interviews

Interviews were loosely structured to enhance the opportunity of informal discussions and to prevent the possibility of leading questions. Some interviews, especially with pastors, were conducted on a one-on-one basis while in some cases up to eight people were involved in group discussions.

All interviews had the following basic content:

❑ Personal introductions

❑ Background, subject and intent of the study

❑ The research methodology used

❑ The goals and structure of the interview

❑ Interview

All the interviews were opened by two basic questions:

- According to your experience and insight, would you describe this congregation as one having a mission impact?
- What are the factors, to your view, distinguishing this congregation from uninvolved Churches?

These two questions normally started in-depth discussions about the mission involvement of the Church. It happened many times that negative factors also came to the surface, which had to be re-opened for discussion later during the interview. I was also aware of the fact that people can easily start to describe their view of the ultimate mission-minded Church, not focusing on the real life situation of the congregation under discussion.

Other questions used to stimulate thought and discussion were the following:
- How would you rate the mission involvement of the Church on a ten-point scale?
- Why do you come to this conclusion?
- When did the mission involvement of this Church started?
- What triggered the change?
- Describe the "before" and "after" scenario (referring to mission-involvement)?
- How do you define mission?
- What is your perspective of the Church?
- Do you think it is possible to measure or rate mission involvement?

Depending on the insight, involvement and personality of the person/people interviewed it was sometimes not even necessary to use these questions as further prompts for discussion.

2.4 Validity

The following two questions must be answered to ensure the validity of my research: Firstly, are the reactions and experiences observed through a relative small number of role-players in a specific Church, valid for the larger community of Church members? Secondly, is the pattern of mission involvement in the Churches included in the study typical of other such communities of believers?

The way the study was conducted allows for some control mechanism through the use of survey data. The fact that a number of "cases" is tested through the sampling of different

Churches also affects the validity of the methodology used. Under normal circumstances the abovementioned questions can only be answered through testing the results in the same Churches and/or conducting further field research.

The abstract character of the variables tested is accounted for by using many indicators. The study of the Scriptural basis for mission draws a definite Biblical border within which the study could be conducted. The extensive literary study allows for a further control mechanism to ensure validity of the study. Validity is therefore ensured by:

❑ Scriptural foundation;

❑ literary study;

❑ sound field survey;

❑ field research; and,

❑ a relative large sample for this type of study.

This study conforms to the classical approach as described by Orenstein & Phillips. As qualitative researcher I began by saying: I want to determine those factors influencing the mission impact of local Churches. Then I probed for these variables (CSFs) particularly influencing mission impact (the indicator) of the local Church. In contrast with the explicit measurement approach, which is designed to permit the comparison of many cases, I investigated a few cases using many indicators of mission involvement (Orenstein & Phillips 1978:362).

The fact must always be taken into account that it is difficult to prove beyond any doubt a specific and constant relationship between variables and indicators in qualitative research. In many cases the association can be a spurious product of some other variable. To minimise this reality the abovementioned combination of methods were employed to assure validity of results (Orenstein & Phillips 1978:366).

The causal relationship (or the lack thereof) between the CSFs and the mission impact of the local Church lies at the base of the thesis. The validity of my interpretation therefore takes into account that three requirements must be met in order to establish causality:

❑ the cause must precede the effect in time;

❑ the variables must be empirically related; and,

❑   the observed empirical relationship should not be the result of the effects of some other variable on each of the original variables.

It is however necessary to understand that compromises must be made in applying these prerequisites - for example, a perfect correlation is not a criterion of causality (Wagenaar & Babbie 1992:30).

The results of the quantitative questionnaires were tabulated to determine if certain trends and commonalties could be determined (discussed in chapter 5). These results point towards the mission involvement and impact of these Churches. It must be stressed that the measuring of mission impact is not the focus and scope of this study. It is furthermore not a simplistic measurement of, for instance, amounts invested in mission or the number of missionaries supported. God determines ultimate mission impact in his sovereignty – it is not ultimately determined by the actions of the local Church. In chapter seven, the opportunity for further research in this area is discussed, accentuated and suggested.

Chapter 3

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLICAL MANDATE FOR THE CHURCH-ON-MISSION

3.1 Mandate for mission

The origin and basis of a mandate have a significant influence on the execution thereof. This statement is just as applicable to the mission mandate of the Church. If the mandate is not Scriptural based, it is understandable that Churches will view it as an optional activity. If the mandate is non-negotiable, there should be an urgency and seriousness to be determined. For this study this mandate is very important because the Church-on-mission should be evaluated against the background of the mission mandate of the Bible

The foundation of mission is even more important when we consider those millions of dollars, thousands of workers and the vast infrastructure, which are invested every year towards the cause of reaching the world with the Gospel. Can the involved Church justify this investment in resources scripturally? Can the rest of the Church justify their lack of involvement scripturally?

In his article "The Bible in World Evangelisation", (in Winter & Hawthorne, A3-A9) Stott concludes that the mandate for mission is the whole Bible. The whole Scripture breathes God's concern for His creation and the Nations. God's plan for salvation is already revealed in Genesis when Abraham is confronted with God's commission and His promises. The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Genesis 12:1-3).

The Great Commission is not an unexpected, isolated, New Testament phenomenon. Right through the Scriptures, God reveals Himself as the God of the Nations. Charles van Engen (1986:36-37) refers to David Bosch's statement: "Our conclusion is that both Old and New Testaments are permeated with the idea of mission. ... But not everything we call mission is indeed mission ... It is the perennial temptation of the Church to become a 'religious club'. ...

The only remedy for this mortal danger lies in challenging herself unceasingly with the true biblical foundation of mission."

Bosch puts it clearly that there can be no doubt about the necessity for the Biblical basis of mission. The need is logical in both Roman Catholic and Protestant circles (1979:44).

We must take cognisance of the hermeneutic dangers when we work with the Biblical foundation for mission. God reveals himself in the whole Scripture as the One who takes care of the underprivileged and those who are downtrodden and cast out by society. In our study of the scriptural foundation for mission we will come across this revelation of God's grace and love rather than missionary contact between the covenant people (Israel) and surrounding nations. Therefore Verkuyl describes every meeting between Jesus and pagans as a vibrating, impatient expectation of the day when salvation will be preached to all nations (in Bosch 1979:59).

Van Engen (1986:35) points out that civilisation brought with it a degree of blindness to questions of purpose, design, and intention when we examine the biblical text. We need to ask the missiological questions regarding God's intentions and purpose. Thus Arthur Glasser calls for a deeper missiological reflection on the biblical message: "All Scripture makes its contribution in one way or another to our understanding of mission. ... In our day evangelicals are finding that the biblical base for mission is far broader and more complex than any previous generation of Missiologists appears to have envisioned.... In our day there is a growing impatience with all individualistic and pragmatic approaches to the missionary task that arise out of a proof-text use of Scripture, despite their popularity among the present generation of activist evangelicals." Johannes Verkuyl advocates a similar change in hermeneutic approach: "In the past the usual method was to pull a series of proof-texts out of the Old and New Testaments and then to consider the task accomplished. But more recently biblical scholars have taught us the importance of reading these texts in context and paying due regard to the various nuances. ... One must consider the very structure of the whole biblical message." (in Van Engen 1986:35-36)

Thus, Verkuyl warns against the use of merely a few scriptures from the Old and New Testament. He calls this the *"biblicistische"* method. He states that it is imperative to interpret

within the structure of the whole message of the Bible - *"zullen moeten letten op de structuren van de gehele bijbelse boodschap"* (1975:123).

3.1.1 In the Old Testament

The God who calls Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the OT and who reveals Himself to Moses as YHWH, is the God of the whole universe. This is the powerful statement of Johannes Verkuyl when he discusses the relevance of mission in the OT (1975:124). He states that "in choosing Israel as segment of all humanity, God never took His eye off the other nations. Israel was the *pars pro toto*, a minority called to serve the majority. God's election of Abraham and Israel concerns the whole world" (Van Engen 1991:55).

Brueggemann (1997:229) emphasises that Yahweh testifies through his actions to Israel who in response replies. This dialogue has implications for the whole world and lays the foundation for mission in the sense that Yahweh is the living God, that He himself testifies to that and that Israel replies to His self-revelation.

Walter Kaiser accentuates in his article "Israel's Missionary Call" that there are three critical references in the OT which must be interpreted as a call to mission. The message of Genesis 1 to 11 is universal in its appeal and addresses an international audience. God was busy with "all the families on earth" when He expressed His grace three times in Genesis. Following the fall of man in Eden, the great flood of Noah and the tower of Babel came God's message in Genesis 3:15, 9:27 and 12:1-3 to the nations (in Winter & Hawthorne, A25-A33).

The phenomenon of pagans coming to faith is visible in the OT when Melgisedek in Genesis 14 as priest-king over Salem pronounced his faith in God openly. In the same way did Jethro, the father in Law of Moses, sat together with him and Aaron at a sacrificial meal. In Numbers 23 and 24 God used Bileam as His oracle to convey the truth. God's involvement with pagans in the OT was therefore a reality (Kaiser, W. "Israel's Missionary Call" in Winter & Hawthorne, A25-A33).

Are there any OT references to God sending an Israelite to the nations with His Great Commission? It was God's purpose for His people to take up the responsibility to bring His

divine plan of salvation and grace to the nations. Kaiser uses three references to answer this question:

- ❑ Genesis 12:3 - to proclaim His plan to bless the nations;
- ❑ Exodus 19:4-6 – to let Israel share in His Priesthood as agents to bring His blessing to the nations;
- ❑ Psalm 67 – to substantiate His plan through which He wants to bless the nations (Kaiser, W. "Israel's Missionary Call" in Winter & Hawthorne, A25-A33).

In Genesis 12:3 we find five expressions of God's intention to bless. Three promises of blessing are articulated and followed up immediately with an intention – "you will be a blessing." The question for whom this blessing was meant is of utmost importance – the answer: for all the families on earth. Therefore, from the beginning, Abraham and his family was meant to be missionaries – to be channels for the Truth. The receivers of this blessing were the seventy nations mentioned in Genesis 10 (Kaiser, W. "Israel's Missionary Call" in Winter & Hawthorne, A25-A33).

In Exodus 19:4-6 the priesthood role of Israel come to the forefront – the whole Israel was suppose to act as mediators for the nations. From this scripture the dogma of the priesthood of the believers originates (1 Peter 2:9, Revelation 1:6-5:10). Israel rejected this priesthood and asked Moses to act as a mediator on Mount Sinai. God's original plan, therefore, only comes to pass in the NT. It was and is still God's plan for believers to fulfil a mediator's role for the nations (Kaiser, W. "Israel's Missionary Call" in Winter & Hawthorne, A25-A33).

Psalm 67 applies what God gives through Aaron and the priests to all nations. The use of the word Elohim, in stead of the expected Yahweh, points towards a more comprehensive blessing – not just meant for Israel. We therefore find a strong agreement with Genesis 12:3 (Kaiser, W. "Israel's Missionary Call" in Winter & Hawthorne, A25-A33).

In all three these references, Kaiser succeeds to point out the unmistakable centrality and importance of all nations in God's eternal plan.

In the same article (in Winter & Hawthorne, A10-A18) John Stott refers to Genesis 12:1-4 as the most effective summary of the Biblical message. God's whole purpose with the world is

contained in these verses. This is the key to unlock the whole Scripture. The first eleven chapters of Genesis lead up to these four verses and the rest of the Bible follows on it and brings it to fulfilment. God is the Creator of the universe and we are not allowed to diminish Him to a "tribal deity." He chooses one man and his family through whom He wants to bless all the nations of the world.

Du Plessis states that the primary theme of the OT is the blessing of the nations through the seed of Abraham. This truth runs like a golden thread through the whole OT (1963:178). Like John Stott, he emphasises the election of Israel to be a blessing unto the nations. True understanding of the mission task can not be attained without insight into God's autonomous election. The OT is nothing but a mission book although mission in its popular form can scarcely be identified in it (Du Plessis 1963:179). The application of the OT to mission lies in its centripetal aspect (Du Plessis 1963:182).

The proclaiming of the Gospel to all nations is implied and prescribed in the OT although it is vividly coupled to the last days when the Son of Man will be glorified (Du Plessis 1963:183).

The complete history of Israel is nothing but the continuation of God's involvement with the nations. The existence of Israel was meant to be a constant appeal to pagan nations to accept and proclaim God as the only God (Du Plessis 1963:161).

Israel failed miserably in doing this. Although introduction to the God of the Nations was supposed to happen through them, they were more of a hindrance to the surrounding nations to repent and turn to God (Du Plessis 1963:162).

Steyne's viewpoint is that you cannot escape the impression that the nations of the OT were not only confronted with God's greatness, but also His love. Although the commission to go and proclaim the Gospel was less explicit than in Matthew, it must have been well known because it comes to light in different ways (Numbers 14:21, Psalm 66:4, Psalm 72:17, Psalm 86:9, Malachi 1:11) (Steyne 1992:218).

The instruction to Israel was given in different ways: Firstly, they were supposed to sing His praises. Secondly, they were to proclaim His mighty deeds. Thirdly, the commission was declared in prayer (Steyne 1992:218).

Although the command was not explicit, it was definitely implicit in God's involvement with His people. Jonah on mission to Nineveh is a clear example of this. Israel's presence between the nations implicates that evangelism was to take place through role modelling. The nations were to take note of God's reputation and then investigate. Clear examples of this can be found in the Queen of Sheba and Rahab. Israel dismally failed in this mission and the Lord established a new nation for Himself (Isaiah 66:18). Israel accepted less of God's revelation and fell into legalism. A living relationship with God did not exist until His voice became still at the end of the OT (Steyne 1992:219).

The OT records God's interaction with His people for the sake of all the peoples. There is an organic harmony between the OT and NT. The goal for God's people in the two testaments is still the same – His glory must be proclaimed (Steyne 1992:220). Early Christians accepted and acknowledged their organic unity with the OT people of God. The OT was their charter for faith and mission (Steyne 1992:221).

The well-known question directed at Isaiah in chapter 6:8 illuminates something about God's attributes and character. This scripture clearly accentuates that the sending aspect of mission is not an exclusive NT phenomenon. The missionary character is implicitly part of God's people (Hay 1994:22). The book of Isaiah is a rich source of insight to understand God's outreach to the nations. Isaiah understood the unique role of Israel among the nations, but he also realised that they did not execute the commission given to Abraham. God's involvement is international and universal (Hay 1994:23). The election of Abraham and his family was not an extraordinary blessing for the elected but it was God's way to bring salvation to the nations. They were supposed to be God's missionaries and channels for the Truth (Romans 4:13, Galatians 3:8 and 3:29, Revelations 7:9) (Hay 1994:24).

God has always been involved with the whole world and all its peoples – in fact, with His whole cosmic creation! In the time of Isaiah Israel believed that salvation was their own exclusive right – thus they developed an elitist character. Instead of being a blessing to the

nations they became self centred and unable to understand God's will for them. In Isaiah 40:9, 43:10-12, 44:8 and 49:6 the command to act as witnesses is unquestionable (Hay 1994:24).

The God of the OT is the God of the whole world. Johannes Verkuyl stresses the fact that the different nations of Genesis 10 underline the universal motif of the OT (1975:124). Von Rad describes this chapter as the conclusion of the history of creation. The focus of God's actions is all peoples – and therefore becomes the basic motif for eschatology. The same God who calls Israel, is the same God who calls people from every tribe and tongue and nation to gather before His throne. For God, Israel can be seen as the first letter of His proclamation of salvation and not the amen (Verkuyl 1975:125).

Theologians like Von Rad, Eichrodt, Bachli and Wright emphasise Israel's preparatory role for the unveiling of God's universal purpose with His creation. When Israel forgets that their election is meant to be a blessing for the nations, they lapse into egocentric self-righteousness. Prophets like Amos, Jeremiah and Isaiah addressed this tragic reality (in Verkuyl 1975:126).

According to Isaiah, Mica, Jeremiah and Zechariah the God of Israel will reveal Himself as the God of the Nations. Even in the Psalms, for example Psalm 87, there will be a feast to celebrate the restored relationship between God and the nations (Verkuyl 1975:125).

Verkuyl emphasises that the OT strongly projects a missionary motif. The people of Israel had the responsibility to demonstrate the attributes of God to the nations. It is interesting that development in missiology strongly supports the importance of Christian presence as a means of evangelism (Verkuyl 1975:128).

Verkuyl does not agree with Hahn who states that the missionary character of the OT had a passive content. Verkuyl refers to the assimilation of foreigners and the frequent use of the word "qahal", referring to the religious community in stead of the word "Am" used for the narrower definition of Israel. References to Melchizedek, Ruth and Job strongly point out the role of individuals from the pagan nations who came to faith in God and demonstrated it. The format of some of the writings, for example the wisdom literature, clearly indicates that it was meant for a larger audience than Israel (Verkuyl 1975:129).

Brueggemann (1997:724) draws the important conclusion that Israel had to recognise that Yahweh, as the one who revealed Himself, is deeply concerned with the moral and practical world. Mission is thus concerned with the situation in which people find themselves.

3.1.2 In the New Testament

To what extent can the missionary task be founded in the four Gospels and by implication, in the ministry of Jesus?

In spite of different approaches and accentuation, we find in all four Gospels, in fact in the whole NT, an unmistakable, fundamental witness with regard to the basis of missions. The Church is busy fulfilling the time by its missionary involvement in the world (Bosch 1979:73).

The Gospels as well as Acts give the same mission mandate to the Church. In each one the command is given by the risen Lord, that the disciples must complete the task which He started. This mission started with Christ and has no limits or boundaries (Steyne 1992:261). The content of the Christ Hymn in Philippians 2:6-11 and the pronouncement in 1 Timothy 1: 16 refer undoubtedly to the truth that mission in the NT is a predicate of the Christology (Bosch 1979: 84).

The NT is from beginning to end a mission book (Verkuyl 1975:141). The apparently small role of the mission command in the latter books of the NT and the fact that Acts 1:8 is rather a creational statement instead of a command, underlines this fact. Mission in the NT is more than obedience – it is the result of an encounter with Jesus. To encounter Him, necessarily implies involvement with the global task of mission. Mission is a privilege in which the believer can share. Paul sees mission as a logical result of his encounter with Christ on his way to Damascus (Bosch 1979:84).

The mission command in the NT does have different nuances. Although, today, it is a well-accepted fact that Matthew 28 is the key to understand and unlock the four Gospels (Bosch 1979:68).

God's interest in the nations, as communicated to Israel in the OT, is unchanged in the NT. In Jesus He reveals His passion for the peoples of this earth (John 3:16). Truly, He "wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4).

The physical journey of Jesus to Jerusalem was in fact a spiritual journey to the nations! (Bosch 1979:65). He becomes the substitute for Jerusalem and the temple. He becomes the meeting place for the nations. The resurrection of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit convinced the early Church that there is meaning in our existence, it convinced them of their undebatable involvement with this world and effectively with mission (Bosch 1979:67). Although we still do not see and experience the New Kingdom in all its glory, the resurrection and the Spirit were signs that we should live according to the norms and standards of the coming age. That is the framework in which we must see and interpret the NT statements on mission (Bosch 1979:68).

Despite debates about the interpretation of Matthew 28:18-20 we cannot escape the powerful implications of what Jesus told His disciples about their involvement in world missions (Bosch 1979:70). Max Warren made this beautiful statement: Missions is not an ethical command, but a Person: "Jesus ... the Great Commission" (in Bosch 1979:71).

Martin Hengel describes the ministry of Jesus as not less mission-focused than that of the disciples after His resurrection, while Erich Grasser claims that the Church saw in Jesus the archetype of a missionary (in Bosch 1979:58).

Jesus' death has manifold significance reaching out to people in different ways. Gopplet (1982:106) mentions that is was intent upon a transformation of all humanity.

Jesus came to demonstrate and declare God's continuous involvement with the world (John 3:16). He restates that God's plan is still intact, it did not change. He became God's plan of salvation to make it possible for God's mission to the nations to proceed. His death could not be prevented – in fact, His death was the reason why He came to earth! He was not a martyr but a conqueror (Steyne 1992:238). Salvation is from God and the substitutional death of Christ forms an important theme of the soteriology in Paul's theology. Mission cannot be explained unless it is explained in Christ's vicarious death (Botha FJ et. al. 1984:271).

Dunn (1998:372) states that, in Paul's theology, justification by faith is in essence a fundamental statement on human dependence on God. Jeremias (1975:255) refers to Jesus as the Bringer of salvation in the sense that He proclaimed the Kingdom of God but, also much more than that. Brown (1997:582) mentions that election has the purpose of salvation and must therefore be seen as God's divine intervention to save people and not as an eternal plan of condemnation.

Although Van Swigchem stresses that we find no reference to the mission mandate in the letters of Paul or Peter, living out of this mandate was logical for the early Church - *"een volstrekt vanzelfsprekende zaak"* (in Verkuyl 1975:155).

Verkuyl summarises his viewpoint as follows:
- In all the Gospels and Acts a specific perspective of the mission mandate to the Church can be found.
- In all cases the mandate can be coupled to Jesus' mission to the world.
- The mandate goes out from the risen Jesus.
- The mission command must be seen in relation to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
- The Great Commission is not completed and therefore it never becomes of less importance for the Church. If the Church neglects its mission responsibility, it becomes nothing but a corpse! (Verkuyl 1975:154-155).

The importance of mission must be seen against the background of deliverance from sin: "If sin is enslavement, Christ brings deliverance. If it is falsehood, Christ presents truth. If disobedience, Christ shows the way of obedience. If deviation from the will of God, Christ sets the perfect example of righteousness" (Guthrie 1981:217-218).

Kümmel (1973:332) makes an important conclusion: "Thus in spite of the development of thought exhibited in them, the three major witnesses of the theology of the New Testament are in agreement in the twofold message, that God has caused His salvation promised for the end of the world to begin in Jesus Christ, and that in this Christ-event, God has encountered us and intends to encounter us as the Father who seeks to rescue us from imprisonment in the world and make us free for active love."

3.2 Conclusion

In his book *Mission on the way*, Van Engen refers to the mission from "above" and "below" (1986:37-38). He states that "one of the most common linkages between the Bible and mission involves a "theology from above." In Roman Catholic and mainline Protestant denominational mission alike, this has involved using Church tradition as the link. The Church interprets the Scriptures, and through its teaching authority or its denominational mission structures it derives missional action from what it sees in Scripture. The extension of the institutional Church and its agendas becomes the heart of mission."

But there is a second method that falls in the "from above" category. This involves seeing the Bible as a source of commands for mission. "William Carey was a champion of this method, viewing the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20 as the basic link. This imperative type of biblical support is common in evangelical Protestant missiology, and especially in Church Growth theory, as popularised by Donald McCavran's unending appeal to Matthew 28:18-20."

The basic problem with both these approaches is that the Scriptures themselves are not allowed to interact with the present contexts of our mission. "They are mediated, reduced, and filtered either by the agendas of the institutional Church or by the guiltbased appeal of those who expound on the commands. Strangely, this approach causes Protestants who would avidly defend a gospel of grace to fall into a pit of legalism when it comes to mission. When we place Church tradition or missional command between the Bible and our mission context, we reduce the impact that Scripture can have in transforming the way we understand, exercise, and evaluate our missional action."

If we study the Old and New Testaments in isolation we step into a minefield of problems. One of these askew viewpoints is that mission in the OT is the exclusive responsibility of God and in the NT *vice versa*. This dangerous interpretation of exclusiveness implies that the activities of God and man exclude each other – God and man becoming opponents (Bosch 1979:81).

Bosch warns against a narrow perspective of Biblical mission. The Biblical concept of mission encompasses much more than the verbal proclamation of the Gospel (Bosch 1979:81). It is critical to understand that the whole Bible underlines the fact that God Himself is the subject of mission. This is a prominent characteristic of Bible centred mission – it involves *missio Dei*, God's mission. The *marturia*, the witnessing role through word and deed is not founded in the witness but in God Himself. Although the witness is still important – God is still the author (Bosch 1979:78).
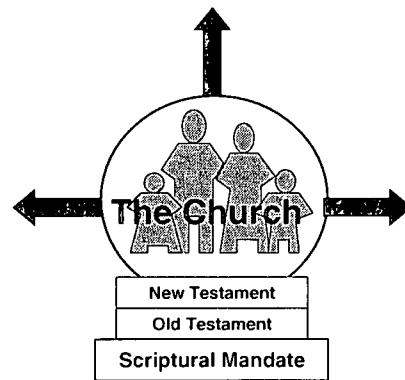
Figure 3.1 – The mandate for the Church-on-Mission; firmly based on Scripture

Without the OT mission perspective the Gospels and Acts would have been "mere interjections, not necessarily normative for the Church today." The NT could easily have been interpreted as focusing on personal sanctification and not sanctification with the goal of mission (Steyne 1992:270).

3.3 Relevance

Dr John Piper, is one of the leading mission leaders and writers of our day. For him the most critical aspect of mission is the centrality of God. Mission is not central but God is. This truth is the driving force behind our mission activities (1993:14). Hawthorne makes the same statement when he concludes that he has heard so few Christians explain their motive for evangelism and missions according to the purpose of it all: that God would be glorified in every people by a movement of obedience and worship to Christ (Hawthorne 1998).

Our passion for God leads to mission involvement. Our commitment to follow Him, to serve Him and to live for His glory is more important than mission. But it will also *inter alia* be the

impetus for mission (Piper 1993:14). Throughout scriptures we find continuous reference to the fact that God's glory is the central theme for our mission proclamation (Psalm 96:3, Isaiah 12:4) (Piper 1993:34).

Through all the ages, nothing has changed. The motif for mission is still the same – God's honour. God calls the elect (like Israel) to proclaim His glory between the nations, to be a blessing unto others so that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord (Philippians 2:9).

Brueggemann describes the unfinished task of mission as an "evangelical conversation of how our life, our bodies, and our imagination can be weaned from the deathliness of the world to the newness of life in the Gospel. That conversation is difficult and unfinished. It is a conversation that promises our life shall come together in wonder, love and praise. What news!" (1993:141).

Chapter 4
CREATING A BIBLICAL PARADIGM FOR THE CHURCH-ON-MISSION

The thesis of Charles van Engen, as it is set out in his monumental work, *God's missionary people – rethinking the purpose of the local Church*, is used as point of departure in this chapter. The insights developed by him will create the structure and model-development in this chapter. Other Missiologists, especially Darrell Guder, will be allowed to "converse" with him about his viewpoints and statements. In "facilitating" this dialogue about the local Church in mission, a Biblical paradigm for the Church-on-mission will be developed. In chapter five this model will be tested by empirical research and eventually integrated with these results as the final model in chapter six.

4.1 The character, nature, intention and essence of the local Church

This chapter will have a three-fold focus and structure. Firstly, the focus will be on the character, nature, intention and essence of the local Church. Secondly, the impact of a new perspective and modern ecclesiology on the local Church will be examined. Thirdly, a new Biblical paradigm for the local Church will be developed through various perspectives.
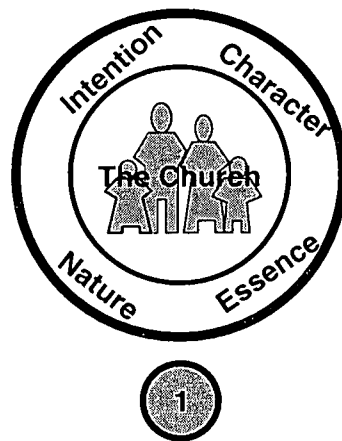
Figure 4.1 – Three-fold focus of this chapter – first focus

4.1.1 Introductory perspective

In the previous chapter it was indicated that the Bible gives a firm mandate for the Church to be on mission. In fact, various theologians state that ignoring the Great Commission strips the Church of being Church. If the Church does not accept the missiological reason for its existence it is dramatically diluting its Biblical character and nature. If we want to adjudicate the missiological impact of the local congregation we can set only one norm for departure - the Biblical perspective.

Anderson describes the Church as a connecting link between the Gospel and mission. The mission of the Church is grounded in the Gospel as its "source and authority." The apostolic mandate is the Gospel mandate by which the Church comes into existence and through mission it extends its own life into the world. "The Church is not the end result of the Gospel by virtue of its own existence - it exist so that the Gospel can be carried out in mission to the world" (Anderson 1986:6).

The Church (Elmer & McKinney 1996:28) is the institution through which God provides for the redemptive development of human beings - particularly of the ones who are called by His name and through them, all mankind. Therefore, we constantly need to ask questions about where we are in relation to His will and what is happening to the Church in our time: What is its social context, within itself and within its larger human circumstances?

"The Church on earth is by its very nature mission, since, according to the plan of the Father, it has its origin in the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit." The breakthrough embodied in this statement locates mission at the very centre of what the Church is called to be and to do. It echoes the words of Emil Brunner; "The Church exists by mission as fire exists by burning" (in Frazier 2001:9).

A recent statement of the Roman Church declares that "if the Church of Christ itself is fully present in local Churches, so also must be the full responsibility for bringing the Gospel to the world." The Secretariat for Non-Christians was following this simple logic when it declared that "every local Church is responsible for the totality of mission" (Frazier 2001:10).

The Church is a participant in, and a result of the mission of God. It is both a result of and a co-partner with God in the process of effecting the Kingdom of God here on earth (Dayton, Edward R & Fraser, David A. "Mission and the Church" in Winter & Hawthorne, D17-D25).

Guder (1998:80) accentuates another perspective of the local Church. He points out that recent theology has made a rediscovery by bringing to light the implications of the Trinity for ecclesiology. It has recognised that the interpenetrating among the persons of the Trinity reveals that "the nature of God is communion." From this point of view, the Church is learning that it is called to be a "finite echo or bodying forth of the divine personal dynamics, a temporal echo of the eternal community that God is."

The so-called "sentness" describes another perspective of the essential character of the local Church. The word made flesh through Jesus Christ (John 1) contains the concept of sentness – His incarnation was a sending forth into the world as a light into darkness. The Church is an apostolic community "in constant, dynamic movement, proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom of light in the midst of the kingdom of darkness." Johannes Blauw states that "missionary work is not just one of the activities, but the criterion for all the activities of the local Church" (in Van Engen 1991:79).

Taking into consideration the different perspectives of the local Church, it is imperative that creating a new paradigm for the Church-on-mission should be firmly based on Scripture – there can be no other point of departure. The reformation credo, *Soli Scriptura*, should focus us in understanding what the Church is meant to be.

The Church "emerges from its Centre, Jesus Christ, moves toward the world and there finds dynamically described its marching orders for its missionary presence in the world" (Van Engen 1991:84).

A synoptic view of the Church reveals the following about its character, nature, intention and essence:

4.1.1.1 The Church exist for, and to serve others

Bonhoeffer said "the Church is Church only if it "exists for others." It exists for humanity in that it is the spiritual body of Christ and is, like Jesus, sent to be a servant (in Van Engen 1991:74). The characteristic of the Church to exist for the world is not an optional extra, it is part of being Church. Barth's viewpoint is that the Church "saves and maintains its own life as it interposes and gives itself for all other human creatures" (in Van Engen 1991:76). The tragic implication of this statement is that the Church uninvolved in mission will either wither, die or exist artificially.

The Church's involvement in a ministry of compassion and mercy is solidly founded on Old and New Testament scriptures. God strongly expressed His displeasure with sacrifices when the poor, oppressed and needy are ignored (Van Engen 1991:77).

Another focal point is derived from the Church's responsibility to identify with the oppressed. Although this statement can be theologically used to support different extremist viewpoints - the sound Scriptural exhortation concerning involvement with the poor, the widow, the needy and oppressed cannot be ignored. New Testament examples can be found in Acts 6 and James 1. This is built solidly on Old Testament exhortations found, for example, in Malachi and Isaiah (Van Engen 1991:71).

4.1.1.2 The Church is being sent

Like Jesus, sent to be a Servant, the Church, His spiritual body, is also send for others (Van Engen 1991:71). "As the Father sent me ......" (John 21). This characteristic is not optional but forms "part of the Church's being" (Van Engen 1991:76). This "sentness" of the Church is related to two of the *notae ecclesiae* – apostolicity and catholicity. The "sentness" of the Church is emphasised through various Scriptural references like Matthew 10:5-42; Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:16; Luke 24:49; John 20:21 and Acts 13:2-4.

If the Church should lose its orientation to the Gospel as the reality of Christ's finished work of redemption, it would lose its apostolic character. Likewise, if the Church should turn in on

its own existence and fail to extend its life and purpose into mission in the world, it would no longer be an apostolic Church" (Anderson 1986:7).

Mission is the result of God's initiative, noted in God's purposes to restore and heal creation. "Mission" means "sending," and it is the central biblical theme describing the purpose of God's action in human history. God's mission began with the call of Israel to receive God's blessings in order to be a blessing to the nations. God's mission unfolded in the history of God's people across the centuries recorded in Scripture, and it reached its revelatory climax in the incarnation of God's work of salvation in Jesus ministering, crucified, and resurrected. God's mission continued then in the sending of the Spirit to call forth and empower the Church as the witness to God's Good News. In Jesus Christ it continues today in the world-wide witness of Churches in every culture to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and it moves toward the promised consummation of God's salvation in the "last" or "final day." We have learned to speak of God as a "missionary God." Thus we have learned to understand the Church as a "sent people." "As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you" (NIV:John 20:21) (Guder 1998:4).

This missional reorientation of our theology is the result of a broad biblical and theological awakening that has begun to hear the Gospel in fresh ways. God's character and purpose as a sending or missionary God redefines our understanding of the Trinity (Guder 1998:4).

Guder (1998:4) further points out that mission should be understood as being derived from the very nature of God. Thus seen in the context of the doctrine of the Trinity, not of ecclesiology or soteriology. The classical doctrine of the *missio Dei* as God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit [is] expanded to include yet another "movement": Father, Son, and Holy Spirit sending the Church into the world." This Trinitarian point of entry into our theology of the Church necessarily shifts all the accents in our ecclesiology, as it leads us to see the Church as the instrument of God's mission.

In a recent article on missiological breakthroughs in Catholic Missiology, Frazier (2001:9-10) writes that Catholics always knew that God in Christ was behind the sending of missionaries to the nations. It seldom if ever dawned on them that the triune God is not just the sender of missionaries but the primordial Missionary already at work in the world in such a way that the

labours of Christian missionaries might bear fruit. When Catholics began to piece together all of this thinking, with the help of Protestant emphasis on the *missio Dei*, it became clear that mission was already underway in time and history long before the Church came into being. What Catholics came gradually to understand was that mission could hardly be a mere function of the Church if the Church arrived so much later in the course of history. This awareness led to the conclusion that mission, as a Trinitarian phenomenon, right from the beginning must have been part of the raw material out of which the Church came to be.

Since the reformation the Church's self-conception was "as a place where certain things happened" – depicted by the reformation marks. David Bosch states that this self-perception gave way, in the twentieth century, to a new understanding of the Church as a body of sent people. Unlike the previous notion of the Church as an entity located in a faculty or in an institutional organisation and its activities, the Church is being reconceived as a community, a gathered people, brought together by a common calling and vocation to be a sent people (in Guder 1998:80-81).

The Church was coming to understand that in any place it is a community sent by God. "Mission" is not something the Church does, a part of its total programme. No, the Church's essence is missional, for the calling and sending action of God forms its identity. Mission is founded on the mission of God in the world, rather than the Church's effort to extend itself (Guder 1998:81). Guder also underline the apostolic character of the Church-on mission. To be apostolic is, literally, to be sent out. This implies a distinction between the Church and that to which it is sent. The Church exists as community, servant. and messenger of the reign of God in the midst of other kingdoms, communities, and powers that attempt to shape our understanding of reality. The world of those kingdoms, communities, and powers often opposes ignores, or has other priorities than the reign of God. To that world, the missional Church is apostle - sent out on behalf of the reign of God (Guder 1998:110).

Instead of separating the work of particular congregational communities or the Church in general into mission and nurture, the total life of the "people sent" makes a difference to its apostolic witness. How Christians behave toward one another, the testimony that their relationships make in the public square, and the character of their life together as a whole community, are integral to their apostolic mission (Guder 1998:128).

Guder accentuates another perspective impacting the sentness of the local Church. Without an acknowledgement of evil, the Church has little basis for evaluating and judging the powers, whether they have turned toward God or toward evil. Without an understanding of evil and of God's ultimate victory over evil in the age to come, it is difficult for the Church to have any sense of urgency about its participation (its sentness) in the mission of God's reign in and to the world. If the Church is truly apostolic, it must see itself as participating in God's victory over evil (Guder 1998:113).

Van Engen emphasises the perspective of discipleship in the sentness of the local Church. "Discipleship must always be discipleship-in-movement-to-the-world." To this strong, categorical statement he adds the statement of Jesus that the disciple who will not lay down his life for the world and the Gospel of reconciliation is not worth of being His follower! As the body of Christ the Church can be nothing else than for the world, "because this itself is an complete expression of the breadth of the Lordship of Christ, its head." Barth's viewpoint accentuates this viewpoint – the Church "saves and maintains its own life as it interposes and gives itself for all other human creatures" (in Van Engen 1991:76).

4.1.1.3 The Church is a witnessing community of believers

Karl Barth saw the "existence and task of the Christian to lie in witness." The Church must confess and witness about the sole Lordship of Jesus Christ in the midst of a world strongly and sometimes aggressively denying it. The parable of the wedding feast in Matthew 22 gives us the image of the obedient Church in the "main thoroughfares" alleys and streets inviting everyone to the eschatological wedding feast of the Lamb (in Van Engen 1991:81).

Karl Barth was, according to Blauw, the first systematic theologian to see the task and existence of the Christian "to be in witness". Lesslie Newbigin strongly states that it is not the Church who converts people but the Spirit. The Church comes into the picture "where it is on trial for its faith" and where it confesses "the sole Lordship of Jesus in the face of the overwhelming power of that which denies it." Proclamation witness is a mark of the Church and "attempts to restore" its "outward and upward direction" (in Van Engen 1991:80).

Guder (1998:5) believes that as we have used the tools of biblical scholarship carefully, we have begun to learn that the biblical message is more radical, more inclusive, more transforming than we have allowed it to be. In particular, we have begun to see that the Church of Jesus Christ is not the purpose or goal of the Gospel, but rather its instrument and witness. God's mission embraces all of creation. God so loved the world is the emphasis of the beloved Gospel summary in John 3:16. This does not mean that the Church is not essential to God's work of salvation – it is. But it is essential as God's chosen people "who are blessed to be a blessing to the nations" (Genesis 12).

As witnessing community the Church-on-mission is, in every cultural context, no matter how benevolent or hostile the governments and societies around it may be, called to demonstrate an alternative culture. If Christian faith makes any difference in behaviour, then the Church in conformity with Christ is called to an alternative set of behaviours, an alternative ethic, an alternative kind of relationship, in dialogue with the surrounding cultures. Its differentness is itself a witness to the Gospel. The Church may be different from the world at only a few key points, but that is enough to make a powerful witness. Moreover, as its cultural setting is constantly changing, the Church itself must discern where its allegiance to the reign of God requires nonconformity – in that way living out its witnessing responsibility (Guder 1998:119-120).

Key images of God's alternative community, the witnessing Church, are found in the Gospel's description of the people of God as "the salt of the earth," a "light of the world." and a "city set on a hill." These images suggest that mission is not just what the Church does; it is what the Church is. Saltness is not an action; it is the very character of salt. Similarly, light or a city on a hill need not do anything in order to be seen. So too it is with God's witnessing people. The visible, taste-able nature of their community is their missional purpose by encountering that "holy nation," others "may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16) (Guder 1998:128).

All followers of Jesus as Lord should earnestly desire to witness. They should exhilarate when, because of their witness, people come to faith.

4.1.1.4 Growth – character and nature of the Church

Another aspect pointing the Church back to its Centre, to Jesus Christ, is the yearning for numerical growth. Van Engen sees this as an essential mark of the presence of the true Church. "This yearning for numerical growth is soundly based on Old and New Testament scriptures. The Church's nature is to yearn for an incorporation "of more and more people within itself." From whatever viewpoint, from the bases of whatever image the Bible uses for the Church – smaller, diminishing or even stagnancy is not words describing the inherent character of God's Kingdom. A dynamic, vibrant, life pulsating yearning to "incorporate more people within the bounds of God's grace" characterises the Body of Christ! (Van Engen 1991:81).

Van Engen refers to the four attributes of the Church and strongly proposes that numerical growth is the one concrete manifestation or indicator to be deducted. The one Church yearns to incorporate more people and to unite everyone and everything at the feet of Jesus (Colossians 1) (Van Engen 1991:82).

Newbigin states categorically that "anyone who knows Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour must desire ardently that others should share that knowledge and must rejoice when the number of those who do is multiplied." Where this desire and this rejoicing are absent, we must ask whether something is not wrong at the very centre of the Church's life" (in Van Engen 1991:82).

Figure 4.2 – Character, nature and essence of the Church-on-mission

4.1.2 A biblical paradigm from the book of Ephesians

Paul saw the local Church as a continual, dynamic growing organism – interpreting its essence in the world through missional involvement (Van Engen 1991:47). In Ephesians he helps us to understand the nature of the Church. The ancient Apostolic Creed declares that the Church is "the communion of saints" – implying the Church as congregation, communion, fellowship or people of God.

The first three chapters of Ephesians underline two striking facts. Firstly, that God has a plan and a purpose. Secondly, that this plan extends to the whole cosmos. What is this masterplan Paul refers to? That God may be glorified by uniting all things in Christ. God's plan is to unite and reconcile all things in Christ so that man can again serve his Maker (Snyder, Howard A. "The Church in God's plan" in Winter & Hawthorne, A134-A143).

The Pauline view of the Church in Ephesians supports a threefold missional perspective:

4.1.2.1 The Church has a mission in unity (Ephesians 4:1-16)

Whenever the plural, Churches, is mentioned in the Bible, it refers to geographical location and not to the existential being of the Church. In the book of Ephesians the reference to *ecclesia* appears only in the singular, supporting the view that there is in essence only one Church. The Church is the mysterious *creatio Dei* of elected, justified sinners. God's "building activity" is mission and the fruit of this building process is the "unity of the body of Christ." Karl Barth stated that the "existence of a plurality of Churches genuinely separated and mutually excluding one another means a plurality of lords, a plurality of spirits and a plurality of gods" (in Van Engen 1991:49).

Believing itself to be one in the "unity of the Spirit" (Ephesians 4:3), the Church knows God has sent it into the pursuit of the "unity of the faith" (4:13). Of course, God delights in having a people who are one in love, and God's people enjoy the freedom of being that particular people. But there is another reason for this mission of being the community of the reign of God. "You are the light of the world," Jesus said (Matthew 5:14). We are a noticed and watched people. The genuineness of our identification as the disciples of Jesus is observed

only in our love for each other (John 13:35). Jesus seeks our oneness with one another "so that the world may believe" that he indeed has been sent by his Father (John 17:21). The Church's love and unity holds ultimate significance for the world as the visible basis of the Gospel power and legitimacy. In fact, the Church is itself the promise of the Gospel. The universal invitation to believe the Gospel includes the invitation to enter the reign of God. Just as Jesus exhibited union with his Father in obedient submission to God's rule and thus could say, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father", so too has God designed it so that when people have seen God's "peculiar" people, they have in a real sense caught a view of God. "As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you" (NIV:John 20:21) (Guder 1998:104).

A biblical view of the Church-on-mission shows that mission and unity are closely linked.

4.1.2.2 The Church has a mission in holiness (Ephesians 1:1-14; 4:17-5:5; 5:6-6:20; 3:14-21)

In ecclesiological terms careful distinctions must be made when we discuss and think about the way in which the different members of the Body live out their "new lives." Paul's viewpoint was that we exercise our holiness within our individual life situations – this is an expression of the holiness of the Church (Ephesians 5:6 – 6:20) (Van Engen; 1991:53).

The holiness of the Church is reflected through its holiness in worship (Ephesians 5:19-20), local Church organisation and submission (5:21), marriage relationships (5:22-33), parenting (6:1-4) and at work (6:5-9) (Van Engen 1991:53).

4.1.2.3 The Church has a mission to all (Ephesians 1:15-23; 2:1-22; 3:1-13)

The Church cannot diminish its universality by exclusiveness. By its very nature the Church is missionary, sent to all people because the Head of the Church "fills all in all." The Church has tended to separate the news of the reign of God from God's provision for humanity's salvation. This separation has made salvation a private event by dividing "my personal salvation" from the advent of God's healing reign over the entire world - in this way fuelling the exclusiveness! (Guder 1998:94).

Roland Allen (1962:120) refers to this exclusiveness when he writes: "with us there manifest a tendency to encourage that kind of separation, a physical separation from a non-Christian society. Christians congregate in Christian villages, they are put into Christian workshops, and they cease to work under heathen masters. Christian schools are provided for their children, which heathen scholars may indeed attend, but where the teaching is strictly Christian. By this we have gained something and we have lost something. We have gained immunity from temptation. Our converts enjoy the privileges and support of Christian intercourse; it is easier to watch over them; the children grow up as Christians without being called upon to face the ordeal of the heathen school and workshop. But on the other hand we have lost something: the Christians became such an exclusive society that they are not living the same life, sharing the same toil, the same gains, the same losses, as their non-Christian fellows."

Just as the lives of the members of the Body demonstrates the state of holiness – in the same way the catholicity of the Church finds expression through the members (Ephesians 2:13-22). The Church becomes an organism of world Christians when the dividing wall is seen to be demolished in His flesh (2:13-15) (Van Engen 1991:56).
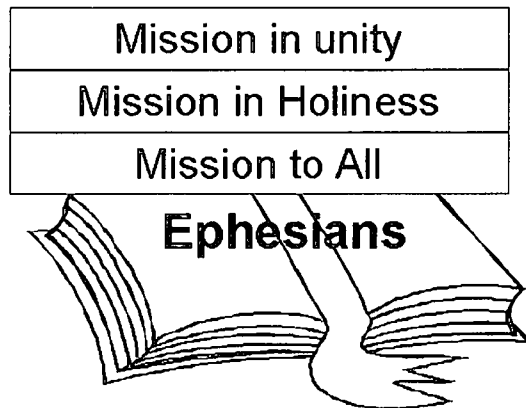
Figure 4.3 – A biblical paradigm for the Church-on-mission from Ephesians

4.1.3 A biblical paradigm from the Gospels

When we search the Gospels we must take into account that the central aspect of the teaching of Jesus was that concerning the Kingdom of God. "Of this there can be no doubt . . Jesus appeared as one who proclaimed the Kingdom; all else in his message and ministry serves a function in relation to that proclamation and derives its meaning from it. The challenge to discipleship, the ethical teaching, the disputes about oral tradition or ceremonial law, even the pronouncement of forgiveness of sins and the welcoming of the outcast in the name of God - all these are to be understood in the context of the Kingdom proclamation, or they are not to be understood at all" (Guder 1998:88).

It is important to note here that, for Jesus, this central theme shaped the sense of His mission as well as the mantle of that mission that He passed to his followers. Luke, who reports the beginning of Jesus' preaching by describing his maiden sermon in his hometown synagogue in Nazareth, notices the hold this theme has on Jesus' mind. The Nazareth incident itself involves the Isaiah text about the anticipated "year of the Lord's favour" and a messianic appointment by the Spirit of one whom will proclaim its arrival: good news to the poor, release to the captives, sight to the blind, freedom to the oppressed. Surely this is a portrait of the reign of God coming! Isaiah wrote about this and Jesus simply said, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (4:21). As the narrative of Jesus' ministry unfolds, the intent of that ministry is clearly identified. Healings among the people of Capernaum lead them to cling to Jesus and urge him to remain with them. "But he said to them, "I must proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose" (4:43) Jesus' commitment to do and say only what his Father had assigned him, so in evidence elsewhere in the Gospels, focused his mission on this announcement of the good news that the reign of God is at hand (Guder 1998:88-90).

And so, the synoptic Gospels as well as the Gospel of John, corresponds by showing Jesus' mission as centred on the presence of the reign of God (Guder 1998:90). The Gospel of the Kingdom is a "finished Gospel" so to speak. The work for our salvation and for the reconciliation of the world to God is God's work - and He has completed it" (Anderson 1986:3).

4.1.3.1 Matthew

"The most obvious feature of the Matthean version of the last commission is the method for mission - make disciples of all nations" (Arias & Johnson 1992:18). So if we are serious about making Matthew 28:16-20 the paradigm for mission today, our evangelisation should concentrate on what we call Christian education!" (Arias & Johnson 1992:19). Mission for Matthew was catechetical mission.

Christian education is already evangelism and should be done evangelistically! (Arias & Johnson 1992:20). Discipleship, Jesus-style, according to Matthew, is much more than doctrinal teaching, and religious training. The disciples were not only trained in orthodoxy – the right doctrine – but also in orthopraxis - the right way of doing and living and dying! (Arias & Johnson 1992:20). This integration of word and deed is epitomised in the revealing summary of Matthew's holistic proclamation of the Kingdom (Arias & Johnson 1992:20).

As supported by the "Sermon on the Mount" it is clear that the missionary mandate of the Church, as depicted by Matthew, has a definite emphasis on doing (Matthew 7:21,24,26). The Kingdom of God is not something to learn about theoretically, but to live and to produce (Arias & Johnson 1992:21). This orthopraxis of the disciple in the Kingdom has to do fundamentally with the neighbour, and specifically with the neighbour in need (Matthew 25:31-46).

Students have found that structurally, thematically and programmatically the last commission to the nations in Matt 28:16-20 cannot be separated from the last judgement to the nations in Matt 25:31–46 (Arias & Johnson 1992:21). After showing His disciples the way of word (teachings in chapters 5 to 7) and deed (actions in chapters 8 and 9), He showed them the way of suffering (Chapter 10). For Matthew and his readers, to be commissioned for mission was to be a confessor like Jesus himself. Confession, in Kingdom discipleship, is not a matter of words of creed but of living, suffering – and dying (Arias & Johnson 1992:21).

All the synoptic Gospels coincide in witnessing that the Kingdom of God was Jesus' only theme and what His Gospel was all about. Matthew calls the Gospel itself "the Gospel of the Kingdom" (4:23; 9:35; 24:14). This is Jesus' primitive *kerygma* (Arias & Johnson 1992:23).

Jesus' ministry of teaching, preaching and healing is Kingdom ministry. So how is it possible to fulfil the Great Commission without any reference to, or rather without a substantial presentation of "The Gospel of the Kingdom." A Kingdom perspective provides a holistic view of salvation - historical, cosmic and existential - and a wide horizon and freedom for the fulfilment of mission in every context (Arias & Johnson 1992:24).

So mission has to do with justice - in persons, communities and nations. The Gospel of the Kingdom has an ethical core - and its name is righteousness and justice. To announce a gospel that is not proclaiming and demanding this "higher justice" and that ignores or postpones the highest priority of love in God's action and human life is a serious departure from the Great Commission (Arias & Johnson 1992:25).

The christological centre of the Gospel is another critical aspect - Jesus, presented as the Messiah. The christological centre is inseparable from the proclamation of the Kingdom of God. No kingdom without the King! No commandment without the personal relationship and the authority of the Teacher - " you have heard that it was said ……. but I say to you ……." Christ is the omega point of humanity (Arias & Johnson 1992:26).

In terms of content then, to be faithful to the Great Commission, we have no other Gospel than "the Gospel of the Kingdom," a Kingdom that comes to us in Jesus Christ, that takes the face of our neighbour and the form of love and justice (Arias & Johnson 1992:27).

And finally, the mission charge must be heard, seen and interpreted in the context of worship to the King – as the disciples did. "When they saw him, they worshipped him" (28:17).

Christological centre
Righteousness and justice
Kingdom perspective
Suffering
Emphasis on doing (neighbour)
Catechetical mission
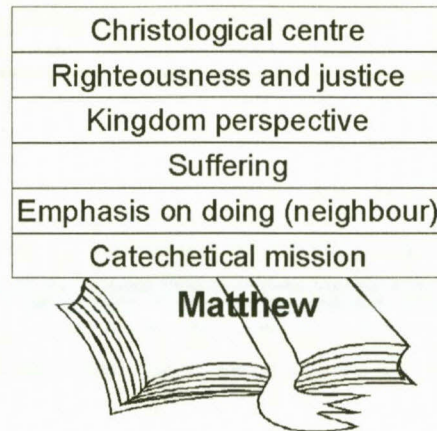
Matthew

Figure 4.4 – A biblical paradigm for the Church-on-mission from Matthew

4.1.3.2 Mark

In Mark, deeds have precedence over words. The presence of the Kingdom is power in action: to heal, to transform and to confront (Arias & Johnson 1992:39). Jesus' holistic proclamation of the power of the Kingdom affirms that he is against any power whatsoever (human, infrahuman, superhuman, individual or social) that is oppressing or hurting human life (Arias & Johnson 1992:39).

The hope of the Kingdom is both motivation and perspective for mission - which reminds us that our understanding of and commitment to mission depend on our eschatology! What do we expect to happen, finally, as a result of our mission? (Arias & Johnson 1992:46).

Jesus' mission strategy was creative contextualisation on the horizon of a global vision. There are no infallible methods or strategies; however, Jesus' own holistic methodology was not able to avoid misunderstanding, polarisation and opposition (Arias & Johnson 1992:46).

The so-called passion Christology was an inherent part of the mandate Jesus gave to His followers. On their way to Jerusalem there was a shift away from the "action" focus during Jesus' Galilean ministry. He challenged his disciples to join Him in His passion for the Kingdom through service, suffering and sacrifice (Arias & Johnson 1992:49). "The passion

51

Christology is going to be constitutive of mission for generations to come" (Arias & Johnson 1992:50).

In Mark 13 we find the Great Commission in an apocalyptic frame. The centre of mission is to "proclaim" and "to watch." The object of mission is "to all peoples" from "one end of the world to the other" (Mark 13:10, 27). The hope of mission is the consummation of the Kingdom, the coming of the Son of man (Arias & Johnson 1992:52).

| Apocalyptic |
| Passion christology |
| Holistic methodology |
| Contextualisation |
| Eschatology |
| Kingdom - power in action |
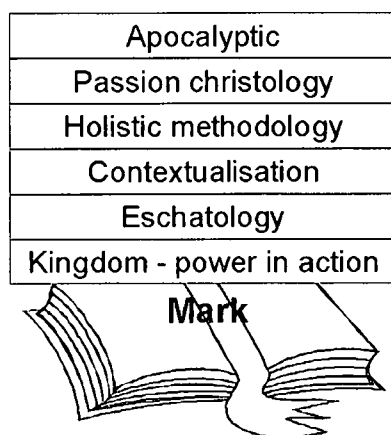
Mark

Figure 4.5 – A biblical paradigm for the Church-on-mission from Mark

4.1.3.3 Luke

In his Gospel as well as in Acts, Luke emphasises the promise of power for mission. This power, named the Holy Spirit, is inseparable from the commission - it is power for mission! (Arias & Johnson 1992:59).

In the Gospel of Luke we find Jesus' ministry and mission strongly clad in jubilee language. His reading from Isaiah in Luke 4 while in Nazareth strongly proclaims the Jubilee as liberation. Many times this scripture is spiritualised. Although partly true this is not responsible exegesis - it does not square with Jesus' holistic message. Some social reformers also suggest a complete literal interpretation. This is also not to be reconciled with Jesus' ministry (Arias & Johnson 1992:63).

The Jubilee rather addresses the whole human situation in terms of oppression and liberation. It is a paradigm both of human need and of God's good news in Jesus Christ. The proclamation of repentance and forgiveness, as Luke describes it, are the announcement of total liberation of any form of oppression in the power of the Spirit! (Arias & Johnson 1992:63).

Thomas Hanks warns that "some Christians wish to preach a gospel of socio-political liberation to the poor, whereas others want to offer forgiveness of sins to the rich. But Jesus do not offer us the luxury of two gospels - one for the rich and one for the poor" (Arias & Johnson 1992:63).

Luke also emphasises that the Gospel, that mission, according to the example of Jesus has a very prominent dimension of action. Reacting on the question of John the Baptist he replied: "Tell John what you have seen and heard." This follows a session of healing many people of a variety of diseases. Jesus' ministry was not only to be heard but also to be seen in action (Arias & Johnson 1992:68).

There is a focus on mission from the Lucan version of Jesus' ministry. Repentance and forgiveness (widely illustrated in the practice of the early Church in the book of Acts) form part of the beacon light of the Kingdom of God, modelled in Jesus' holistic ministry and inspired by the vision and challenge of the jubilee paradigm of healing, restoration and liberation. In this perspective mission is no less than the holistic proclamation of jubilee (Arias & Johnson 1992:77).

Holistic proclamation
Dimension of action
Oppression and liberation
Jubilee paradigm
Holy Spirit - power for mission
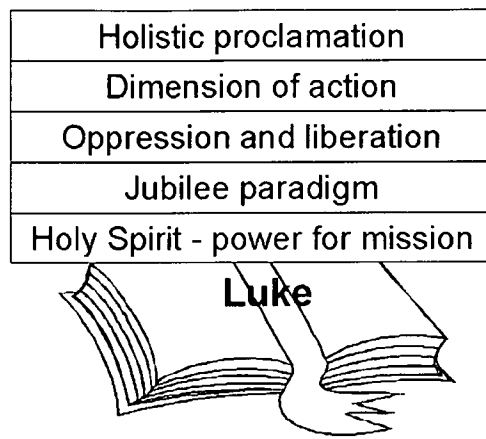
Luke

Figure 4.6 – A biblical paradigm for the Church-on-mission from Luke

4.1.3.4 John

John Stott claims that the incarnational form of the Great Commission in the Gospel of John is the crucial form. Because this incarnation form - "as the Father has send me, so I send you" (John 20:21) is mostly neglected by the Church because "it is the most costly" form of the Great Commission" (in Arias & Johnson 1992:79). In this shortest and most condensed form of the Great Commission it is emphasised that the whole Gospel is about sending and being sent. "God is the one who sends me." Jesus makes this statement once and again. Jesus is "the sent One"; consequently, the Church's identity is about being sent (John 4:38; 17:3; 20:21). They were to follow the example of the Incarnation – "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14) (Arias & Johnson 1992:82).

The divine presence of Christ standing among the ten disciples after the resurrection was the source for mission as described by John. As then, it is today the source and motivation for mission (Arias & Johnson 1992:80). Incarnational Christology is at the centre of Christian mission and it is not an esoteric treasure to be kept behind locked doors, but one to be shared with the world (Arias & Johnson 1992:81).

The disciples had an internal missionary motivation! Peace and joy are contagious, not to be kept, but to be shared. With this internal motivation the doors can be opened, and the world can become the arena and the horizon for mission (Arias & Johnson 1992:81).

In John, mission is related to the world seven times (3:17, 16:33, 17:3-4, 17:8-9, 17:21, 17:23, 17:25). In this context world means people - mission is with people and for people (Arias & Johnson 1992:83). Therefore John Stott can declare "that the actual commission itself must be understand to include social as well as evangelistic responsibilities unless we are to be guilty of distorting the words of Jesus" (Arias & Johnson 1992:83).

In the Latin American Protestant Church the 1960's were a turning point when they realised that they should move beyond the transplant model of evangelical Christianity. They sensed their calling to share in the "agonies and hopes of the struggling peoples of the Southern Hemisphere" (Arias & Johnson 1992:83). Against this background Prof. Jose Adreu states that "a Christian mission that doesn't take into account the reality of the world, that world that God loved so much through the Incarnated One (John 3:16): a mission giving the back to the needs of this world, is a disincarnated mission, a christological heresy in the practical life of the Church. And a docelist Church is a disfigured, ghostly and unreal Church, unworthy of being called Church ......" Without incarnation there is no real communication and without communication there is no authentic mission" (Arias & Johnson 1992:83).

Jose Comblin makes a powerful statement about the incarnational character of Jesus' mission as described in the Gospel of John: "He did not say who He was, he told only whence He came and where he was going (7:29; 17:3; 17:18; 17:25; 17:21). Jesus did not bring a message - He was the message! His whole being is a communication between God and the world - His very being is missionary - Jesus as sent by God reveals to us a new way of being human" (Arias & Johnson 1992:90).

The Johannine theological perspective of mission present it not as duty of hard work but as a privilege, as "receiving" and "gathering" (4:36). The wages or reward is not a payment but the gift of eternal life and shared joy (Arias & Johnson 1992:90).

Arias is asking the Church if "we can resonate with the ecumenical dimension of mission, so beautifully anticipated in the missionary imagery of the sowing and reaping." This is also strongly incorporated into Jesus' final reaping (John 4:35 - 38; 17:20 - 23;) (Arias & Johnson 1992:93).

Unlike the first missionary Church, the apostles, who had the chance to see the resurrected Lord and then believe in Him, today's missionary Church has to believe in order to see and to experience His living Presence (Arias & Johnson 1992:96).

The Gospel of John is centripetal in its call to "come and see," a call not only made to the disciples (1:39, 46) to the Samaritans (4:29) and to Jesus' contemporary addressees (5:40, 6:35, 37) but also to all the potential readers as well (Arias & Johnson 1992:96).

For John there is no doubt, He and his community are engaged in mission. Because the way to be authentically human is to be as one sent by God. This is the bottom line and the ultimate meaning of the incarnational paradigm, calling us and our Churches to mission – incarnational style! (Arias & Johnson 1992:97).

| Centripetal |
| Ecumenical dimension |
| Privilege |
| Social and evangelistic responsibilities |
| Sending and being sent |
| Internal motivation |
| Incarnational christology |
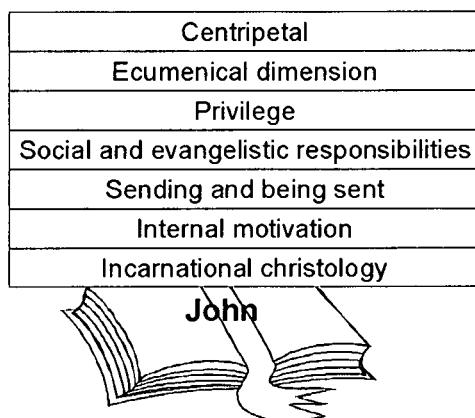
John

Figure 4.7 – A biblical paradigm for the Church-on-mission from John

4.1.4 From a historical perspective

Through the centuries there existed a tension between what the Church is and what it should be. This tension can in a positive sense be viewed as the creative energy or driving force to become what it is by faith. This gap between what is and what should be is the modern foundation for strategic planning. What it should be by faith is the verbalising of a vision (Van Engen 1991:59).

Martin Luther tried to define the Church in simplistic statements but admitted there is more to the Church than can be seen. The phrase "I believe the Church" accentuate an element of faith

56

- although we view the Church through faith, it is even bigger than the attributes we can assign to it" (Van Engen 1991:60). Through the ages three attributes for the Church were confirmed but a fourth one was added at the First Council of Constantinople in 381 - it was called apostolic (Van Engen 1991:59).

Figure 4.8 – The ancient Notae Ecclesiae – the marks of the Church
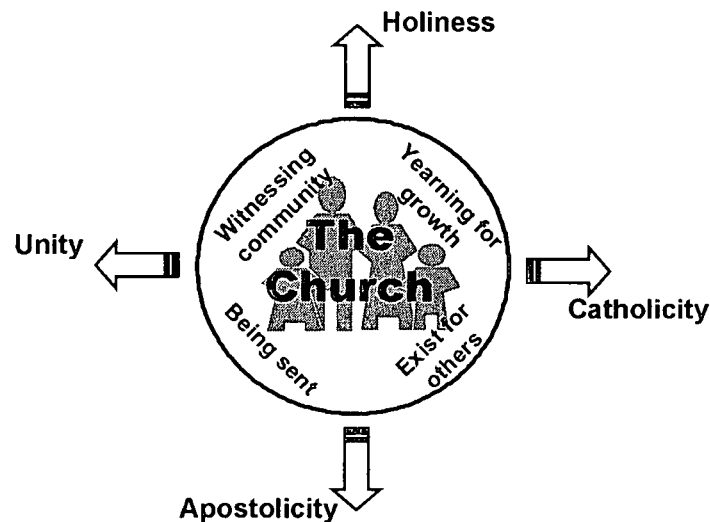
(developed from van Engen 1991:83)

When we look at these four essential attributes of the Church (*notae ecclesiae*) they should present themselves as visible qualities. If we move on an abstract level we loose touch with the Church's life on this earth. On the other hand we seek for much more than what the Church is - we are still reaching towards what it should be Biblically - the emerging Church! (Van Engen 1991:61).

Although we can only judge by what we see - "paradoxically, we also know that the Church is not what we see: she is holy but sinful, one but divided, universal but particular, apostolic but steeped in the thought structures of her own time" (Van Engen 1991:61). In a recent and important study by Robert Scudien, he concludes that: "The Church is apostolic not just because it represents the apostles" reaching out, but because it represents Christ too (in Guder 1998:84).

Historically these four elements became known as the marks of the Church. The fact that the Roman Catholic Church misused these marks to self-righteously declare their unique right to be called Church, led to a sharp semantic distinction between the marks (*notae*) and the attributes (Van Engen 1991:62). In order for the Church to become really "turned inside out", as Johannes Hoekendijk advocated, its four classical attributes should be interpreted in a fresh dynamic way to understand it as a movement of missional significance.

Van Engen builds on this concept by developing very concrete ways in which the Church-on-mission should manifest its missiological calling in the world. The one Church of Jesus Christ would be seen as a unifying force. The holy Church of Jesus Christ should be seen as a sanctifying force. The catholic Church of Jesus Christ should be seen as a reconciling force. The apostolic Church of Jesus Christ should be seen as a proclaiming force. Seen in missional perspective these concepts are not only activities but they define the totality of the Church's existence. They should "set the agenda" in the local congregation as Van Engen puts it (Van Engen 1991:70).
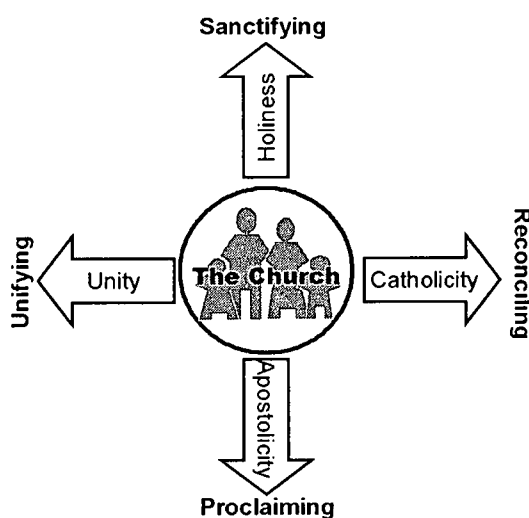
Figure 4.9 – The Notae Ecclesiae – a practical expression of the Church-on-mission (developed from van Engen 1991:83)

The mission of the Church is the unifying, sanctifying, reconciling and proclaiming activities of Jesus Christ in the world. This is the essence of being Church. Mission is not something

separate or different. The essential nature of the local congregation is mission – or else the congregation is not really the Church (Van Engen 1991:70). This statement does not support the viewpoint that "everything the Church does is mission," because "what the Church does internally without intention to impact the world outside itself is not mission."

The *notae ecclesiae* was accepted by the Roman Catholic Church as a given fact – whether these attributes functioned in the local Church was not a point of discussion. The reformers, on the other hand, were looking for a way to test the "distance of the local Church from its Centre in Jesus Christ" (Van Engen 1991:62). According to Berkouwer the reformers never disputed the four attributes but they introduced three marks as criterion "by which the Church could be and had to be tested as to whether she was truly the Church:"

❑ pure preaching of the Gospel

❑ pure administration of the sacraments; and

❑ exercise of discipline.

These marks converge to the essence that "the Church is and must remain subject to the authority of Christ, to the voice of her Lord" (Van Engen 1991:63).
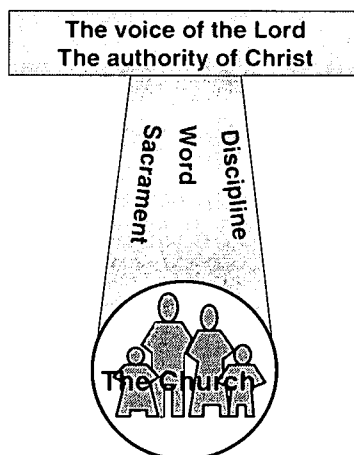
Figure 4.10 – The marks of the Church converging to the authority of Christ

Sadly, as was the case with the *notae ecclesiae*, these reformation marks became "dogmatic, polemical tools" for disunity, for differentiating between "true" and "false" Churches and to create an "introverted, exclusiastic tendency" (Van Engen 1991:64).

Guder also questions the reformation against the missional challenge of the modern Church. He refers to David Bosch, stating in lectures during 1991, "The Churches shaped by the Reformation were left with a view of the Church that was not directly intended by the Reformers, but nevertheless resulted from the way that they spoke about the Church. Those Churches came to conceive the Church as "a place where certain things happen" – namely the reformation marks.

These emphases may have been profoundly missional since they asserted the authority of the Bible for the Church's life and proclamation as well as the importance of making that proclamation accessible to all people. But over time, these "marks" narrowed the Church's definition of itself toward a "place where" idea. This understanding was not so much articulated as presumed. It was never officially stated in a formal creed but was so engraved in the Churches' practice that it became dominant in the Churches' self-understanding.

This perception of the Church gives little attention to the Church as a communal entity or presence, and it stresses even less the community's role as the bearer of missional responsibility throughout the world, both near and far away. "Church" is conceived in this view as the place where a Christianised civilisation gathers for worship, and where the Christian character of the society is cultivated (Guder 1998:79-80).

Thus, these marks were not flawless. They were, according to John Piet, largely influenced by the social and religious factors prevalent in the sixteenth century. Therefore the valid warning that a rigid adherence to reformation concepts could lead to a "stationary and static view of the Church." The Church must look to God and to the world and find its reason for being as God's people in God's world (in Van Engen 1991:64).

"The Church is a people, a community of people, who owe their existence, their solidarity and their corporate distinctness from other communities to one thing only - the call of God" (Stott 1968:17). "Such is the Church, God's people, called out of the world to Himself, called to holiness, called to mission, called to suffering, and called through suffering to glory" (Stott 1968:19). And this calling of the Church is the calling of the "whole Church, and of every member of the Church, without any distinction or partiality" (Stott 1968:20).

The Church should continually evaluate where it stands in proximity to the dynamic, living essence of being Church. Van Engen states that the Church lost the objectivity to "maintain a constantly-reforming ecclesiology." Thus modern Ecclesiologists questioned the one nature viewpoint of the Church. They started to view the Church as "both human and divine, organism and organisation, fellowship and institution." The *notae ecclesiae* and protestant marks are therefore perceived as both gifts and tasks (Van Engen 1991:65).

Through the GIFTS that the Church is:	Resulting in the following TASKS:
One	❑ Strive toward unity ❑ Live as one ❑ Unite around the Lord
Holy	❑ Strive toward holiness in its members ❑ Its organisations ❑ In its life in the world ❑ In its reception and expression of the Word
Catholic	❑ Grow in its cultural, geographical, racial, spiritual, numerical and temporal universality around the Lord
Apostolic	❑ Applying the apostolic Gospel ❑ Living in the apostolic way ❑ Being sent as apostles to the world

Table 4.1 – Tabulation of the King-Berkouwer perspective of task and gift as deducted from the Notae Ecclesiae (in Van Engen 1991:65).

This approach lead to a new dynamic, vibrant view of the Church. Relying on "the old order of the established and organised Church, relying on structures and traditions instead of the renewing of the Spirit of God, will not do." David Watson continues that "the formularies and creeds of the Church, devoid of spiritual life, will never satisfy those who in their own different ways are searching for the living God." (in Van Engen 1991:67). Van Engen accentuates the fact that this view of the essence of the Church propels it to "reach out beyond

itself." It becomes truly turned "inside out" according to Hoekendijk - it becomes the Church-on-mission (in Van Engen 1991:67).

4.2   Paradigm of the local Church impacted by a new perspective and modern Ecclesiology

The second focus of this chapter can be illustrated as follows:
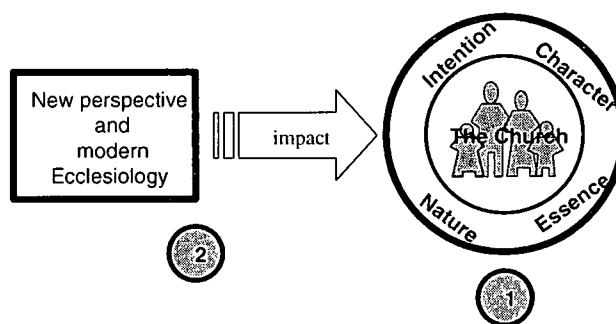
Figure 4.11 – Three-fold focus of this chapter – second focus

Guder (1998:6) warns that the Church-centred approach to mission is alive and well. Congregations still tend to view mission as one of several programmes of the Church. Evangelism when present, is usually defined as member recruitment at the local level and as Church planting at the regional level. The sending-receiving mentality is still strong as Churches collect funds and send them off to genuine mission enterprises elsewhere. Indeed, the main business of many mission committees is to determine how to spend the mission budget rather than view the entire congregational budget as an exercise in mission.

As denominational and centralised structures diminish in importance and power, local congregations are beginning to see their own context as their mission. But even with that shift, few have taken the necessary steps to re-define themselves as missionary by their very nature. This gap between theological re-orientation and actual practice is still reflected in much theological education. The doctrine of the Church, Ecclesiology, can and is still taught with little or no reference to the Church's missionary vocation. Mission, or missiology, is a somewhat marginalised discipline, taught usually as one of the subjects in practical theology. There is little curricular evidence that mission is the mother of theology.

Therefore the Church needs a new vision or perspective of itself in its local setting (Van Engen 1991:26). This perspective can only have impact if it is based on the Biblical perspective of the Church-on-mission. When we look at the local Church historically, a new perspective emerges. Various scholars also support this new perspective:

Missiologists	Closer relationship between concept of mission and Church	
Sociologists	Strategic importance of congregation	Call for a new congregational missiology
Ecclesiologists	Call for new way to envisage the Church	
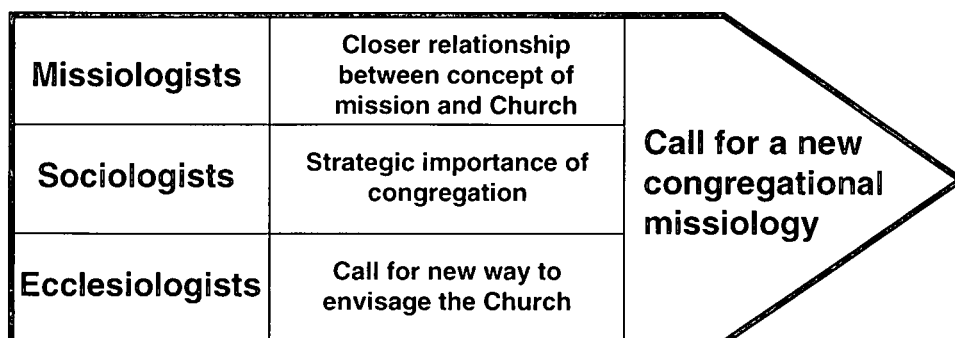
Figure 4.12 - Relation of Mission and Church in modern Missiology

Figure 4.12 shows that the call for a new paradigm, a new congregational missiology is coming from at least three different directions.

Van Engen describes a classical problem situation experienced by a local pastor. In the process of seeking for a solution he realised that the specific Church did not know how to interact with its environment. From this case study Van Engen deducts that the Church will experience an existential crisis if it does not:

❑ understand the reason for its existence;

❑ interpret its geographical location; and,

❑ accept God's unique purpose for every local Church.

The Church will "rise to new life when they catch a vision of their unique purpose and mission within their individual context." New vitality will only come when they discover the missiological purpose for which they alone exist (Van Engen 1991:20).

In practical terms Church and mission is often seen by Church-members as non-related, conflicting or opposing ideas. If the Biblical basis of mission is not grasped and integrated as the Church's primary reason for existence, the uninvolvement of so many Churches will stay unchanged.

The 1952 Willingen conference in Germany formulated a strong statement by proclaiming that "there is no participation in Christ without participation in His mission to the world. That by which the Church receives its existence is that by which it is also given its world mission" (Van Engen 1991:29).

John Stott claims that it is impossible to understand the Church rightly if not "in a perspective which is at once missionary and eschatological." Although different, it is impossible to understand one without understanding the other (in Van Engen 1991:29). W Douglas Smith, on the other hand, points out that there is a cyclical pattern detectable when we study the local Church involved in mission. This cycle involves going, teaching, equipping and sending. (in Van Engen 1991:42).

Figure 4.13 – The cyclical pattern of the Church-on-mission

A team of researchers and theologians (Guder 1998:10-12) who were involved in an extensive
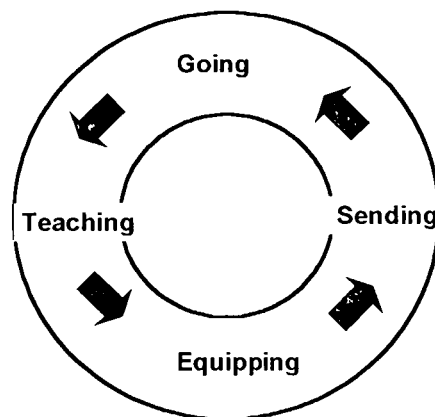
research project declares that "our path has led us to make the following fundamental affirmations as the basis for the vision we wish to portray. These should be the characteristics of a faithfully missional ecclesiology:"

❑ A missional ecclesiology is biblical. Whatever one believes about the Church needs to be found in and based on what the Bible teaches. Moreover, these biblical perspectives need to be made explicit. The biblical testimony is to God's mission and the formation of God's missionary people to be the instruments and witnesses of that mission.

❑ A missional ecclesiology is historical. When we shape our ecclesiology for a particular culture, we must take into consideration the historical development of other

ecclesiologies. Today this means reading our western history and the worldwide emergence of the Church carefully. As part of our catholicity, the Christian Church in all its cultural expressions guides us, those that precede us and those that are contemporary with us.

☐ A missional ecclesiology is contextual. Every ecclesiology is developed within a particular cultural context. There is but one way to be the Church, and that is incarnationally, within a specific concrete setting. The Gospel is always translated into a culture, and God's people are formed in that culture in response to the translated and Spirit-empowered Word. All ecclesiologies function relative to their context. Their truth and faithfulness are related both to the Gospel they proclaim and to the witness they foster in every culture. Moltmann (in Van Engen 1991:74) is in agreement with this statement when he declares that the Church's need to be relevant and contextual is expressed by being a missionary Church. In an enlightening article on contextualisation, Darrel Whiteman (1997:2-7) points out that we have the obligation to search continually for ways in which the Good News can be more deeply lived, celebrated and shared. We must get back in touch with the principle that contextualisation is a fine balancing act between necessary involvement in the culture, being in the situation, and also maintaining an outside, critical perspective that is also needed. Unfortunately, when Christianity is not contextualised or is contextualised poorly, then people are culturally offended. Being offended turns people off from inquiring more about who Jesus is. Contextualisation should teach us to have a more adequate view of God as the God of all persons. God can no longer simply be the god of myself, my family, my community. my nation; such a god is ultimately an idol or false god. One made according to my narrow and limited image and perspective. Hesselgrave states that the message of the Church should be contextualised, taking world-views into consideration, because eventually, the Gospel message will be decoded and evaluated against world-view (Hesselgrave, David J, "World-view and Contextualisation" in Winter & Hawthorne, C42-C53).

☐ A missional ecclesiology is eschatological. Our doctrine of the Church must be developmental and dynamic in nature if we believe that the Church is the work of the creating and inspiring Spirit of God and that it is moving toward God's promised consummation of all things. Neither the Church nor its interpretative doctrine may be static. New biblical insights will convert the Church and its theology; new historical challenges will raise questions never before considered; and new cultural contexts will

require a witnessing response that re-defines how we function and how we hope as Christians.

❑ A missional ecclesiology can be translated into practice. The basic function of all theology is to equip the Church for its calling. If that calling is fundamentally missional, then what we understand and teach about the Church will shape God's people for their faithful witness in particular places. A missional ecclesiology serves the Church's witness as it "makes disciples of all nations,... teaching them to obey everything that I (Jesus) have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20).

4.3 A new biblical paradigm

The third, and last major focus of this chapter will develop a new Biblical paradigm for the Church-on-mission through various perspectives.
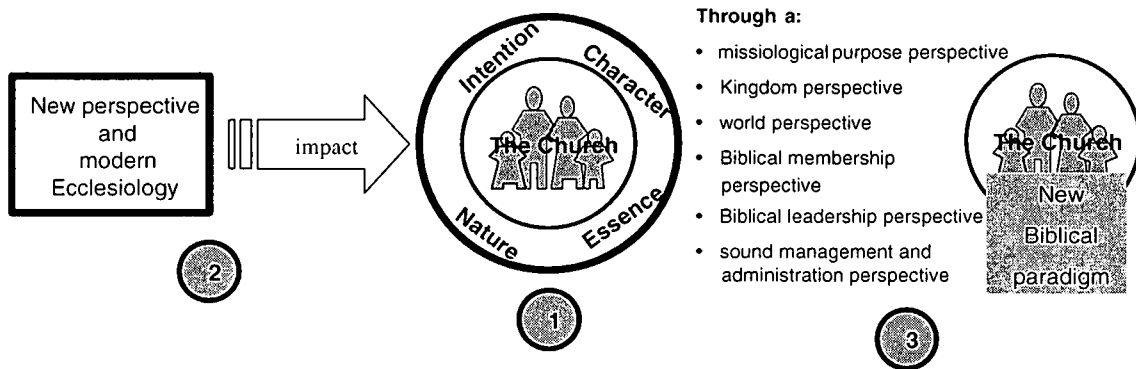
Figure 4.14 – Three-fold focus of this chapter – third focus

4.3.1 Through the missiological purpose perspective

We have tried to understand the essence of the Church by focusing on the three Reformation marks; the four credal attributes and other Biblical pointers of the Church-on-mission. The essence of the Church is closely interwoven with its purpose. Rightly Van Engen warns that we cannot derive the purpose from what we want the Church to be, neither what we think the world desires or needs from the Church. Because Christ is the Head of the (His) Church it is imperative that the authentic purpose of the Church can only be derived from "the will of Jesus Christ, its Head, from the Spirit who gives it life, from the Father who has adopted it and from the Trinitarian mission of God" (Van Engen 1991:87).
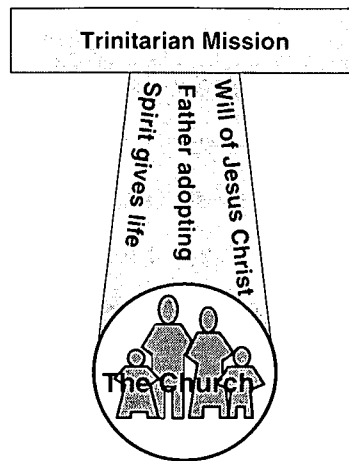
Figure 4.15 – Deriving the purpose of the local Church from its Trinitarian mission

Our understanding of the purpose of the local Church is of primary importance - our reaction to this question forms the basis, or driving force, behind our strategies, plans and activities. The Church's interpretation of its purpose determines the CSFs operating in the life of the Church and have a significant bearing on its mission impact in the world. Karl Barth stated that "the Church's essential nature is not only perceived, but in fact comes to be, when the Church fulfils the purpose for which it exists" (in Van Engen 1991:88).

It is also of great importance to understand that the purpose of the local Church is not imbedded in its structure or organisational existence. John MacKay stresses that these are secondary aspects. Purpose is closely linked to nature. Our understanding of the Church's purpose is based in the primary understanding that it is a "community of those for whom Jesus Christ is Lord" (Van Engen 1991:88).

Scripture supports the statement that the Church is much more than an organisation when Paul addresses the Church in 1 Corinthians 12:27 "now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." The Church is a living organism, lead by and sustained by Christ, the Head of the Body. If the bonding of the Body is founded in the Church community's confession that Jesus Christ is Lord it emphasises the Church's responsibility to "keep His commandments" (1 John 2:3). Such a Church will also find meaning and purpose in the fact that "as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:21).

This commission of Christ, Head of the Church, has far-reaching implications when we discuss the purpose of the New Testament Church. Any tendency for the local Church to focus inward, to ignore the context, environment and realities in which it exists is therefore contradicting the essence of being "salt" and "light." Fulfilling this living, dynamic role implies impacting the cosmos and being impacted by it. Since the 1950s the Church exists in an ever-changing and increasing cuber. The Church can therefore not be limited to be a global role-player. The Church exists in creation and is lead by the (its) Creator!

In order to have missiological purpose and perspective Guder (1998:4) warns against the inability to contextualise and therefore loosing the ability to impact. "Without discounting the remarkable response of men and women in previously unevangelised cultures, and the emergence of strong and vibrant Christian Churches across the world, many began to be concerned about the shape of that mission. It became increasingly clear that western mission had been very much European-Church-centred. The Gospel to which we testified around the world had been passed along in the cultural shape of the western Church. This Church was the result of centuries of western cultural tradition. The subtle assumption of much western mission was that the Church's missionary mandate lay not only in forming the Church of Jesus Christ, but in shaping the Christian communities that it birthed in the image of the Church of western European culture."

The primary reason for the Church's existence should be deducted from scripture. Van Engen refers to four reasons or pillars for the Church's "reason-for-being in the world":

❏ *Kerygma* – "Jesus is Lord" (Romans 10:9; 1 Corinthians 12:3).

❏ *Koinonia* – "Love one another" (John 13:34 - 35; Romans 13:8; 1 Peter 1:22).

❏ *Diakonia* – "The least of these my brethren" (Matthew 25:30, 45).

❏ *Martyria* – "You shall be my witnesses; be reconciled to God" (Isaiah 43:10, 12; 44:8; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:20) (Van Engen 1991:89).
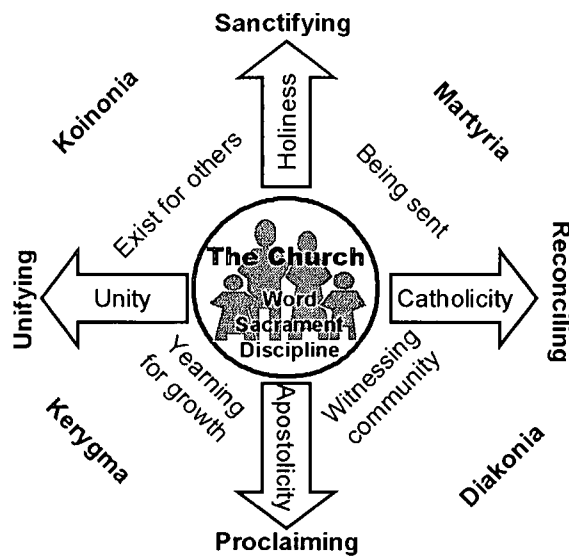
Figure 4.16 – Finding purpose for the local Church through the Biblical pillars for being in the world (developed from van Engen 1991:98)

The impact of the Church should therefore be manifested through these pillars. "Through loving *koinonia* fellowship, through confession that Jesus is Lord, and through actions of diaconal service. God's missionary people are to be a reconciled community who witnesses to the possibility of reconciliation in an alienated world. The work of bringing God's reconciliation to the world is the heart and soul of the Church's witness" (Van Engen 1991:97 - 98).

4.3.1.1 Kerygma

The earliest Christian creed expressing that Jesus is Lord emphasises that His Lordship manifests in the Church but also has "cosmic and universal proportions (Acts 4:25 - 30) (Van Engen 1991:92). The confession of Jesus as Lord implies that the Church inescapably moves "toward its own universality - a movement outward to the nations" (Van Engen 1991:93). Through this confession the Church does not emerges as an organisation or structure but as a "missionary fellowship of disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ" (Van Engen 1991:93).

The theme of God's Lordship, beginning with creation and continuing through redemption in Christ, provide a solid theological basis for mission. The very force of his name *Yahweh*, "the

one who is what comes into existence," brings men everywhere under His right to rule (Gilliland 1983:49).

The Church has tended to envision itself in a variety of ways unconnected to what must be fundamental for it - its relation to the reign of God. It was Jesus' announcement of the reign of God that first gathered the Church into community. That Church grew and matured around the way that reign found meaning and hope in His death and resurrection. These facts cannot adequately be explained, simply by noting that in place of the Good News of the reign of God the Church has proclaimed Jesus as King. These two statements are not opposed to each other but are complementary. As one Latin American theologian has put it: "Kingdom of God and person of Jesus (in Luke) explain and fulfil each other, in such a way that we cannot speak of Kingdom of God without Christ or Christ without Kingdom. The Church must always seek its definition with the reign of God in Christ as its crucial reference point" (Guder 1998:92).

A significant recovery of "reign of God" or "Kingdom of God" language has been evident within the field of biblical scholarship. To some extent the same is true of Church conversations about mission. But even when that is so, the use of such language tends not to be thought out very well. Typical Christian conversation on this subject speaks of "building" or "extending" the reign of God. These two ways of talking represent dominant and sometimes opposing ideologies. In both cases, the images of building or extending arise from the combined effects of a Christendom heritage of power and privilege, the Enlightenment's confidence in reason and social progress, and modern culture's dependence on managing life with pragmatic technique.

Those who imagine the Church's role as "building" the reign of God may also use words like "establish," "fashion," or "bring about." The reign of God in this view is perceived as a social project. The Church is sent out by God to achieve that project, to create it. This view tends to place the reign out there somewhere, where we go to construct it as its architects, contractors, carpenters, or day labourers. Others say the Church is sent to "extend" the reign of God. They speak in terms of "spreading," "growing" or "expanding" the reign of God. This treats the Church's mission as a sales problem. The Church attempts to provide an expanded place where the reign of God may reside. Functionally, the Church becomes the CEOs, promoters,

or sales force for the reign of God. But the grammar of the New Testament depicts that the reign of God cuts across the grain of these culture-bound ways of seeing things.

Guder shows very clearly (1998:94-95) that in the New Testament's grammar the announcement of God's reign nowhere includes an invitation to go out and build it nor to extend it. These are not New Testament ways of speaking about the reign of God. The words most often used evoke quite a different spirit and, therefore, a very different missional identity and engagement. The reign of God is, first of all, a gift one receives. The reign of God is something taken to oneself. It is a gift of God's making, freely given. It calls for the simple, trusting act of receiving it. In addition to being a gift, the reign of God is equally a realm one enters. Here the imagery is quite different, for the reign of God is cast as a domain into which one moves. It meets everyone with God's welcome and Jesus' invitation. The reign of God is a realm, a space, an arena, a zone that may be inhabited. This realm of the reign of God into which we are welcomed to enter is never equated with a particular human political regime. It is always, after all, the realm of the regime of God. But on the horizon lies the cosmic specter of the reign of God fulfilled. So the grammar of "inhabiting" the reign of God includes the prospect of a future destiny. The reign of God is an inhabiting for which we are destined.

Inherent to the biblical images of gift and realm, flows the fresh insight that the first mission is always the internal mission: the Church evangelised by the Holy Spirit again and again in the echoing words of Jesus inviting us to receive the reign of God and to enter it (Guder 1998:98). "Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father" (Matthew 13:43). The messianic community is here construed to be the children of the divine reign, on the way to shining like the sun in that reign which is coming. In other words, the Church is the offspring of the divine reign. It is its fruit and therefore its evidence.

The Church must not be equated with the reign of God. The Church as a messianic community is both spawned by the reign of God and directed toward it. This is a different relationship from what at times has captured the Church's thinking. The Church has often presumed that the reign of God is within the Church. The two have been regarded as synonyms. In this view, the Church totally encompasses the divine reign. Therefore Church extension or Church growth is the equivalent of Kingdom extension or Kingdom growth, and

the reign of God is synonymous with the people who embrace it through faith and gather together as the Church. This view leads easily to the affirmation that there is no salvation outside the Church. The Church then sees itself as the fortress and guardian of salvation, perhaps even its author and benefactor, rather than its grateful recipient and guest.

The biblical portrait of the divine reign and the Church does not allow such conclusions. The Church always stands in a position of dependence on and humble service to the divine reign. The Dutch Reformed scholar Herman Ridderbos has stressed this point strongly. But at the same time we must say with equal force that the reign of God must not be divorced from the Church. Those who are entering and receiving the reign of God constitute the Church. It is where the children of the reign corporately manifest the presence and characteristic features of God's reign. The divine reign expresses itself in a unique, though not exhaustive or exclusive, fashion in the Church. Hoekendijk rightly insisted: "The Church cannot be more than a sign. She points away from herself to the Kingdom; she lets herself be used far and through the Kingdom in the whole inhabited earth. There is nothing that the Church can demand for herself and can possess for herself (nor an ecclesiology either). God has placed her in a living relationship to the Kingdom and to the world. The Church exists only in the proclamation of the Gospel of the Kingdom to the world" (in Guder 1998:99-101). As a sign represents something else and as a foretaste represents something yet to come, the Church points away from itself to what God is going to complete. In this sense, the divine reign's otherness is guarded. The Church must affirm that it is not identical with God's reign.

Guder (1998:110) points out three facets of mission which directly answer the most fundamental questions and challenges for the contemporary Church-on-mission. They signal three basic priorities for the Church's recovery of its missional soul:

❑ the Churches must revive what it means to be communities of the reign of God;

❑ the Churches must discover what it means to act faithfully on behalf of the reign of God within the public life of the society; and,

❑ the Churches must learn to speak in positive Christendom accents as confident yet humble messengers of the reign of God.

Van Engen strongly accentuates the relationship between confession and commission. This binding reality is valid for all disciples through the ages. The Lordship of Jesus must be

proclaimed over all people. The Lordship of Jesus is strongly emphasised by Philippians 2:9-11 when the writer states that God has "given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Van Engen makes a statement with vast implications: "The proclamation is only kerygmatic when it is intentionally addressed to those who have not accepted Jesus as Lord" (1991:94).

4.3.1.2 Koinonia

Since ancient times God's people understood the essential command to love one another. In the Old Testament "love of neighbour" was a cornerstone (Leviticus 19:18; Proverbs 20:22; 24:29). This love forms part of the summary of the *Torah*. In New Testament times Jesus confronted His listeners with the same command but with astonishing new dimensions. He went so far to call it "a new commandment." He made Himself the example by commanding them to "love one another: as I have loved you, so you are to love one another" (NEB:John 13:34).

Van Engen refers to Charles K Barrett stating that the "love of the disciples for one another is not merely edifying, it reveals the Father and the Son" (John 10:18, 12:49-50, 15:10) (1991:90).

To fulfil its purpose the New Testament Church must again realise that it is a "community of love." To boast about the reformation marks of Word and sacrament without the practical manifestation of love towards one another, is described by Van Engen as "empty mockery." The command of the Lord of the Church must resound in the Church: "I give you a new commandment: love one another; as I have loved you, so you are to love one another. If there is this love among you then all will know that you are my disciples (John 13:34-35 NEB).

Koinonia can also work negatively and give reason to focus inward. Instead of propelling the Church towards a lost world it can create stagnation and spiritual self-indulgence. C. Peter Wagner describes this situation as "koinonitis." He defines this state of the Church as follows: "Fellowship, by definition, involves interpersonal relationships. It happens when Christian

believers get to know one another, to enjoy one another, and to care for one another. But as the disease develops, and *koinonia* becomes koinonitis, these interpersonal relationships become so deep and so mutually absorbing, they can provide the focal point for almost all Church activity and involvement. *Koinonia* becomes koinonitis when the purpose for which the fellowship exists is lost" (in Van Engen 1991:91 - 92).

4.3.1.3 Diakonia

"The Least of These My Brethren" point the Church towards its responsibility to act as servant - to what must be done for those in the world in obvious need. The example of Jesus laying down His life stands clearly before the Church. *Diakonia* gives practical impetus to the new commandment "love one another" and can be described as the "supreme test of discipleship" (Van Engen 1991:95).

The Church fulfilling its *diakonia* role can rightfully and meaningfully be involved in establishing justice, righteousness and peace. "The grace of sharing (or participation) in the service to the saints" (Corinthians 8:4) is an inevitable and necessary expression of the Church's essential nature as the fellowship of the disciples of Jesus. To confess Jesus as Lord is inescapably joined to the diaconal call of Jesus Christ to look after "the least of these my brethren," for in them we see the face of our Saviour" (Van Engen 1991:96).

The diaconal ministry of the Church does not exclusively focus on the Church fellowship itself, but must, in the spirit of New Testament teaching, impact the world. Through the *diakonia* the Church contributes towards an ever-changing world where "peace, justice, and mercy reign under the lordship of Jesus". *Diakonia* is not simply an add-on for the fellowship of believers - it practically conveys and demonstrates the essential character of the Church (Van Engen 1991:96).

4.3.1.4 Martyria

In Jesus' classical Commission recorded in Acts 1:8 the *Martyria* of the Church is confirmed: "You Shall Be My Witnesses." The implication of this command accentuates the fact that the "Church's existence shall be one of witness in all those places and cultures."

Van Engen sums up several uses of *Martys* in Scripture:

- □ witness to facts in a legal sense;

- □ witness to facts in a confession of faith;

- □ declaration of fact as an eyewitness to an event;

- □ the evangelistic witness to Christ's nature and significance; and,

- □ martyrdom.

These different meanings accentuate the purpose of the Church in the world. The living Christ, head of the Church, must become real for those who do not confess His Lordship. The Church must through its "presence, proclamation, and persuading acts and words witness to the fact that Jesus is alive and that He is Lord" (Van Engen 1991:97).

4.3.2   Through a Kingdom perspective

The "breadth or depth of the congregation's mission cannot be fully understood" unless we see it in relation to the Kingdom of God in the world." Van Engen describes local congregations as "branch offices of the Kingdom" (1991:101). The implication of this metaphor is that the world wanting to experience the Kingdom in action should be able to have that exposure in its experience of the local Church. This statement is soundly based on scripture –where else do we find the body of Christ in action?

Since the Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 15) God's people is seen as the covenant community - as such, the missionary congregation is a local manifestation of that covenant. To be light for the gentiles and priests for the nations (1 Peter 2:9) defines the "special calling and identity of missionary congregations." Misunderstanding the importance of the local congregation points directly to a misunderstanding of the "unique identity and purpose" of the local Church as a "covenant community of the King" (Van Engen 1991:104).

Johannes Verkuyl sees "the Kingdom of God as the hub around which all mission work revolves." The Kingdom and the Church are "interrelated precisely in the person of Jesus Christ" (in Van Engen 1991:108). Misunderstanding or ignoring the Kingdom perspective will therefore have significant effects on the Church's mission involvement. Local Churches

must understand that their identity and calling is not derived from "denominational affiliation or from institutional structures. They exist because they are the covenant community of the King, called to be God's instruments for blessing the nations" (Van Engen 1991:108).

"Missionary congregations emerge as they increasingly practice, announce, herald and illustrate the coming of a Kingdom, which is already present. As eschatological heralds of that which is coming, local Churches experience the rule of the King. They already moves gradually toward the anticipated not-yet as the Church heralds its coming"(Van Engen 1991:111).

To spread the knowledge of the rule of the King implies that the local congregation can never be an end in itself. The Church is not the final goal in mission, but "a toll of the Kingdom of God." The Church does not create, bring in or build the Kingdom - it can and does witness to it in word, deed, miracles, signs, wonders, transformation of lives, in the presence of the Holy Spirit and in the radical recreation of humanity (Van Engen 1991:111 - 112). The Kingdom comes as Jesus Christ is made known!

The missionary Church does not grow towards something "but points to something much more magnificent - the rule and reign of the King over the Cosmos. The Church points simultaneously to the beginning ("in the beginning was the Word" - John 1:1) and to the end ("I saw no temple in the city for its temple was the sovereign Lord God and the Lamb" – Revelation 21:22). Thus as the Church emerges it moves toward Christ as Alpha and Omega (Revelation 1:8) the One who is both King of all and Head of the Church" (Van Engen 1991:113).

The Kingdom of God is more inclusive, more extensive, more perfect and more comprehensive than the Church – the Church must therefore be understood as the servant of the Kingdom - bridging the gap between Kingdom and world. Bridging this chasm means that the Church must model before the world all for which the Kingdom of God stands (Van Engen 1991:113).

4.3.3 Through a world perspective

The Church-on-mission with a Kingdom perspective understands that its apostolate "is received from, guided by and patterned after the mission of Jesus" (Van Engen 1991:119). This is confirmed in John 20:21 by Jesus saying: "as the Father sent me, so I send you." The Church authentically lives as body of Christ when it lives out the role assigned to it by Jesus himself. The early Church demonstrated this in word and deed. In the same way Paul saw his ministry as a continuation of the ministry of Jesus. His ministry was founded, grounded and defined by the ministry example of Jesus (Van Engen 1991:120). Lloyd Perry and Norman Shawchuck link the *munus triplex* directly to the ministry of the Church. In the Old Testament the "priest ministered to the private and spiritual needs. The prophet ministered to the public, social and religious needs. The king ministered to organisational and political needs - he was to manage wisely and effectively the human organisational resources put under his care by God." Under the Old Testament dispensation there were three different people fulfilling these roles. These three theocratic figures and all that they represented were fulfilled "since they all merged into a complete unity in His person" (in Van Engen 1991:121).

Emil Brunner writes: "He is both Reconciler and King in His sovereignty. He is both Revealer and Sacrificial Lamb in His Priesthood. He is both the One who proclaims the Name of God and asserts God's glory and Sovereignty" (in Van Engen 1991:121). Each local Church is uniquely chosen by God to be His body in that place. His is an active body, with every member assigned a specific ministry to perform. In order to carry on those many ministries the Church must organise itself for action in such a way that every member becomes active in ministry" (Van Engen 1991:122).

In this way the reformation marks can be integrated with the *munus triplex*:
- true preaching of the Word – prophet;
- true administration of sacraments – priest; and,
- maintained godly discipline – king.

Van Engen (1991:124) describes the missiological implications of this threefold role of the Church as "exciting and staggering." It can be tabulated as follows:

PROPHETIC ROLE	PRIESTLY ROLE	KINGLY ROLE
❑ calling for and working toward justice ❑ toward righteousness and peace in human relations ❑ toward righteousness and peace in social structures	❑ sacramental presence ❑ reconciliation of people with God, each other and themselves ❑ offering of redemption found in Jesus to all who will come	❑ role in nation building ❑ bringing harmony in chaos ❑ calling for government which cares for its people ❑ organising itself for the proclamation of the Gospel of freedom and grace

Table 4.2 – Missiological implications of the threefold role of the Church in the world

The exercising, the manifestation of these roles depends on the Church's context. Contextualisation is more than "form and shape" of the Gospel message or the choice of activities the Church is involved in. Contextualisation includes shape, style, way-of-life and organisation in relation to own unique setting and in dynamic interaction with, and in the midst of its culture (Van Engen 1991:125).

Against this background, Guder (1998:77-78) asks if our structures and our assumptions about the Church's nature and purpose are still suited to the time and place in which we currently live. Might it be that both our organisation and presuppositions have been dislodged from their moorings in the biblical message?

These are difficult questions for the Church of any age and place because they involve the complicated calling of the Church to both relevance and faithfulness. The Church may fit well into its social environment, but unwarranted accommodation may cause it to lose touch with its biblical warrant. Or the Church may adhere too strictly to scriptural forms of expressing its faith that were intelligible to the cultures of biblical times, and in the process neglect to translate the biblical warrant into an incarnation relevant to the Church's current time and place. The struggle to be both faithful and relevant is constant for every Church. It is the Church's calling to embody the Gospel's "challenging relevance."

The threefold office of the Church should also find an outlet through the ministry of the Church leadership.

In addition to the *munus triplex* at least two other roles can be derived from Christ's ministry (Luke 4 :16-20). Personalising the ancient Scriptures He revealed Himself as "healer" and "liberator" (Van Engen 1991:125). As in the ministry of Jesus and the early Church the role of "healer" should be "one of the most important functions which the Church can exercise in the world." The healing ministry can be demonstrated through the healing of:

❑ body;

❑ mind;

❑ psychological stress; and,

❑ spiritual illness (Van Engen 1991:125).

Christ's liberating ministry was focused on the liberation of:

❑ the penalty of sin;

❑ the consequences of sin;

❑ oppression of spirits;

❑ penalty of the law; and,

❑ broken relationships (Van Engen 1991:126).

From whatever viewpoint we look at the essential character, role and function of the Church - "all of these must ultimately translate into the Church's doing something in the world" (Van Engen 1991:126).
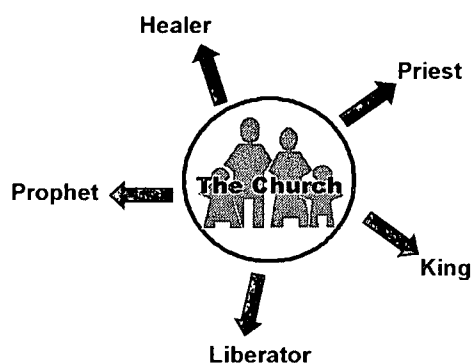
Figure 4.17 – The role of the Church in the world
(developed from van Engen 1991:123)

The activities of prophet, priest, king, healer and liberator are extremely important for the Church-on-mission because it defines the areas in which the Church's goals and objectives

79

should fall - this translates "what the Church is into - what the Church does!" To emerge toward "its deepest essence" the Church must accept and live out its missionary role "in the world of humanity and creation" (Van Engen 1991:126).

The Church becomes missionary because of "the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit who:
- creates;
- sustains;
- directs; and,
- propels" (Van Engen 1991:133).

In conclusion, Bellagamba identifies global megatrends that the Church should take into consideration when it develops a new Biblical paradigm through a world perspective:
- Resurgence of cultural traditions. This aspect has a phenomenal influence on all the other global megatrends and will deeply affect the mission of the Church in the world. There is a resurgence among all the peoples of the world of a sense of their own cultural identity (1992:2).
- Revival of religious experience. People all over the world are thirsting for the Divine, People are in search of the absolute, people are longing for practical religious experience (1992:3).
- Basic ecclesial communities. The Church's mission in the world is largely affected by the need for a personal encounter with God with the small faith communities (1992:3).
- Problems in Ministerial Structure. There is tragic inadequacy in the Church today to respond to the needs of the people. People in the Church today are thirsting for God; they long for the experience of God in their lives, and for participation in the life and ministry of the Christian community (1992:4).
- The western Church in crisis. The western Church is in crisis because it is western, because it has modified the universality of its nature and defined it in terms that may have been relevant to Westerners in the past but is definitely not so any more (1992:5).

4.3.4 Through a biblical membership perspective

Research done by Wesley Baker in the mid-1960s led to his description of the "disturbing difference between the committed few and the uninvolved many" in the local congregation. He named this phenomenon "factor Beta." He described a "small inner core of believers who assume the necessary posts of leadership with gratitude and devotion." "A cloud of uninvolved and mildly approving witnesses" surrounds these people. The Church can move in "no prophetic direction without doing greater interior battle with the forces of inertia." The Church becomes "practically sealed off by the religiously immobile whose grasp of the meaning of the Church is something less than courageous" (in Van Engen 1991:149).

Gibbs' (1989:174) viewpoint is that the larger the congregation, the greater the percentage of passengers and the larger the number of unused and frustrated leaders one is likely to find. This state of affairs, although common, is not inevitable. It normally indicates that the Church does not have an adequate cellular growth structure.

Baker states that it is virtually impossible for some Churches to move into action, to be the emerging Church-on-mission because of "sheer tons of dead weight". He suggests two strategies to address the Beta factor:
❑ more stringent requirements for membership; and,
❑ to "attack" the distinction between "clergy" and "laity" through liturgy, Christian nurture, evangelism and Christian ethics (in Van Engen 1991:150).

Although we may criticise the solutions suggested by Baker, the situation described by Factor Beta is still the general pattern in most congregations. Missionary Churches will only "emerge when leaders equip all the members to realise their greatest potential for growth, maturity and service in a relationship of shared ministry and co-operative outreach of the whole Gospel by the whole Church to the whole world" (Van Engen 1991:151).

In a provocative article, Wilbert Shenk (1997:154-157) points out that the Church needs constant reformation to combat nominalism and ultimately uninvolvement. He writes that today Church renewal is an urgent priority for Churches the world over. Among Protestant Christians the theme of reformation, revival, or renewal is common. Indeed, reformation is

integral to Protestant identity historically and theologically. In the twentieth century all ecclesiastical traditions in the West have been concerned with renewal. Furthermore, most Churches in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, founded as a result of the modern mission movement, is now several generations old. The vitality and commitment of the first and second generations are not being reproduced in the third and fourth generations and these Churches are now confronting the problem of nominalism. The solutions vest in authentic renewal, which will combine a return to the theological roots of the Church in Scripture with missionary engagement.

Another contributing factor is underlined by Ted Ward. He indicates two problems undermining the Biblical functioning of the laity in the Church today. The first reason he calls the passivity of the laity. "Why," he asks, should it be that some Christians are willing to delegate - to let others take care of responsibilities - while being so passive and apparently so disinterested in the things of God." This problem of passivity of the laity seems to be widely recognised by the clergy and is acknowledged by the laity (in Elmer 1996:28-29).

The other factor he calls hierarchy. Much of the Church today is essentially as hierarchical as any secular organisation. Hierarchy is widely accepted as the keynote of organisation. Some clergy are sensitive to this. Laymen are even more sensitive and concerned about it. There is a mounting criticism that the Church, established as a community of God's children ("you are all brothers" - Matthew 23:8) has fallen into hierarchical structures. The complaint does not argue against the doctrines of offices in the Church. Biblically, the offices are not hierarchical but are functional. They are described in terms of the needs of the particular Church. The offices are intrinsically related to the gifts of the Holy Spirit to the Church. And the gifts are broadly distributed among the people of God - not concentrated on a prestigious hierarchy.

Ward's particular criticism is focused on the ranking systems that exist in the Church. The assumed legitimacy of ranking itself, and the resulting notion that there are some people who are more important and other people who are less important, is debilitating, and undercuts the work of the Holy Spirit.

David Watson points out that we need a shift towards a more Biblical perspective of ministry, membership and leadership. He shows that the typical two-class Church structure evident in

most Churches is not to be justified through the New Testament. "In the biblical sense all Christians are priests and clergy, and this is a crucial starting point if we are to re-discover the true concept of ministry and leadership within the Church." The biblical sense of the word laity (Greek: *laos*) describes the "people of God" with distinction in "gift, function and administration" - not in "holiness, prestige, power, commitment or activity" (in Van Engen 1991:151). The unbiblical distinction made between laity and clergy "has served to place the clergy on a pedestal as being close to God removing the vast majority further from holiness and the activity of the Spirit in their lives." Van Engen sees this unbiblical view as "one of the main sources of decline, secularisation and sinfulness of the Church."

"It is against the background of the equality and unity of the people of God that the real scandal of clericalism may be seen. What clericalism always does, by concentrating power and privilege in the hands of the clergy, is at least to obscure and at worst to annul the essential oneness of the people of God. Extreme forms of clericalism dare to reintroduce the notion of privilege into the only human community in which it has been abolished" (Stott 1968:21). The clerical minded see "the one higher and the other lower, the one active and the other passive, the one really important because vital to the life of the Church, the other not vital and therefore less important" (Stott 1968:21).

Many metaphors in the Old and New Testament are used to point towards the relationship between God and His people. "No metaphor stands or falls by the inclusion of the clergy. This is simply not how the Bible thinks about the Church" (Stott 1968:25). "The essential unity of the Church leads us to one conclusion: the responsibilities, which God has entrusted to His whole Church (Stott 1968:26). "God's people are intended to be a worshipping and witnessing community. And both those duties belong to the whole Church. The clergy cannot monopolise them; nor can the laity escape them. Neither clergy nor laity can delegate them to the other; there is no possibility of worship or witness by proxy" (Stott 1968:27). "Clericalism is due to a distorted image of the Church." The laity will only find their rightful place in the Church when the simple truth is recognised, that the clergy are there to serve the Church, not the Church the clergy. We must recover the biblical doctrine of the Church as the people of God and that the offering of worship to God and the bearing of witness to the world are the unalienable right and duty of this one people, the whole Church" (Stott 1968:27).

"God's people are one holy people, owing their unity and holiness to the will and call of God Himself. They are His ecclesia, called out to be His" (Stott 1968:94).

The New Testament view of the Church focuses on the whole people of God together who are called to be the Church (Ephesians 4:15). Historically there are many examples of lay movements like the great youth and missionary movements of the 19th century. This "upsurge of lay energy from below" can be interpreted in many ways (Stott 1968:12). One possibility is that the Church structures, leadership and ecclesiastical insight created a bottleneck and forced this energy outside of the traditional parochial structures. Therefore Yves Congar writes that "there can be only one valid theology of the laity: a total ecclesiology" (Stott 1968:15).

This view of the Church as people of God has fundamental implications for the Church-on-mission. This implies that we broaden our understanding of the term conversion. Conversion means that "those who were not a people" becomes "the ministry people of God - the active, involved, serving body of Christ" (1 Peter 2:10). This is a conversion "out of selfishness, out of self-centredness, out of serving the rulers of darkness and into agape love, discipleship and serving Jesus Christ" (Van Engen 1991:152). It is imperative for the missionary Church to understand the implication of full and complete Biblical conversion for all its members. It is a three-part process including:

- conversion to God in Jesus Christ;
- conversion to the Church – the body of Christ; and,
- conversion to ministry in the world for whom Christ died (Van Engen 1991:152).

Understanding the biblical concept of people-of-God has a further implication for the Church. It implies that our literacy and theological education programs in the Church "must be understood to be the equipping of the people of God for a dynamically missional discipleship in service to the world" (Van Engen 1991:153). This approach is not focused on a small number of willing "second class professionals" who can relieve the "ministers" of some of their workload!

Ward indicates that intellectualism and meritocracy are largely contributing towards this "two-class"-system. This criticism is more widely heard among laymen than among the

clergy: an intellectual meritocracy dominates leadership education for the Church. In the Church, status is earned by knowing; what is required for leadership is dealt out to relatively few by the theological seminaries. Maintaining oneself - career and salary – happens more in terms of what one knows than what one is. The Bible suggests relatively few criteria for the elder or the pastor (or for the deacon) that relate to what one knows. Many more criteria relate to what a person is and how a person is functioning within the body of Christ (in Elmer & McKinney 1996:29-30).

Yet Christians today seem reluctant to challenge the sort of ordination that is dictated by the educational establishment. Intellectual meritocracy is a kind of aristocracy; it should be challenged within the Church because it falls short of the standards for being Church that are described biblically as the community of Christ.

4.3.5 Through a biblical leadership perspective

Servanthood and leadership are basic concepts in biblical Christianity. How servanthood and leadership relate to each other is an especially important issue in the development of the Church in our time. But discussion of servants and leaders sometimes leads to consideration of tyrants; indeed, tyranny within the Church is one of the historical and contemporary problems of Christianity. Much that we assume and much that we tolerate (and sometimes embrace) within the Church and especially within the educational functions of the Church is tyrannical (Elmer & McKinney 1996:28).

John Mott wrote that "the secret of enabling the local Church to press her advantage in the non-Christian world is one of leadership. The people do not go beyond their leaders in knowledge and zeal, nor surpass them in consecration and sacrifice. The Christian pastor, minister, rector - whatever he may be denominated - holds the divinely appointed office for inspiring and guiding the thought and activities of the Church. By virtue of his position he can be a mighty force in the world's evangelisation..." (in Cotton 1995).

Because the Church is a living Body and not an institution the task of leaders in the Church is distinctively different from the management tasks of an institution. "At every level of congregational life missionary Churches require dynamic, forceful, optimistic and organised

leaders who can direct the potential abilities and resources of the members as they emerge in ministry in the world." Engstrom in his studies on Church leadership came to the conclusion that leaders possess at least three qualities: They:

❑ make things happen;

❑ are never passive puppets; and they

❑ perform.

The difference between leadership and management can be tabulated as follows:

LEADERSHIP	MANAGEMENT
Is a quality	Is a science and art
Provides vision	Supplies realistic perspectives
Deals with concepts	Relates to functions
Exercises faith	Has to do with facts
Seeks for effectiveness	Strives for efficiency
Is an influence for good among potential resources	Co-ordination of available resources organised for maximum accomplishment
Provides direction	Concerned about control
Thrives on finding opportunity	Succeeds on accomplishment

Table 4.3 – Distinguishing between leadership and management (Van Engen 1991:164)

Hersey, Blanchard and Natemeyer define leadership as "the process of influencing the activities of an individual or a group in efforts toward goal accomplishment (in Van Engen 1991:165). For the Church-on-mission this means there is less focus on the "internal relationship between leaders and followers" but rather a "conscious mobilisation of the whole people of God in mission in the world." Leadership is nothing but the "product of the empowering activities of the Holy Spirit" to become the "creative, motivational, visionary, enthusiastic, positive and forward-looking catalysts to mobilise the people" (Van Engen 1991:165).

This viewpoint can be summed up by the following schematic:

LEADERS – their:		MEMBERS – their:
Spiritual, emotional and mental personhood	Managerial acumen	"hands", "feet" and spiritual gifts
provide(s) the		
Heart for the Church-on-mission	Structure for missionary outreach	means to carry out the missional intention of the Church

Table 4.4 – Contributing towards being the Church-on-mission (Van Engen 1991:166)

The leadership paradigm needed in the Church-on-mission is one where the leader must be "servant to all." When leaders "rule rather than serve they loose their right to lead. This servant leadership is neither passive nor impotent. It still leads, but through a particular kind of leader who empowers and actualises the led" (Van Engen 1991:170). Nel also accentuates the fact that Biblical leadership is equal to servant leadership (1994: 49).

In his extensive research about Church growth, Christian Schwarz also identified empowering leadership as a crucial element for the Church in the new millennium (1998:10). Please notice that he does not refer to "empowered" but "empowering" leadership. "Empowered leadership" could mean that there is one (sometimes several, but usually just one) ingenious multi-gifted leader with a great vision. And this leader needs volunteers to help him turn his vision into reality. His study shows that leaders should not try to build up their own power to become all-powerful - exactly the opposite. They should consider it as one of their most important tasks to help Christians develop greater degrees of empowerment, which according to God's plan already belongs to them. They equip, support, motivate and mentor individuals to become all that God wants them to be. Some of these Christians may even be led to go very different ways than their leaders. But empowering leaders can rejoice about such a Christian with all their heart because they know that God has a unique calling for every individual.

Ward (Elmer & McKinney 1996:30) warns that pride and status can have a disastrous influence on leadership effectivity in the new millennium. Leadership in the Church itself has become something of a proud self-serving status in which one takes pride in the leadership

role and serves oneself through the various kinds of privileges and prerequisites of leadership. In other words, leadership has become something of an end in itself. Leadership is a cause for pride and self-service much more than a cause for service to the community. The teachings of Christ about servanthood are confused in some minds – it becomes a temporary or transient period of initiation or demonstration of eligibility to eventually become great.

Another threat to the style of leadership in the Church today is called manipulative tactics (Elmer & McKinney 1996:31). It takes no diligent search to find the use of manipulative strategies and procedures on the part of leadership people, particularly the manipulation of guilt in order to get certain kinds of conformity: the use of fear; the playing upon "divisions" that occur within the household of faith; and the old-fashioned technique of manipulated gossip.

The new wave of "management skills" in Church leadership may be partly responsible, since management technology takes as its base value pragmatic goal seeking. But there is an easier explanation: at least some of the problems of manipulative leadership can be traced to an impoverishment of leadership logic and leadership skills. Some leaders are manipulative because they have a limited "vocabulary" or understanding of leadership. They lack awareness of the possible range of approaches to people, and therefore, they resort to tactics that are impudent, and in the final analysis, devilish! They resort more to manipulation than to true leadership (Elmer & McKinney 1996:32).

The Bible deals with leadership in a peculiar way. In the New Testament, the contrast with secular leadership is sharp. The Old Testament is not quite so precise, except for the inescapable God-presence shown through His selected leaders (Elmer & McKinney 1996:34).

In the New Testament leadership is seen as less concerned with the huge and momentous movements of history and more concerned with the step-by-step development of the people of God. What is most striking is the attunement between the leader and the community. In Hebrews 13:7 for example, leadership is more than knowing and telling. Leadership is behaviour, a lifestyle, that is worthy of being inspected; it is even worthy of being emulated. Leadership is not just what a person knows, not just what a person says. In Matthew 23 it is noteworthy how Jesus criticise the secular (Greek) model of leadership demonstrated by those

who have seated themselves in the seat of Moses: they talk a good line but they don't behave consistently; they are not worth modelling on" (Matthew 23:3) (Elmer & McKinney 1996:34).

Leadership in New Testament terms is reckoned in terms of accountability, not just in terms of authority. It gets its authority as it has accountability. Taken as a whole, biblical teaching on leadership deals more with criteria than with privilege; and beyond responsibility is accountability.

The person of the leader (Van Engen 1986:233-234) is a very significant part of the complex set of factors, which move a local group of God's people toward participating in God's mission in the world. The leader is a catalyst to stimulate the people to follow in a mutually agreed direction in the midst of a particular spiritual, social, economic, political, and cultural context. The Holy Spirit, who establishes and mobilises the Church, uses the entire mix of complex factors to move God's people to be and do something new in the world. God-given leaders are in the centre of it all, and yet they are only a part of the story. Because of the multiplicity of factors involved, there seems to be no assurance that a leader will in fact be successful in leading the Church. This dynamic tension created by the interplay of numerous factors seems to be what the apostle Paul had in mind when he spoke of the upbuilding of the body of Christ in the midst of ministry until we all attain the stature of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13).

The dynamic relationship between leader and led, pastor and flock, servant and people of God in the process of building the Church confirms that the pastoral role is difficult, multifaceted, and absolutely essential. We often consider the "how-tos" as the equipping ministry in the Church. But having understood that the whole people of God are to be involved in ministry in the world, we must carefully analyse the implications of that for pastoral leadership. Here we are not speaking so much of what the pastor-builder does, but of who the leader is in the view of the people of God on the one hand, and those outside the Church on the other. Far deeper than the tasks of facilitating, training, and organising are other aspects of the leader's incarnational role that involve a radical transformation of one's selfhood to become the stimulus for moving the people of God forward in mission and ministry in the world.

One criterion for effective missionary leadership in the Church-on-mission is whether the whole membership of the Church is growing in grace and in knowledge of God. Where this is happening - the leadership is effective. Where the Beta factor features strongly, the leaders are not leading but side-tracking and obstructing the ministry. Effectiveness of the leader should therefore be measured by how the people of God is equipped, enabled, empowered, organised, inspired and released into ministry on the grounds of their individual gifts. People led in this way will participate in God's mission in the world (Van Engen 1991:176).

In the developing new paradigm for the Church-on-mission, leadership will have to "facilitate" certain outcomes in the Church:

- ❏ Inspiration: This aspect is closely integrated with the leadership of the local Church. The investment of time, energy and teaching by the leadership to mobilise the members for involvement in the missionary task. This is many times a process of "un-learning" viewpoints that cannot be scripturally supported (Meiring in Kritzinger et al. 1994:48). To get the whole body into dynamic action, to use and to utilise the gifts of all the members and to direct these powerful corporate resources towards impacting the world sums up this indicator.

- ❏ Information: Webster verbalises the need for information in the local Church as follows: "Every local congregation has to be made profoundly and disturbingly aware of what is happening in the whole world and in the whole Church. That is what missionary education is all about. In a world where knowledge is available and easily come by, ignorant Christians are a grave liability in the Christian cause. Just as every adult is expected to know what are called the facts of life and ignorance is inexcusable, so there is a set of facts about the Church and the world which should be the common property of every Christian. Yet the extent of Christian ignorance of facts are alarming."(in Kritzinger et al. 1994:49). Preaching mission means, amongst other things, opening up the windows of the world to one another (Kritzinger et al. 1994:49). How sad that Webster concludes that "often the greatest obstacle to missionary education is the vicar himself" (in Kritzinger et al. 1994:51).

- ❏ Interpretation: The need to make the Church understand the Biblical view of the Church-on-mission is imperative. The people-of-God must understand the Church as co-working with God towards bringing people to follow Christ as their Saviour. The Church must understand its privileges and responsibilities as it emerges to impact the world. If we want

a Church-on-mission, we should "interpret to them what our Gospel message really is, what the consequences of believing in Jesus Christ, in our society, in our day, really are" (Kritzinger et al. 1994:51).

- ❑ Instruction: The Church programmes should include proper instruction, training and mission education. The Church should invest time and money to equip members to witness in the world (Kritzinger et al. 1994:52).

- ❑ Intercession: The example of Jesus in Matthew 9 "opened His disciples" eyes to the needs of the world. He took them to see the crowd, the pain and sickness and alienation of the people." In verses thirty seven and thirty eight He gives His exhortation: "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Pray, ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field!" "A missionary congregation is a praying congregation" (Kritzinger et al. 1994:53). "The prime author of mission is God, and nothing is worth being called mission when it is done without reference and utter obedience to Him. There is no other starting-point for faithful mission than prayer" (Kritzinger et al. 1994:115).

4.3.6 Through a sound management and administration perspective

It should be obvious that leadership in the emerging Church-on-mission should not be confused with effective management functions like planning, organising, leading and control. Management will have to fulfil their strategic and operational responsibilities dynamically and effectively. For Christians to develop strategies forces them to "seek the mind and the will of God" – the so-called "from above" perspective (Dayton, Edward R & Fraser, David A. "Strategy" in Winter & Hawthorne, D36-D39). Following this, the management role expects that they will have to create and develop structures to support these missional strategies.

That is why Skreslet calls Mission structures, critical tools – because without them, no theory of mission will lead to practical results. Structures in the new millennium should not only be correct in a purely theological sense, but they should be suitable, culturally sensitive and right for the current age. Structures devised for mission are subject to the same faults as their secular counterparts. The secular ideology of modernisation greatly influenced the new mission emphasis. But it should be remembered, no matter how useful, mission structures cannot replace local communities as the primary means by which Jesus Christ is made known (Skreslet 1999:2-6). Shenk concludes that Church structures should support continuous

renewal – and they will not, unless they express deeply held values and missionary purpose (1997:157).

The most important criterion for forms and structures in the Church is if they fulfil their purpose or not. Church structures are never an end in themselves but always only a means to an end (Schwarz 1998:14).

Prof. Piet Meiring points out (1994:24) that the structures of the local Church should support and not oppose the involvement of the Church in the world. The Church is continually fighting "heretical doctrines" opposing the Kingdom of God. In the same way the Church should fight "heretical structures," because often the Church will find that it needs a structural "conversion." The Church-on-mission needs adaptable structures, which make it possible to cross not only geographical borders, but also social, cultural, economic and ideological borders.

Managing the Church-on-mission should also utilise a management concept known as management-by-objectives (MBO). This logically results from our attempt to answer the following questions: How does the Church bridge the gap, or strive towards the bridging of the gap between what it is and what it should be? Between what it is and what the Body of Christ is in essence? Of becoming what it already is by faith? Of really being the emerging Church?

This gap gives birth to the creative energy supporting the dynamic Church-on-mission. This creative energy must be harnessed and managed through prayerful goalsetting, visionary focus and strategizing.

Fife and Glasser (1963:241) states that "more and more leaders are recognising that it is not enough to have large numbers of sincere and dedicated Christians working for the cause of Jesus Christ. There is real need for imaginative planning based upon penetrating insights that the Church may make its impact upon this generation.

As pointed out in chapter one, leaders in ministry always experience the dialectic tension between the spiritual "from above" and the secular "from below." From both perspectives

there are always enough reason to question and to play down actions and decisions. Van Engen writes that "where the people of God set goals with vision, by faith and with serious consideration for achieving those goals, they translate the statements of faith about the Church into statements of purpose." This points towards the Church becoming what it is suppose to be - the emerging Church.

Goalsetting "bridges the gap" between the "from above" and "from below." Goalsetting is a way of verbalising what the Church is through faith. Goalsetting covers the gap between "confession and action." Therefore the congregation sets priorities, builds goals, creates plans and carries out actions by which it lives in the world, for the sake of the world, but in distinction from the world. Continual evaluation is necessary to adjudicate the Church's growth as missionary fellowship. Karl Barth described how the Church grows of its own inherent nature, yet through the efforts of Christians in building the Church. He wrote that "the human planning and speech and faith and love and decision and action are also involved according to divine will and order" (Van Engen 1991:135). Van Engen concludes that "there is no choice but to set goals for which the community of saints is accountable. This process of translating the Church's nature into defined goals, objectives, plans and tasks makes a Church relevant and powerful" (Van Engen 1991:136).

"The missionary Church begins to take part in ministry in the world when its nature is translated into priorities which lead to intentional mission goals." Dayton and Engstrom call a goal "a future event toward which we can measure progress." They remind us of "the awesome power of goals" for the life of the Church in the world (in Van Engen 1991:143). Van Engen concludes by saying that the Church's goalsetting must "create concrete, workable, time-lived and prayerful plans of action whereby the people of God can become truly the salt of the earth in our world and in our generation. Without such careful and intentional planning, missionary congregations never emerge and are never built up to become God's people in mission in the world" (Van Engen 1991:145).

Another aspect to be taken account of, is the modern view of ecclesiologists that the Church must be understood from a systems approach. Viewed this way it is easier to understand the missiological impact of the Church-on-mission. The Church as system is influenced by a myriad of subsystems. Because the Church is a fellowship of people, these individuals are

also part of other systems. The sum of all these complex interactions will determine the overall impact of the congregation (Van Engen 1991:137).

The congregation "enters the various subsystems" during the week. "There it is involved in mission - sent to influence its environment. If it is too much like the environment, the impact is minimal. If it is too countercultural, the influence may be rejected. At the same time there is a two-way interaction between people of God and world" (Van Engen 1991:141).

On the operational side of the Church-on-mission, administrative structures facilitate the actual doing of mission in the world.

Can we include administration when we build a biblical paradigm of the Church-on-mission? Can we truly refer to biblical principles when we state that the emerging missionary Church should be characterised by certain administrative attributes?

Although the Bible is "relatively silent regarding organisational and administrative patterns" it is so by design, because these things are supportive means to divine ends. The Bible does however comment on these areas by describing some dynamic and powerful principles (Van Engen 1991:180). As can be deducted from Scriptures like Exodus 18, Nehemia 1-12, Acts 6 and Acts 15 "organisation is very much part of Scripture's view of the life and nature of the people of God" (Van Engen 1991:182).

Gene Getz did research on these Biblical principles to be identified in the areas of administration and organisation. Although the methods and forms may vary the "need for thoughtful administration and organisation is always great" (in Van Engen 1991:182).

We can identify some advantages of dynamic and effective administration in the life of the missionary congregation. Administration:
- focuses the Church's ministry;
- seeks contextualisation;
- helps avoid manipulation; and,
- facilitates evaluation.

According to Lindgren "administration properly understood simply provides the means through which a group can fulfil its purpose" (Van Engen, 1991:184). "It is in organisation" says Van Engen "that missionary congregations are given their concrete practical liveable form. It is in administration that the "from above" perspective of the Church is joined with the "from below" viewpoint. In administration the organism is welded to the institution" (Van Engen, 1991:185).

Good administrative leaders are conscious of "whether the Church is a transforming influence in its world." Van Engen further states that "the most effective missionary congregations are incarnational – they reflect the presence of Jesus Christ and embody the Holy Spirit within their communities. Therefore, Spirit-led administration is an absolute requirement at all levels" (Van Engen 1991:187).

"Administration that actualises is biblical. It focuses the purpose for which the Church exists, and it helps to avoid manipulation. Creative administration build organisational infrastructure that provide opportunities for service not otherwise available - this has been stressed by many authors." In teaching leaders we are often preoccupied "with the personal, spiritual and liturgical aspects of the Churches we plant - but we do not seem to get around to teaching them contextualised administration, accounting, stewardship, organisation and the building of Church structures" (Van Engen 1991:189).

The need in the Church is for administrative leaders who can direct the labourers in an efficient, strong and fruitful way. A major share of training should be invested to equip Churchplanters and pastors who are visionary, compassionate administrators, to direct missionary congregations, denominations and mission agencies in effective ministry (Van Engen 1991:190).

4.4 Conclusion

Finally, the process of evaluation in the Church-on-mission should be to compare what we actually see with what we confess. The evaluation of our goals, strategies, leadership, membership and administration should cause us to ask how close we are to the one, holy,

catholic and apostolic community of Word and sacrament, gathered around Jesus Christ (Van Engen 1991:190). Churches need to evaluate their life and effectiveness as an eschatological, emerging reality. There need be no fear of failure here, for evaluation measures progress toward becoming - not arrival (Van Engen 1991:191).

"Through the on-going spiral of reflection on the Church's essence, goals, people, administration and evaluation we will experience the way Jesus Christ builds His Church against which the gates of Hell themselves will not prevail" (Van Engen 1991:192).

We must view and evaluate the actions and activities of the Church-on-mission continually by asking the following questions formulated by Lindgren (in Van Engen 1991:192).

❑ What are the goals toward which the activity is supposedly moving?

❑ Are these goals in harmony with the nature and mission of the Church?

❑ Will the activity actually contribute to achieving the goals?

❑ Is the activity in conflict with any other equally valid project of the congregation?

❑ Are sufficient personnel and resources available to carry out the activity? Or will the congregation be overburdened by it?

❑ Will all the techniques employed bear examination in the light of the Gospel?

❑ Is there a danger that this activity as a means to an end, will become and end in itself, thus obscuring the real goal by its very "success"?

❑ Are there other basic goals that require prior attention?

Creating a biblical paradigm for the emerging Church-on-mission presents a multi-angular perspective. From the various perspectives discussed in this chapter it is clear that we are not working with a single dimension but rather a multi-dimensional view or perspective.

Only by allying itself with the Spirit can the Church live in fidelity to its Lord, who himself was allied to the Spirit in his mission. It is as the body of Christ and the "face" of the Spirit that the Church discovers its mission in the world. In its mission the Church is committed to combat the forces of death and enhance the emergence of life. Mission in partnership with the Spirit might reveal depths to salvation that human minds could never come to by themselves (Bevans 1998:102-105).

The biblical essence of the missionary congregation becomes multifaceted when the prism of the analytical process breaks up the single, sharp biblical light in its multifaceted reality. Through this we become aware of the complex but exciting implications of the local Church finding meaning and purpose in becoming what it is supposed to be!

Chapter 5

EMPIRICAL RESULTS

When field data is interpreted, it is important to consider some of the inherent characteristics of a field survey. This research is not based on systematic sampling procedures. In contrast with the typical survey methodology, very detailed descriptions from the Church life of relatively few Churches were collected. Much of the information comes from a relatively small group of people selected to form a representative sample of the different types of people in the Church. Five Churches were selected for this empirical study, while 80 people were interviewed.

Because the study focuses on a relatively homogeneous group, the Church, in which most people think and behave alike, data on a few Churches should adequately represent them all. But, viewed from a different perspective, the realities of cultural and denominational differences lead to a complex social system, with many people, subgroups, and differences in attitude and life-style – this was accounted for by employing a sampling methodology taking this into consideration (Orenstein & Phillips 1978:359).

The immediate product of the field research was a detailed set of field notes, reports of observations and encounters, and formal supporting documentation from the various Churches used for the study. This amounted to a large volume of paper and tape-recorded descriptive information. As expected, the source of fieldwork data was diverse. Some data came from direct observation, some from informal and other from formal questioning. Some information came from questionnaires and other from informants. The variety of data and of relationships developed has an important bearing on the validity of the research results (Orenstein & Phillips 1978:326).

The field data were indexed and categorised for each Church. In this way it was possible to get a clear perspective of the CSF's raised during each interview. It was rare to pick up any unique or totally diverse viewpoints. When it did happen, it was recorded as such. In the overwhelming majority of cases the feedback and perspectives were consistent and were confirmed by the majority of interviewed people. The responses were weighed to ensure that unique, unsupported reactions could be highlighted and isolated.

The data were then consolidated under sub-headings in order to determine and develop a certain inherent structure of results.

5.1 Field Data – Qualitative

5.1.1 Interview Data – DRC Moreleta Park

5.1.1.1 Distribution of people interviewed

Pastors	2
Church management	1
Church council	1
Missionaries	1
Missionary trainee	1
Mission commission	1
TOTAL	7

Table 5.1 – Selection of people interviewed – DRC Moreleta Park

5.1.1.2 Summary of indexed and consolidated interview results

5.1.1.2.1 Scriptural basis

The pastors understand the centrality of mission from a Scriptural perspective. Their understanding of a balanced mission involvement is based on Acts 1:8 and therefore implicates focus on the whole world.

5.1.1.2.2 Missiological character – balanced, holistic view

Mission is not an event or "attachment" to Church life but forms the heart of being Church. It is not seen as a minor or to be neglected activity, but rather a pivotal part of the integrated whole of being Church. In this congregation mission is seen as a high profile strategy.

5.1.1.2.3 Kingdom perspective

The Church does not overemphasise their denominational alliance but see that as subservient to their Kingdom responsibility. Their viewpoint is that other denominations and Churches also "have something of the truth" and that their ecumenical involvement is therefore an enriching opportunity and not a menace.

It is also interesting that despite the size of the Church they do not only strive towards implementing and supporting their own plans and strategies. There are various examples of joint ventures with other Churches and organisations. Coupled to this, there is a strong initiative to make their experience and expertise available to other Churches – in this way serving the larger body of Christ.

They also allow the positive influences of inter-denominational initiatives to widen their perspectives and Kingdom involvement - the Love Southern Africa mission initiative was mentioned as an example.

5.1.1.2.4 Spirituality

A strong focus exists on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They make sure that every member understands where they can optimally use the gifts entrusted to them. They feel strongly about the leading of the Holy Spirit and that they are not led by or dictated to by structures.

The general spirituality of the Church implicates a certain understanding and application of their faith. They therefore tend to put their faith into practise by getting involved in imaginative projects or initiatives.

It was continually stated that their relationship with the Lord is paramount and that their involvement in mission is derived from their commitment to serve Him. His will for His Church is of utmost importance. They corporately endeavour to hear His voice and to experience His leading at breakaway and retreat sessions.

Prayer plays a vital role. New innovating strategies are continuously implemented to involve more people in praying for mission – therefore channelling their prayer focus on the world in need. Involvement in so-called prayer journeys to different unevangelised countries and a 24-hour continuous prayer chain is part of the strategy.

5.1.1.2.5 Vision

The clear vision statement contributes largely to corporate involvement and unification of the Church. It was noteworthy that every person interviewed knew the vision. The vision statement is a verbalised version of the dream towards which they work and strategize. Leadership markets the vision continuously and makes sure that they work purposefully towards it.

The vision, "Glorify God, Care for one another and Reach the world", contributes towards the mission focus of the congregation. It is strongly emphasised through the functioning of small groups and through the yearly mission conference.

Feedback and witness from missionaries coming from different fields also strengthens the congregation's grasp of and involvement in reaching the vision. Effective communication and visual displays of relevant information, stretching over the interdenominational spectrum, enthuse Church members to work together towards fulfilling the vision.

Involvement in mission projects or actions is effectively shared with the members, which also contributes towards broader involvement.

There is a strong focus and planned strategy on vision-casting - making sure that leadership keeps on advocating the vision. This strategy is coupled to a belief that people no longer "give themselves" for an institution, but rather for a vision.

5.1.1.2.6 Practical application

The fact that there is a strong emphasis on members knowing and understanding their gifts, leads towards the practical application of those gifts. People are therefore urged to get involved in practical ministry.

The sending of missionaries makes the mission involvement practical. No longer is it only a theoretical, Biblical concept, but the Church can now "visualise" mission. What was theory now has "a face."

They are involved with missionaries in a holistic way through pastoral, emotional, spiritual and financial involvement. This results in total involvement and accentuates practical application of the vision. A strong focus on short-term outreaches also contributes towards practical involvement.

The leadership of the mission committee is involved with the operational aspects of their strategies. The system of faith-promise-offerings gives members the opportunity to get practically involved with mission strategies through financial involvement.

The wide variety of practical ministry options make it possible for every member to be involved in a way that suits personal gifts and talents. To facilitate this, leadership makes sure that members are empowered and encouraged continually. There is a strong focus on operational planning – in this way executing strategic plans to really contribute according to their gifts and talents.

Somebody described this congregation as a "doing" Church. Implicating that they get involved on a practical level not theorising about mission. Because of this they believe they are blessed with increasing resources to increase their mission involvement. The fact that a large percentage of financial resources are invested "outside the congregation" supports their claim that they strive to be actively and practically involved in outreach.

5.1.1.2.7 Structure

The small group structures and implementation of sending cells for missionaries largely support the missional character of the Church. Structure is not a goal in itself but it is the supporting means to ensure operational effectiveness and efficiency.

The mission commission was recently restructured into a subdivided portfolio structure leading to new focus and momentum. The involvement of full-time office staff, led by a dedicated mission pastor, also contributes towards a clear focus and continuity.

The correct functional structure would not have any positive influence if the right people did not fill the positions. The specific structure supporting the mission strategy takes into account the field workers and their needs. They believe that the umbilical cord between the Church and the missionary should be as short as possible to facilitate dynamic, effective support and communication.

5.1.1.2.8 Leadership

The leadership is united in their understanding of the importance and centrality of mission. Well-qualified, motivated and knowledgeable people lead the mission department, while the broader leadership attended a training programme on mission to equip and inform them.

There are a large number of visionary leaders in the Church. Although the whole leadership supports the mission involvement the various mission strategies and activities are driven and managed by the members and not by the pastors.

The people interviewed are convinced that part of their success is due to the fact that people in leadership are utilised in positions where their skills and expertise can be of maximum benefit to the Church.

The visionary role of the senior pastor and his passion to bring people into a relationship with the Lord, is of paramount importance – in this way he plays an important role to create an environment for mission to prosper.

5.1.1.2.9 Growth

From the birth of this congregation, evangelisation was the cornerstone of their calling. This created an ethos to proclaim the Gospel and to see people come into a relationship with the Lord. One of the pastors testified that they see "people coming to Christ" on a weekly basis. The Church shows sustained growth figures of more than 120 people per month and therefore has an image of an evangelising Church. This strongly emphasises growth and inevitably leads to a strong mission focus. This Church is not in a so-called "maintenance mode" of operation but they dynamically strive towards growing and building the Kingdom.

5.1.1.2.10 Uninvolvement of members (Factor Beta)

The negative influence of uninvolvement was so pertinently mentioned that I decided to cover the remarks in a separate paragraph. As Wesley Baker concluded in his research, it also disturbs the leadership that a "small inner core of believers" assume responsibility with "gratitude and devotion" but that "a cloud of uninvolved and mildly approving witnesses" surrounds these people (refer to paragraph 4.3.4).

Although the figures are not tested and verified there is consensus that only 20% of the members are actively involved in mission and other ministries. Although the small group structures and a dynamic prayer strategy supported and contributed towards involvement, factor Beta is still a negative reality.

The perception that financial involvement "replaces" the need for total involvement can also be a contributing factor towards uninvolvement.

5.1.1.3 Other observations

There is a strong focus on training and equipping people. The total leadership attended a specific training programme, called World Perspectives. In this way a shared understanding of world mission was created.

The composition of Church members facilitates and contributes towards world-wide involvement. A large number of the members are successful professional people experiencing international involvement and exposure on a daily basis. Therefore, they do not need to be convinced of the need to be actively involved in global projects. If they are internationally involved for so-called secular reasons, why not to bring the Gospel to the nations?

Although it seems to be obvious, some leaders stress the point that it is of utmost importance to take note of a firm decision that was taken by the leadership to be actively involved in mission. This decision forms part of the cornerstones of their involvement. They therefore do not debate their involvement – it is the result of a firm decision. This statement is in accordance with the viewpoint on "missionary intention" as expressed by Meiring (1994:22-25).

I observed two current trends through the interviews. The one is their realisation to be more sharply focused in their mission approach. They plan to invest resources in a more dedicated way in so-called focus countries. Secondly there is a strong realisation that their mission endeavours should ultimately result in Church planting. There must be a reproducing cycle. This realisation led to the leadership sending the mission pastor to the USA for training in Church planting.

Some people stated that the Church should put even more focused prayer behind their mission activities. Others feel that Church members should learn how to cope personally with less so that even more physical resources can become available to invest in Kingdom endeavours.

There is a drive to spend at least 50% of resources outside the Church.

It was also emphasised that a long-term perspective should be developed. If long term strategic planning does not focus the Church's activities, it is possible that within one or two decades hindsight can prove that some activities were ineffective and fruitless. Questions like: "Where will we be involved in ten years time?" or "How would we be involved in ten years from now?" are relevant questions needing strategic answers.

Some people also stressed that an ongoing, growing, intimate relationship with Jesus, the Head of the Church, is necessary. Without that, it seems as if all the other "good" intentions will be futile and of no significance.

5.1.2 Interview Data – DRC Lynnwoodrif

5.1.2.1 Distribution of people interviewed

Church board	4
Pastors	3
Church members	9
Missionaries	5
Missionary trainee	2
Mission commission	3
TOTAL	26

Table 5.2 – Selection of people interviewed – DRC Lynnwoodrif

5.1.2.2 Summary of indexed and consolidated interview results

5.1.2.2.1 Scriptural basis

Through continuous, focused preaching on the subject of mission the members are sensitised and challenged with the mandate and responsibility of the local Church. At the heart of this lies a sound understanding of who and what (the nature of) the Church is. Mission involvement therefore culminates from the centrality and preaching of the Gospel message.

The leadership is assured that they constantly lay a firm Biblical foundation in order to allow the members to interpret and to evaluate other viewpoints in a mature way. This plays an important influencing role on some of my other observations.

The fact that the Scriptural mandate covers the whole world also leads to constant sensitising of members that their involvement should cover a "Jerusalem" as well as an "ends of the earth"-perspective. Strongly coupled to this is a commitment to be obedient to the Word – it "would be unacceptable" to be only "hearers" of the word and not also "doers."

5.1.2.2.2 Missiological character– balanced, holistic view

Its missiological character runs like a thread throughout the activities of this Church.

5.1.2.2.3 Kingdom perspective

This Church does not feel threatened by other Churches, denominations or individuals. They therefore feel free to be involved in ecumenical relationships and to really live out their Kingdom perspective.

It appears as if denominational connections are of less importance than Kingdom perspective. For this reason a wide spectrum of speakers are allowed on the pulpit, trusting that the pastors' continuous teaching of biblical principles allows members to listen and interpret with discernment.

5.1.2.2.4 Spirituality

The people interviewed felt that they experience personal spiritual revival and that they live according to New Testament principles. They are obedient to the Biblical exhortations and live a committed Christian life. They believe they must demonstrate an attitude of servanthood. To be involved in mission asks steps in faith and a willingness to seek the Lord's will, whatever the cost.

This seeking to do His will becomes evident through a leadership-breakaway called a "listening weekend" (*luisternaweek*). During this time of retreat they focused their attention on the direction the Lord is leading.

They accept that people reveals different spiritualities and therefore seeks to accommodate these differences. They do not endeavour to change people in order to create a corporate spirituality. I do however have the impression that the dynamic functioning of this Church will necessarily have an influence on the spirituality and experiences of members – in this way having a congruent effect.

Church members are involved in a well-planned prayer strategy. The involvement of members in some national prayer initiatives and the yearly publication of a detailed prayer guide also demonstrate this.

During the evening of my interviews, I had the opportunity to witness a prayer meeting attended by more than twenty people. It is obvious that many people envisage a strong relationship and interaction between prayer and mission-involvement.

Although there is such a clear focus on prayer, even by structuring to emphasise the importance of prayer, there are some intercessors remarking that more prayer is needed.

In an interview with the pastors it was mentioned that the leadership and members strive towards "allowing" the Holy Spirit to work in this congregation.

5.1.2.2.5 Vision

It was strongly accentuated by many people that the clear, well-communicated vision of the Church has a major impact on their mission involvement. The vision is clearly formulated and is therefore part of their way of being Church. Throughout the interviews I could pick up that everybody was aware of the content and implications of the vision.

It is also of paramount importance that the vision is accepted and internalised by the members. In my opinion the leadership succeeded in "selling" the vision to the Church. This also implies that there is momentum and a dynamic movement towards fulfilling this vision. As one of the leaders reacted: "We know where we are going."

I also experienced something that can only be called passion. There is a clear passion to work toward the vision. A cold, clinical vision statement would not enthuse or mobilise the Church – in this case, adding passion to the vision generates dynamic momentum.

There is also an effective communication strategy to ensure that members are informed about how the Church progresses towards fulfilling the vision. This "closing of the communication loop" works effectively towards strengthening the vision. In this process the "Focus Feast"

(*Fokusfees*) is playing a significant role. This celebration is creating an opportunity to enthuse and mobilise the Church as a whole towards their mission goals. Members therefore feel informed - they know about the need in the world and the importance and implications of their involvement.

The formulation of the vision is also important – it is clearly articulated and can be understood by every member. The use of metaphors like the fishing industry and family life are utilised very effectively to strengthen the vision.

5.1.2.2.6 Practical application

The vision will ultimately remain a dream if it does not manifest through practical goalsetting and supporting strategies. This Church has plans and execute them in a professional way. It was interesting to deduct from certain remarks that a professional style of management and excellence in the execution of strategies are of utmost importance.

As in most other Churches-on-mission they succeed in various ways to personalise the Great Commission. Visiting missionaries and speakers play a vital role in this personalising process. This also contributes towards mobilising the Church.

The "Focus Feast" (*Fokusfees*) is a prime yearly event ensuring the build up of involvement and to generate funds and workers.

Visits to fieldworkers are also an important part of bringing the practical implications of the witnessing task to the congregation. In this aspect leadership is also playing a constructive and leading role.
The role of a faith-promise-offering for mission played and still plays a vital role in mobilising funds and enthusiasm for mission. In doing this the members also experience an opportunity to put their faith in practise.

A significant number of members make large contributions towards the mission goals of the Church – this does not only refer to financial contributions but a willingness to give "themselves" towards reaching people with the Gospel.

5.1.2.2.7 Structure

Leadership declares openly that the Church does not exist to uphold certain structures but that structures are there to support the strategies of the Church. This conviction leads to the fact that the structures are very dynamic and that it changes with the strategies to support the vision.

The structure supports the importance of the mission strategy and in this way also plays a vital role to keep the mission momentum.

As in the case of the organisation structure, the infrastructure also plays an important role in supplying an environment in which the vision can be supported.

The functioning of and focus on small group ministry also plays a significant role in mission involvement. More than 500 members are involved in this way.

Leadership feels strongly about the fact that mission cannot be an "add-on" but that structures should support the centrality of the Great Commission. They also make sure that the people filling the structures are empowered to work purposefully and unhindered towards fulfilling their goals.

The functioning of a strong, dynamic and focused mission "office" creates a "champion" to drive the operational implications of their strategic planning.

Leadership also mentioned that structures could have an inhibiting role on vision-accomplishment. By ensuring dynamic structures they make sure that the structure supports and not opposes the vision.

5.1.2.2.8 Leadership

The leadership creates opportunity and empowers members to start new initiatives and to be involved in the ministry the Lord is calling them for. Members are exposed to input from

other people and in this way they experience growth and deeper insight in the mission calling of the Church.

The leaders are using an open, informal leadership style – making it possible for constructive dialogue and discussion. They are also open to constructive criticism.

It was mentioned a few times that, historically, specific personalities have played a vital role in the development of the mission involvement of the Church. Existing and previous leaders laid the foundation for the success and focus experienced today.

There is widespread recognition for the talents, knowledge and expertise brought into the congregation by the leadership.

The congregation does not only experience professional leadership, but also a style in which leadership endeavours earnestly to hear the voice of the Lord.

5.1.2.2.9 Growth

A strong focus on growth exists and an understanding that mission is one of the vehicles through which growth takes place.

5.1.2.2.10 Relationships

Sound, positive relationships exist - especially between the leaders. This is the result of an active focus on relationship building.

5.1.2.2.11 Uninvolvement of members (Factor Beta)

It is generally accepted that greater involvement on a broad basis is needed to accelerate mission involvement and that better marketing of mission and a stronger focus on prayer will have a positive effect on the lack of involvement.

The involvement of the younger generation is crucial. Strategies to get them enthused should therefore be implemented.

Discussions about involvement lead to different viewpoints on this subject. One is that everything should be done to increase a larger and broader involvement. This originates from an understanding that the Church is not allowed to ignore its "lost sheep." Another perspective accentuates that so much effort and energy can be invested in this matter that the Church becomes inward focused - in this way becoming stagnant and loosing the dynamic strive towards growth.

It is widely accepted, though, that factor Beta is prevalent in this Church.

5.1.2.3 Other observations

Some members believe that there should be specific initiatives to target certain interest groups in the Church community. They should, for instance, develop strategies to involve business people in the mission program of the Church.

The weekend retreat where leadership isolated themselves to seek God's will for the Church, should be repeated. It is possible to move into a situation where activity and talk become so overwhelming that "listening looses its importance."

Although prayer plays such an important role, it should be co-ordinated by a full-time, devoted person – in this way accentuating the importance even more. There is also a feeling that more partaking in the prayer initiatives by the broader leadership will contribute towards larger prayer involvement.

Sharper focus, more effective marketing of projects and efforts to make it visually more visible can also contribute towards greater involvement.

5.1.3 Interview Data – AFM Witbank

5.1.3.1 Distribution of people interviewed

Pastors	5
Church council	1
Church members	1
Missionaries	2
Pastor trainee	1
Mission commission	6
TOTAL	16

Table 5.3 – Selection of people interviewed – AFM Witbank

5.1.3.2 Summary of indexed and consolidated interview results

5.1.3.2.1 Scriptural basis

The congregation understands the Scriptural mandate of Acts 1:8 and is therefore involved in a balanced way from "Jerusalem" to the "ends of the earth." The senior pastor who initiated the mission involvement had a clear understanding that the Church should be the "agent" to bring about change in the world. The Great Commission was therefore given to the local Church as responsibility.

It is of utmost importance that mission involvement is derived from a scriptural perspective and not from secondary motives. They have experienced that some Churches become involved for self-centred reasons and not because they understand the scriptural mandate.

Members are convinced that the leadership strives towards copying the New Testament Church and therefore accentuates the mission responsibility of the Church. Their reason for existence revolves around mission – therefore they are outward directed.

A very interesting comment was made by a black pastor involved in Church planting: "When you look at this Church, you get the impression that they see the Great Commission as their sole responsibility; it appears as if they take complete ownership for mission." This is a strong testimony for their commitment and zeal.

5.1.3.2.2 Missiological character– balanced, holistic view

Because the congregation presents a missiological character and fervour, this characteristic influences all ministries. The children ministry's involvement in mission was used as an example to demonstrate this principle. Mission is not a department but the sheer existence of the congregation.

The approach is holistic – resulting from an understanding that mission is more than evangelism. They prove this by ministering to people who are under-privileged. The "Herberg," for example, is run as a shelter and place of refuge for these people. They use the opportunity to address their spiritual, but also physical needs.

5.1.3.2.3 Kingdom perspective

It is stated emphatically by most people that the focus of the senior pastor was always directed on the Kingdom and not on the local Church or the denomination. They see the world in need and not their own environment as the only responsibility.

The corporate mission conference is a yearly event in the city where different Churches and denominations work together towards greater mission involvement. This Church took the initiative in this regard. It is also a well-known fact that the leaders of this Church are frequently used by other Churches and denominations to enthuse and motivate people for greater involvement. They regard this as part of their expertise investment in the Kingdom of God.

5.1.3.2.4 Spirituality

There are various prayer strategies implemented in the congregation. The comment was also made that the members are "willing to pay the price." They put strong emphasis on their understanding of good stewardship. They will rather suffer themselves, in order to see more resources invested in the Kingdom. They have learnt to "get by with less so that more can be

available for the Kingdom." This underlines their willingness to be sacrificially involved in proclaiming the Good News.

5.1.3.2.5 Vision

In July 1992 the senior pastor were convinced that the Lord calls them to be involved in mission. This vision is consistently mentioned in all discussions. It is possibly the strongest underlying reason for their mission involvement.

Leadership managed to convince the members that this vision was from God and that they should be involved in reaching people with His love. The effective way in which this vision was communicated and the overwhelming involvement of the congregation at large, were contributing largely towards their mission involvement. They emphasise that the vision does not make a difference *per se*, but rather the ability to "cast the vision." It was mentioned that although there was a lack of strategy in the earlier years, the vision was so enthusiastically communicated that people "could not resist involvement."

The vision is "to experience the glory of God and to reflect it to the ends of the earth."

The vision also resulted in the creation of a mission-training centre where long-term missionaries are trained cross-culturally and inter-denominationally to serve in different countries of the world.

5.1.3.2.6 Practical application

Instituting a faith-promise-offering to finance mission involvement created an opportunity for the members to become practically involved in mission. Much was and is done to give mission a "face" by allowing missionaries the opportunity for feedback and testimony. The yearly mission conference creates a wonderful opportunity to accentuate the vision, to mobilise involvement and to set up a "window" through which the world becomes visible.

This is one of the Churches where the physical environment emphasises their mission involvement. Paintings, banners, slogans and photos support the experience that they are

involved in the world. Leadership claims that apart from the physical "evidence" of involvement the members of this Church "talk missions." It is such an important part of their Church life, that mission is often the topic of day to day discussions. In the same way it is reflected continually through the preaching of the Word.

Leadership involved international mission organisations to act as consultants and to conduct mission seminars in the congregation. These experiences also contributed towards the practical involvement of members.

They stay committed to their missionaries and make sure that they do not just talk theoretically about the Great Commission. Even where new Churches are planted they do not withdraw but keep up their holistic support for the new Church and converts.

The influence of practical outreaches was mentioned as a means through which practical involvement is secured.

5.1.3.2.7 Leadership

The passion and the influence of senior leadership can not be overemphasised. Leadership by example motivates members to be practically involved in mission. Part of the example manifests through the willingness of leaders to practically reach out to the world, to accompany outreaches and to personally make a difference.

Members have appreciation for a strong team of leaders in which the senior pastor does not feel threatened by his colleagues.

5.1.3.2.8 Growth

The congregation sees Church planting as an outcome of mission involvement. They are involved in pioneering work that resulted in the planting of two new Churches.

5.1.3.3 Other observations

It was mentioned that external influences, like certain publications, played a major influencing role in the establishment of the vision. The fact that influential and prominent members in the congregation accepted and promulgated the vision, also played a significant role.

On the negative side, some leaders have the perception that the mission focus was over-emphasised at the cost of the Church's larger responsibility. To be completely focused on reaching the world ignores the other responsibilities of being Church and results in an imbalance. A narrow focus can easily lead towards negligence of other responsibilities. This had the result that some members became negative and that a certain level of resistance was experienced. This statement underlines one of the dangers of strong, visionary leadership.

5.1.4 Interview Data – Lewende Woord

5.1.4.1 Distribution of people interviewed

Pastors	10
Church council	1
Church members	2
Missionaries	3
Mission board	3
TOTAL	19

Table 5.4 – Selection of people interviewed – Lewende Woord

5.1.4.2 Summary of indexed and consolidated interview results

5.1.4.2.1 Scriptural basis

The senior pastor was a team member on a short outreach to South America when he was confronted with the reality and implications of Acts 1:8. On his return he shared the Biblical truth of the Great Commission with his co-pastors – challenging them with the question: "What are we going to do about it?"

5.1.4.2.2 Missiological character– balanced, holistic view

Mission is not just a project, but an inherent part of the Church's character. The Church leadership utilised the World Perspectives training program and through that sensitised many Church members to understand this Biblical principle that mission is the responsibility of the local Church. They understand their responsibility to make disciples of all nations in a balanced and responsible way – from "Jerusalem" to the "ends of the earth."

One member of the Church leadership made the comment that they practise a balanced ministry model. If mission is taken out of this model it is no longer balanced and therefore the Church ceases to be Church. Because of this, mission is always visible through their strategies and actions.

5.1.4.2.3 Kingdom perspective

The growth of the Kingdom is of utmost importance. Therefore the leadership believes that stewardship should reflect this value. They "invest" resources in a very practical way through financial support of missionaries to see this come to pass. They stress the importance of "seeing the big picture." The big picture reflects the Kingdom and that people are lost without the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

Their non-denominational attitude is strongly supported by the fact that they support missionaries from various Churches and denominations. They also believe they fulfil a role of reconciliation between Churches in their geographical area – in this way focusing on the Kingdom and not on themselves.

5.1.4.2.4 Spirituality

There is a strong focus on "sowing" in the Kingdom – therefore, they believe, they are harvesting the fruit of the "seed" they sowed. They understand their responsibility to invest against the background of the exhortations in Luke 6 and Matthew 6.

Mission is not primarily fuelled by external factors but by an attitude of the "heart." They experience the living God, the Holy Spirit communicating with them and the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit.

Prayer is important and therefore they are actively involved in various national prayer networks.

5.1.4.2.5 Vision

The senior pastor has a clearly defined vision for their mission involvement. He interprets this vision into goals – stretching his team continually. The vision is maintained and communicated regularly.

The Church members believe the Lord has spoken to the senior pastor and that he understands the Commission of the Lord and His love for a lost world. Therefore they support him in setting specific goals. The Church is definitely not stagnant and complacent – they move dynamically towards the goals visualised by the senior pastor.

It was stated emphatically that if the senior pastor do not have a vision to reach the world it is practically impossible for the local Church to be dynamically involved in mission.

5.1.4.2.6 Practical application

The system of faith-promise-offering give the opportunity to members to be actively involved in financing missionaries. It also prohibits the possibility that the income base of normal contributions comes under pressure.

The yearly mission weekend is a prominent event accentuating the member's responsibility towards mission. Innovating methods are utilised to give members a practical experience of what missionaries experience in practical terms.

The "sending out" of missionaries is also a very prominent and important event. This is seen as an opportunity to mobilise and enthuse members to become involved in the mission program of the Church.

Church members are convinced that they do not only talk about missions – they are practically involved in "doing mission". The slogan "walk the talk" describes their understanding of involvement.

To support missionaries financially, emotionally and spiritually can be seen as the basic mission strategy of this Church. Because of this, a set of procedures and policies were developed, regulating their involvement with missionaries. The criteria are clearly stated – in this way minimising the possibility of unsuccessful involvement.

A system of sending teams is implemented. In this way a team of supporters is developed to take charge of all the aspects involved in supporting a missionary. Training opportunities are created for these teams to be effective in their support.

It was stated several times by the broad leadership that missionaries could count on their support – in this way eliminating unnecessary stress.

They try to create a "window" through which the Church can experience the world of the missionary. In this way mission become "personalised."

They focus on the spiritual orientation of the missionaries. In this way taking co-responsibility for their equipping. Although they consistently work in partnership with mission organisations, they take up the mutual responsibility.

Although missionaries seldom get the opportunity to give feedback in a worship service special opportunities are created for this. The feedback of missionaries is utilised to build the general involvement of the Church.

Some missionaries are positive about the support they get from the Church. They experience the leadership to be sensitive to their situations and they are not stressed by unnatural

demands. Despite this, there is a leadership view that missionaries should be responsible and accountable for their outputs in the mission field.

One of the leaders stressed that a high level of mission awareness exists and that mission is a high profile reality in the congregation. Members are probably more informed about mission than the average Church member is.

5.1.4.2.7 Structure

The Church's structure and way of operation creates opportunity for people to serve through their talents and gifts. Various examples exist where such involvement eventually led to full-time mission involvement.

Various people mentioned that the existence of a full-time mission office and a dedicated mission pastor creates the platform for high impact involvement. The mission pastor drives the process of involvement – in this way becoming the "mission heartbeat" of the Church.

They differentiate between the roles of mission involvement – some people will be called to be full-time missionaries while other will be responsible to release resources.

5.1.4.2.8 Leadership

The driving force of the senior pastor is seen as the major contributing factor behind their mission involvement. He translates his vision into practical goals – in this way using goalsetting as a major strategy for success. He expects from his team to reach these goals and he keeps on stretching these goals. It is obvious that he has a very strong influence on the outcome of their actions and activities.

It was interesting that a question directed to the broader leadership implicated that they are involved in mission because this is the expectation of the senior pastor. This emphasises the awesome influence of leadership but also accentuates a warning that mission involvement can be based on secondary motives.

Inputs from specialists are used frequently to maximise the effect of synergy. Some of these mission specialists are involved in the mission board of the Church – ensuring high level inputs and expertise. These people are Church members who are involved with different mission organisations as full-time missionary staff.

The management style allows for members to develop their own ministries and to be guided, facilitated and mentored by leadership. They experience "space to listen to the Holy Spirit and to be obedient to their calling." In this way the leadership is willing to accommodate exceptions although a well-defined set of procedures and policies are in place.

Because leadership focuses wider than the immediate environment it does have a "top down" effect on the rest of the Church. Support by prominent role players in the Church strengthens this effect. Other strong characteristics of leadership include the ability to network effectively and widely, to acknowledge and confess mistakes and to be honest and open.

5.1.4.2.9 Growth

Three new Church planting projects are in operation.

5.1.4.2.10 Relationships

Open and effective relationships exist between the Church and mission organisations through which missionaries are placed.

5.1.4.2.11 Uninvolvement of members (Factor Beta)

It was mentioned that Factor Beta is also a reality in this fast-growing, dynamic Church. The constitution of the Church limits the possibility for uninvolvement, but leaders mentioned that members do substitute involvement by giving financial contributions. This is in many cases the "easy way out." This could be symptomatic of people without a deep inner conviction that mission involvement is inherently part of Christian life and not just an event to be involved in.

5.1.4.3 Other observations

Some members believe they do not lack vision but that implementation of strategies can sometimes be a problem. They feel that goalsetting can be a positive, motivating tool but that the implementation of strategies and plans should not be neglected or over-simplified.

Some missionaries felt that the Church does not really associate with them. Although they appreciate financial commitments it was obvious that they feel a need for deeper spiritual and emotional support. They feel that local Church members "do not really understand" because they were "not there yet." This hampers their ability to understand the actions of the field worker. They also feel that a lack of communication demotivates them.

The sending team should in concept be responsible to take up most of these responsibilities. Although missionaries understand their own responsibility to develop these structures themselves, they still feel a need for more interaction with Church leadership.

It was also mentioned that external influences played a major role in preparing their mission involvement. The Church was one of the host Churches for GCOWE '97 – a mega-conference involving Churches, denominations and leaders from across the globe. This convinced them that they should be involved to address the imbalance of workers in different parts of the world.

The World Perspectives training program was mentioned frequently as a phenomenal means to equip members for their responsibilities and to understand the Biblical foundation of the Great Commission. This also leads to a common understanding of the task of reaching people with the Good News.

5.1.5 Interview Data – DRC Bergsig

5.1.5.1 Distribution of people interviewed

Pastors	3
Church council	3
Church members	3
Missionaries	1
Mission commission	1
Observer	1
TOTAL	12

Table 5.5 – Selection of people interviewed – DRC Bergsig

5.1.5.2 Summary of indexed and consolidated interview results

5.1.5.2.1 Scriptural basis

The mission-mindedness of this Church results from a firm persuasion that Scripture forms the basis for mission. From this perspective arises their understanding of the commission given to the Church. A balanced scriptural viewpoint leads to preaching and teaching that emphasises the holistic responsibility of the Church. I have attended many services in this Church and am always thrilled by the solid proclamation that the mission responsibility forms the foundation of being Church.

There is also a sound emphasis on the *missio Dei* - the members understand that mission is ultimately God at work.

One of the leaders stated that the reason for existence of any Church is founded on two pillars – mission and prayer. This is strongly supported by the testimony of one of the biggest Presbyterian Churches in the world – the Myung Sung Church in Seoul, Southern Korea. During a visit to this country in 1995, the Church leaders confirmed that the phenomenal growth, expansion and impact they experience are firmly based on their commitment to pray and to be involved in mission.

From this point of departure a strong focus was detected on understanding and effectively manifesting the true nature of the Church. There seems to be clarity on the different roles of leadership and Church members. Through this understanding developed a balanced framework in which the laity can and do fulfil a significant role. This also opens up the possibility for individual members to minister through the gifting of the Holy Spirit.

The scriptural mandate is so strongly imbedded that even budgets are evaluated against the holistic view of Acts 1:8.

5.1.5.2.2 Missiological character– balanced, holistic view

The missiological character of this Church flows through all the activities of being Church. Mission is not seen as an isolated, unrelated activity. This characteristic is accentuated by involving all the different ministries and interest groups in the Church. A very vivid example is the involvement of the youth through various strategies.

It was also noticeable that mission is not seen as the only responsibility of being Church. A balanced way of integrating the different responsibilities of the Church seems to be practised. If this view is emphasised, it logically leads to a balanced, holistic involvement in mission. They understand that mission is more than evangelisation and that the responsibility covers the whole world. It is accepted that the majority of members share the viewpoint that the Great Commission is the essential cornerstone of being Church.

5.1.5.2.3 Kingdom perspective

This Church has a Kingdom perspective. The scriptural responsibility to be involved in ecumenical initiatives is clearly understood. They do not feel threatened by any other denomination or Church and can therefore convey the unity supposed to be presented by the body of Christ.

5.1.5.2.4 Spirituality

It was mentioned in more than one interview that this Church experiences the reality of the Holy Spirit equipping people to fulfil the commission entrusted to the Church by its Head, Jesus Christ. They "allow the Holy Spirit to work" amongst them.

A very strong focus on prayer exists. It is supported by their structuring - where prayer is included, not as a "by-product", but as one of seven major strategies. Nearly every person interviewed referred to the major focus on prayer and the fact that the leadership is also setting an example in this regard.

One of the pastors witnessed categorically that change started to happen when they decided to pray. The weekly bulletin, which is made available at the Sunday services, strongly focuses on prayer and can therefore be described as a prayer guide for the week.

They also believe that mission involvement is a reflection of the member's relationship with the Lord. God is at work in the world around us – they see it as their responsibility to be involved where God is working.

They express gratitude because the Lord is blessing this congregation. They believe they are blessed because they are obedient to His commission – they are blessed to be a blessing to others!

5.1.5.2.5 Vision

The vision is well formulated and is communicated clearly and consistently in many ways. Through effective communication the members see themselves as missionally well informed. A wide spectrum of initiatives is utilised to support this communication. The very effective and popular World Impact Conference (*Wêreld Impak Konferensie*) is a yearly event contributing largely to inform, enthuse, motivate, challenge and to build vision.

The "sending out" of missionaries from the Church is not a minor event. Leadership uses opportunities like this to further fuel enthusiasm and to sharpen the focus of the Church.

There is a strong focus on the marketing of the vision. Church members feel positive about the motivational power of their vision. There is an overwhelming consciousness of the Church's vision and the positive role of the leadership to ensure momentum.

They use visits from, and other forms of communication with mission workers in the field to strengthen member's involvement with the vision.

5.1.5.2.6 Practical application

It is very clear that the Church is practically involved in living and proclaiming the Good News. Nearly every person interviewed supported this statement – even non-members of the Church. Through sacrificial giving of finances, practical outreaches and a servant attitude the love of Christ is proclaimed.

I am impressed by the testimony of Church members that the leadership does not only preach mission – they also "live" it. It is clear that a significant part of leadership and members "walk the talk."

In various ways mission is personalised. The utilisation of field workers to accomplish this goal is very effective and positively experienced by the Church.

The fact that visiting missionaries is encouraged to report and witness about their experiences in the field contributes towards the "practical experience" of members. In this way, mission becomes a reality to them. Mission is therefore not an impersonal theological concept but it has "faces." An effective communication strategy is in place to ensure that the Church is continuously informed about relevant mission developments. Informed speakers and practising missionaries are used at mission conferences to inform and to enthuse.

The Church building is vividly decorated by relevant mission information. This visibility of information, as well as an effective feedback loop, ensures that people are continually reminded of the outward directed focus of the Church.

There is a drive to get all members involved in ministry. The ethos of the Church is therefore one of practical involvement – in this way supporting the "sentness" of the Church.

Opportunity for outreach enhances practical involvement. They claim that mission is a way of life for many members – "We don't just talk, we do." Like prayer, practical outreach was a trigger to launch their mission involvement.

It was also notable that leadership uses a strong integrated approach. They do not work dualistic or fragmented. They manage to combine preaching, praying and doing to effectively be a Church-on-mission.

5.1.5.2.7 Structure

The Church is strongly committed to structures supporting small group functioning. There is a drive towards complete transformation in this regard. It is perceived that the effective functioning of small groups support mission involvement.

It was also mentioned that the structures are dynamic and constantly developing. The impression is created that structures are supporting strategy and that it is utilised as a means to reach a goal.

Structuring to support effective administration, logistical and financial support is also important. There is an understanding that the practical mission involvement of the Church is upheld by an effective support structure maintained by managerial efficiency. This implies that they accept that structures would not support strategy if the incumbents within the structures do not fulfil their responsibilities effectively.

Structures also support efficient communication. Strong focus exists to ensure that the "communication loop" is closed.

5.1.5.2.8 Leadership

The very important impact of leadership in the Church-on-Mission is also emphasised through the interviews. The style, enthusiasm, vision and integrity of leadership was strongly commended by the people interviewed. There is a perception that effective mission-involvement is initiated and fuelled by the leadership.

It was also mentioned that the leadership functions in a complimentary manner – each one bringing unique skills, abilities, expertise and spiritual gifts to the team.

Leadership is not just leading, but they are also involved in the execution of strategies. In this way they lead through example. The pastors have a strong developed vision for mission and does therefore lead from "the front." Members can interpret the preaching in practical terms – "the pastors don't just preach it, they also do it." The leadership style allows for people to take part and to be empowered.

The informal leadership style also contributes towards mission involvement. .

5.1.5.2.9 Relationships

It was frequently emphasised that healthy relationships exist between the leadership, missionaries and Church members. It is clear that a high premium is placed on the development and maintenance of relationships.

One person mentioned that "love binds this Church together." Someone also remarked that without sound internal relationships and the demonstration of love, it is impossible to be involved in mission – in communicating God's love for mankind.

5.1.5.2.10 Uninvolvement of members (Factor Beta)

It is clear that the Church leadership strives for greater involvement by all the members. I attended a meeting of the Church board focusing on this aspect and discussing strategies to address this goal.

This aspect was mentioned by most people interviewed, indicating that active members feel the lack of a broad movement of involvement. Some people felt that the uninvolvement is probably more acute than what it appears to be.

The view was expressed that an acceleration of mission involvement will only be possible if this aspect can be effectively addressed. It was mentioned that asking a new and firm commitment from members could affect involvement.

5.1.5.3 Other observations

The existence of a strong core group of members, with passion and vision to be involved with mission, plays an immensely important role. They also believe that mission involvement is not a series of events but it should be developed and intensified over a period of time – it is a process.

It was also mentioned that their involvement with other Churches creates and stimulates mission involvement in those Churches – thus playing a mobilising role.

Although there is a big focus on dissemination of information, it was questioned by some people if the "ordinary member" does "absorb" this information.

It is dangerous to overemphasise financial contributions as a means to judge involvement. Financial involvement is much "easier" and can be a "cheap" way to ignore a total personal involvement.

A strong focus on symbolism was observed. The interior decorating, as well as discussions during a meeting, support this observation. Symbolism is used to ensure internalisation of concepts - in this way also strengthening the vision.

5.2 The commonality of qualitative results

	DRC Moreleta Park	DRC Lynnwoodrif	AFM Witbank	Lewende Woord	DRC Bergsig
Scriptural basis					
Missiological character					
Kingdom perspective					
Spirituality					
Vision					
Practical application					
Structure					
Leadership					
Growth					
Relationships					
Uninvolvement					

Table 5.6 – Common factors deducted from interviews

5.3 Field Data – Quantitative

5.3.1 Quantitative data – DRC Moreleta Park

Age of the congregation	16
Attendance of meetings (p/week)	
Morning sermons	2500
Evening meetings	2000
Prayer meetings	1800
Small groups	
Number	260
Number of members actively involved	3744
Leadership	
Number full-time pastors	5

Number part time pastors (tent makers)	2
Number elders	15
Number deacons	-
Number - other leaders (example cell-Church) not included above	55
Average age of pastors	43
Members	
Number	11300
Age distribution - %	
Matric and younger	36
Up to 25	6
25 to 40	22
40 to 60	32
over 60	4
Economic distribution % households in congregation	
Below average <R2000 p.m.	5
Average – R2000 – R15000 p.m.	30
Above average >R15000 p.m.	65
Resources – finances - 2000	
Total Asset value	R 14 m
Yearly income – Rand	
Normal contributions	8,100,000
Faith-promise-offerings	2,300,000
Other	1,400,000
Total income	11,800,000
Yearly spending of mission budget – Rand	
Own area	1,188,000
South Africa	1,336,500
Africa	594,000
Outside Africa	1,831,500
Total	4,950,000
Faith-promise-offerings	
% of promise realised in 2000	80
% real growth since initiation	-
Year initiated	1995
Resources – manpower	
Staff (number – not missionaries)	
Full-time – including pastors	-
Part time – including tent makers	-
Total	30
Involvement with missionaries (number)	
Financial	54
Prayer	56
Moral, emotional, pastoral, etc.	56
Number of missionaries - involved in any way	
Own area	10
South Africa	13
Africa	5
Outside Africa	28

Total	56

Table 5.7 – Tabular summary of quantitative data – DRC Moreleta Park

5.3.2 Quantitative data – DRC Lynnwoodrif

Age of the congregation	26
Attendance of meetings (p/week)	
Morning sermons	930
Evening meetings	690
Prayer meetings	25
Small groups	
Number	52
Number of members actively involved	520
Leadership	
Number full-time pastors	4
Number part time pastors (tent makers)	1
Number elders	62
Number deacons	63
Number – other leaders (example cell-Church) not included above	52
Average age of pastors	43
Members	
Number	3032
Age distribution - %	
Matric and younger	16
up to 25	10
25 to 40	22
40 to 60	30
over 60	22
Economic distribution % households in congregation	
Below average <R2000 p.m.	3
Average - R2000 - R15000 p.m.	52
Above average >R15000 p.m.	45
Resources – finances - 2000	
Total Asset value	R 9 m
Yearly income – Rand	
Normal contributions	1,693,060
Faith-promise-offerings	1,274,300
Other	676,763
Total income	3,644,123
Yearly spending of mission budget – Rand	
Own area	619,882
South Africa	375,991
Africa	24,300
Outside Africa	224,845

Total	1,245,018
Faith-promise-offerings	
% of promise realised in 2000	98
% real growth since initiation	23
Year initiated	1998
Resources – manpower	
Staff (number - not missionaries)	
Full-time – including pastors	19
Part time – including tent makers	3
Total	22
Involvement with missionaries (number)	
Financial	27
Prayer	27
Moral, emotional, pastoral, etc.	27
Number of missionaries - involved in any way	
Own area	11
South Africa	6
Africa	0
Outside Africa	10
Total	27

Table 5.8 – Tabular summary of quantitative data – DRC Lynnwoodrif

5.3.3 Quantitative data – AFM Witbank

Age of the congregation	42
Attendance of meetings (p/week)	
Morning sermons	420
Evening meetings	265
Prayer meetings	60
Small groups	
Number	15
Number of members actively involved	220
Leadership	
Number full-time pastors	6
Number part time pastors (tent makers)	-
Number elders	19
Number deacons	-
Number – other leaders (example cell-Church)	
not included above	7
Average age of pastors	42
Members	
Number	1095
Age distribution - %	
Matric and younger	14
up to 25	10
25 to 40	26

40 to 60	32
over 60	18
Economic distribution	
% households in congregation	
Below average <R2000 p.m.	25
Average - R2000 - R15000 p.m.	65
Above average >R15000 p.m.	10
Resources – finances – 2000	
Total Asset value	R 6 m
Yearly income – Rand	
Normal contributions	1,339,227
Faith-promise-offerings	580,000
Other	120,790
Total income	2,040,017
Yearly spending of mission budget – Rand	
Own area	66,700
South Africa	81,400
Africa	62,000
Outside Africa	207,411
Total	417,511
Faith-promise-offerings	
% of promise realised in 2000	80
% real growth since initiation	1208
Year initiated	1991
Resources – manpower	
Staff (number - not missionaries)	
Full-time – including pastors	7
Part time – including tent makers	1
Total	8
Involvement with missionaries (number)	
Financial	52
Prayer	52
Moral, emotional, pastoral, etc.	52
Number of missionaries - involved in any way	
Own area	7
South Africa	11
Africa	12
Outside Africa	22
Total	52

Table 5.9 – Tabular summary of quantitative data – AFM Witbank

5.3.4 Quantitative data – Lewende Woord

Age of the congregation	15
Attendance of meetings (p/week)	
Morning sermons	2200

135

Evening meetings	2200
Prayer meetings	443
Small groups	
Number	167
Number of members actively involved	1993
Leadership	
Number full-time pastors	13
Number part time pastors (tent makers)	-
Number elders	13
Number deacons	92
Number – other leaders (example cell-Church) not included above	1091
Average age of pastors	40
Members	
Number	6750
Age distribution - %	
Matric and younger	20
up to 25	15
25 to 40	30
40 to 60	32
over 60	3
Economic distribution % households in congregation	
Below average <R2000 p.m.	2
Average - R2000 - R15000 p.m.	78
Above average >R15000 p.m.	20
Resources – finances – 2000	
Total Asset value	R 28 m
Yearly income – Rand	
Normal contributions	9,500,000
Faith-promise-offerings	1,600,000
Other	900,000
Total income	12,000,000
Yearly spending of mission budget – Rand	
Own area	447,451
South Africa	307,048
Africa	244,049
Outside Africa	667,048
Total	1,665,596
Faith-promise-offerings	
% of promise realised in 2000	67.7
% real growth since initiation	330
Year initiated	1996
Resources – manpower	
Staff (number - not missionaries)	
Full-time – including pastors	-
Part time – including tent makers	-
Total	-
Involvement with missionaries (number)	
Financial	88

Prayer	96
Moral, emotional, pastoral, etc.	96
Number of missionaries – involved in any way	
Own area	27
South Africa	19
Africa	12
Outside Africa	38
Total	96

Table 5.10 – Tabular summary of quantitative data – Lewende Woord

5.3.5 Quantitative data – DRC Bergsig

Age of the congregation	29
Attendance of meetings (p/week)	
Morning sermons	700
Evening meetings	30
Prayer meetings	60
Small groups	
Number	56
Number of members actively involved	600
Leadership	
Number full-time pastors	3
Number part time pastors (tent makers)	0
Number elders	42
Number deacons	5
Number - other leaders (example cell Church)	
Not included above	40
Average age of pastors	45
Members	
Number	2609
Age distribution - %	
Matric and younger	23
Up to 25	11
25 to 40	15
40 to 60	32
Over 60	19
Economic distribution	
% households in congregation	
Below average <R2000 p.m.	1
Average - R2000 - R15000 p.m.	79
Above average >R15000 p.m.	20
Resources – finances – 2000	
Total Asset value	R 7 m
Yearly income – Rand	
Normal contributions	1,085,000
Faith-promise-offerings	281,000

Other	162,000
Total income	1,528,000
Yearly spending of mission budget – Rand	
Own area	54,000
South Africa	62,000
Africa	53,000
Outside Africa	106,000
Total	275,000
Faith-promise-offerings	
% of promise realised in 2000	105
% real growth since initiation	186
Year initiated	1997
Resources – manpower	
Staff (number - not missionaries)	
Full-time – including pastors	8
Part time – including tent makers	0
Total	8
Involvement with missionaries (number)	
Financial	13
Prayer	17
Moral, emotional, pastoral, etc.	17
Number of missionaries – involved in any way	
Own area	3
South Africa	4
Africa	3
Outside Africa	7
Total	17

Table 5.11 – Tabular summary of quantitative data – DRC Bergsig

5.4 Conclusion

In the process of interpreting these empirical results it is necessary to underline a few realities that should guide us in defining CSF's:

It was clear, during the interviews, that a certain level of subjectivity is present. There is a natural tendency to accentuate positive aspects and to ignore those aspects, which can create a negative perception of the Church. Loyalty towards leadership also strengthens this reality.

People tend to move towards an idealistic scenario when interviewed. I was forced many times to ensure that comments were applicable to the "as is" situation, and not to what they would like it to be.

Because different theological traditions were covered in this study I was confronted with the reality that concepts have a different content for various people. The definition of Church membership is a typical example. In the reformed tradition there are different "types" of membership – before and after confirmation. In Churches from the Charismatic or Pentecostal tradition these differences are irrelevant. Traditional Church structures create a certain understanding of, for instance, the role of leadership. These various perceptions underline the necessity to interpret with discernment. It is very easy to relate factors to each other, which are totally unrelated. The question that must continually be asked is: "Is this data comparable?"

Given the type of study, it would be unwise and unscientific to make exclusive statements when data is interpreted. I therefore limit myself to the identification of certain trends.

5.4.1 Qualitative results

It is clear that certain CSF's are consistently mentioned during interviews. This was so obvious that it was possible to structure the results in the existing format. Although different nuances were found in the content – the presence of these factors could not be argued. It was also clear that the depth and functionality of these factors can vary, but again, they were present.

It is necessary to mention that there was more than 90% consistency in the results of interviews. Because of the danger of leading questions I refrained from prompting people when certain factors were not spontaneously mentioned. Growth and relationships are typical examples. Although these factors were not mentioned in certain cases, I am convinced that they are still important for these Churches - although not specifically mentioned. Growth is so closely related to a Kingdom perspective, that certain other statements made during the interviews imply it.

Another very important and notable observation is that there is a strongly developed realisation that the local Church has to play the primary role in reaching out with the Gospel. Although the importance and contribution of other role-players, for instance para-Church

organisations, are not denied, the local Church should take up the responsibility to be the major thrust behind mission.

I would like to accentuate a few concerns that developed during this empirical study:

The Church should beware of measuring involvement in superficial numbers or ratios. It is very simplistic to measure "mission involvement" in the number of missionaries. It can be just as dangerous, and irresponsible, to use financial "investment" as a means to compare Churches. Done in this way, it can be possible to loose the holistic perspective and responsibility for the Great Commission.

It can be a threat to overemphasise certain aspects of being the Church-on-mission. The *missio Dei* must constantly bring the Church in line with the correct Biblical perspective of their responsibility. Any unbalanced presence of one of the CSF's will not strengthen involvement in God's work, but will rather render the Church as a hindrance.

In all the Churches used for this research, the holistic responsibility was accentuated strongly. The overall importance to be balanced in vision, strategy and operation must be stressed. This holistic view should penetrate the understanding of the Church, their geographical involvement and investment of resources – in fact it should penetrate the whole "fibre" of the Church-on-mission.

The empirical study supports the identification of the following ten Critical Success Factors for the Church-on-mission:

The mission mandate, motive and involvement is firmly based on Scripture (CSF 1).

Its missiological character permeates the whole being of the Church (CSF 2).

Its Kingdom perspective propels the Church outward; taking the whole Gospel to the whole world (CSF 3).

Yearning for and working towards growth in God's Kingdom so that every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that He is Lord (CSF 4).

The balanced spirituality of the Church is soundly based on a living relationship with Jesus, the Head of the Church (CSF 5).

Assertive, visionary and servant leadership enthuses, direct and empower people to effectively invest their gifts and talents to impact creation (CSF 6).

Enthusiasm, direction and essence is founded in an effectively communicated, God-given vision (CSF 7).

Effective, dynamic strategic and operational management support and accelerate the missional impact of the Church (CSF 8).

Invest every effort to create, develop and sustain loving and co-working relationships within the Body of Christ (CSF 9).

Mandate and vision is effectively translated into practical outcomes impacting creation (CSF 10).

These ten CSF's will be integrated in the model that will be developed in the next chapter.

5.4.2 Quantitative results

The following observations result from the quantitative research:

The ages of the Churches vary between fifteen and forty two years. The age is irrelevant in terms of this interpretation because all of them developed into outstanding missional Churches since 1991. It could however be more difficult to facilitate a significant transformation if lack of vision and involvement are deeply entrenched through the years.

Attendance of worship services on Sunday mornings average at less than forty percent of the membership. This figure may not be outstanding, but it is notable that a tendency exists in these Churches to have vibrant, growing evening services. In some cases these figures match the number of people attending the morning services.

The figures for members involved in prayer meetings are not comparable. There are formal prayer meetings as well as small group meetings where attendance records are not kept. It is therefore difficult, even impossible, to determine prayer involvement through these types of statistics.

The existence of small group ministry is strongly developed in all these Churches. On average one third of the members are actively involved in these small groups. Groups consist on average of between ten and fourteen members. In many cases these small groups are closely linked with missionaries in the field.

The age distribution of members in the Churches falls primarily in the category between forty and sixty years of age. In two of the Churches there are a relatively small number of elderly people, while a significant percentage of young children and teenagers are forming part of all the Churches.

One of the Churches recorded a substantial percentage of people in the lower economic income bracket, while two Churches recorded a majority in the middle group and the other two Churches in the upper group.

An amount between R1300 and R5500 are invested per member in fixed assets. It is dangerous to deduct any conclusions from these figures because assets are normally valued at original cost prices – influencing these ratios substantially. Planned new capital investments in some of these Churches will influence these ratios dramatically in the near future. It could however be meaningful for a Church to use this ratio to evaluate capital investment planning.

Yearly income varies from 21% to an enormous 84% of fixed asset investment. Also in this case it is a usable ratio, but it should be intelligently interpreted for every Church in its unique situation and is not to be used to compare Churches.

It is strongly advocated by all these Churches that they utilise the method of faith-promise-offerings to largely finance their mission programs. This view is supported by the quantitative data. These funds contribute between 18% and 35% towards yearly income.

It is notable that between 18% and nearly 50% of these Church's budgets are spend outside the congregation – on what can be labelled as mission. It is interesting that this ratio is used extensively to evaluate mission impact. Although it definitely gives certain indications, I am wary to use the ratio categorically for this reason.

All the Churches have three or more pastors. In three cases, dedicated full-time pastors attend to the mission responsibility of the Church.

In all cases a substantial part of mission involvement take place through the support of missionaries. The number of missionaries supported varies between seventeen and ninety six in these Churches. These figures are not comparable because the extent of involvement varies from person to person – and nearly always implies part-time involvement.

The geographical distribution of missionaries displays a holistic view of mission responsibility. Between 35% and 63% of these supported workers are involved in South Africa.

I would like to conclude that these quantitative data underlines the fact that mission impact is not determined by:

> financial affluence of the members,
>
> age distribution of members,
>
> geographical location of the Church,

age of leadership, or

age of the congregation.

In conclusion, it does however appear as if structures, like the functioning of small groups, do influence mission impact. Effective financial strategies as well as an attitude of investing outside the Church also appear to be important. Involvement, also in participating in worship services and prayer meetings, does signal some vitality and impact.

With the empirical results to our disposal, we can now proceed to develop a model for the Church-on-mission.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION - CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS FOR THE CHURCH-ON-MISSION

6.1 Relativity of Critical Success Factors

CSFs cannot rigidly be measured or its influence mathematically connected to the Church's impact in the world. Although the relationship is not a linear equation, it is imperative that if the factor is not firmly imbedded in the being of the Church it will have less influence on the outcome of mission involvement.

The following four figures illustrate this statement. Among other things, leadership style can vary between dynamic/pro-active and passive/re-active. From the research it is clear that Churches involved in mission, experience the propelling influence of a dynamic leadership style. This cannot be illustrated by drawing a linear equation, but it is clear that a dynamic style has a more positive influence than a passive one (Figure 6.1).

In the same way some leaders have a positive effect on their followers, inevitably motivating them to follow. Such a leadership influence will contribute towards success while a negative influence have the opposite effect on followers (Figure 6.2).
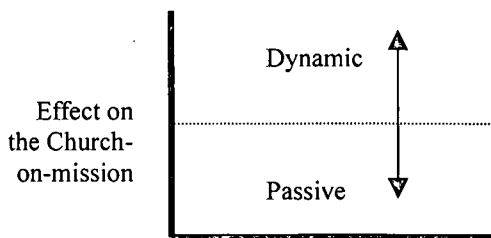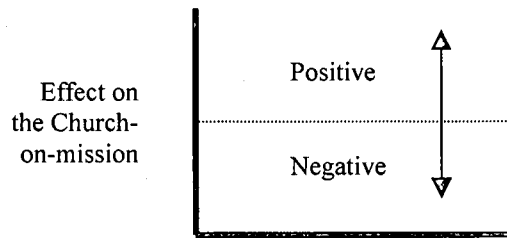

Figure 6.1 – Leadership Style   Figure 6.2 – Leadership Influence

A sensitive ecumenical view will necessarily lead to a broader Kingdom perspective – focusing wider, planning broader and crossing denominational barriers. Lack of this view will ultimately lead to an inward focused self-centeredness. Mission impact would be trivial when such a narrow ecumenical view exists (Figure 6.3).

Throughout the field-study the existence of factor Beta was described as a Critical Failure Factor. If the Church does not succeed in mobilising most of its members, mission impact would be less than expected – in spite of all the other positive factors. Although impossible to couple direct relations to this statement, research shows that less of factor Beta has a positive influence on mission impact (Figure 6.4).
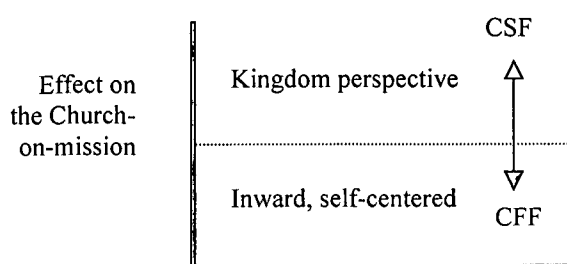
CSF

Effect on
the Church-
on-mission

Kingdom perspective

Inward, self-centered

CFF

Effect on
the Church-
on-mission

Most members involved

Few members involved

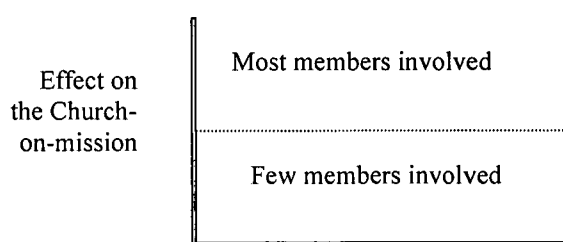*Figure 6.3 – Ecumenical View*   *Figure 6.4 – Factor Beta*

All CSFs should be viewed from the perspective illustrated by figure 1.6. The stronger the CSF is developed, the larger the influence on the Church's mission impact. These CSFs also have mutual effects on one another – leading to other complexities and prohibiting simplistic interpretations.

It is crucial to understand and to consider the relativity of CSFs. Churches with little mission impact do also present some or all of these CSFs. All Churches have leadership – leadership is therefore not the critical aspect, but the type of leadership is of paramount importance. Passive leadership can actually be depicted as a Critical Failure Factor (CFF). As leadership develops towards the dynamic end of the scale, the influence becomes more positive to the point where it becomes a critical contributor towards mission impact. Figure 6.1 illustrates this point.

As the effects, contributions, impact and influence of the CSFs differ, so they also differ in terms of complexity and content. They can for instance be spiritual or physical. Spirituality is a loaded term with vast and complex nuances and theological implications while growth is easier to define and to evaluate.

When we interpret and apply the results of this study, the inherent relativity of factors should therefore be accepted and considered.

6.2 Confirmation of empirical results

If the empirical results could not be reconciliated with Scripture, we would be forced to question the results. It will be pointed out however, in developing the final model, how Scriptural and empirical data compliment and support the model.

It is also notable that one of the world's most acclaimed mission statisticians, Patrick Johnstone, made relevant comments in a recent publication – supporting the results of this study. He (1998:193-196) developed certain questions that should be addressed by the local Church in its endeavours to impact the world. He asks the following questions:

- ❑ Is there a clear vision statement on mission?
- ❑ Is the leadership committed to a global vision?
- ❑ Is there a mission structure within the Church?
- ❑ Is mission an integral part of the Church's being?
- ❑ Is there a commitment to regular prayer?
- ❑ Is there a good balance in mission involvement?

These questions refer directly to the CSFs identified. We can therefore state emphatically that Scripture, empirical research and other resources support the crucial importance of the CSFs.

6.3 Integration of research results

This study was based on a threefold research approach:

- ❑ In chapter three a thorough investigation of the Old and New Testament was done to determine if there is a firm scriptural base for mission. We concluded that the Church-on-mission find its missional mandate and reason for existence firmly based on a holistic, contextual interpretation of Scripture.
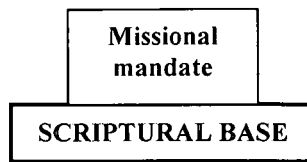
146

Figure 6.5 – Scriptural base (Chapter 3)

❑ In chapter four an in depth study was made of the ecclesiastical implications of this Scriptural mandate. Scripture not only supports the mission mandate, but the whole essence of being Church, its reason for existence is derived from God's word. From this essence, character and being of the Church flow certain identifiable critical elements, called Critical Success Factors. These factors form building blocks for the development of a Biblical paradigm for the Church-on-mission.
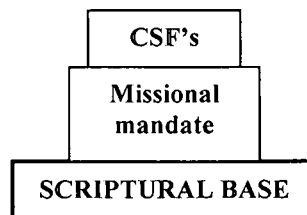

Figure 6.6 – Critical Success Factors derived from Scripture (Chapter 4)

❑ In chapter two the methodology used for the empirical study of Churches known to have a substantial mission impact was discussed. Finally five Churches were selected for the empirical study. They were researched without any reference to the previous results or scriptural expectations. The methodology used, can be described as a zero-base approach. The results were described, tabulated and interpreted in chapter five. Through this empirical study the Scriptural insights were tested and compared with the existing situation in the selected local Churches.
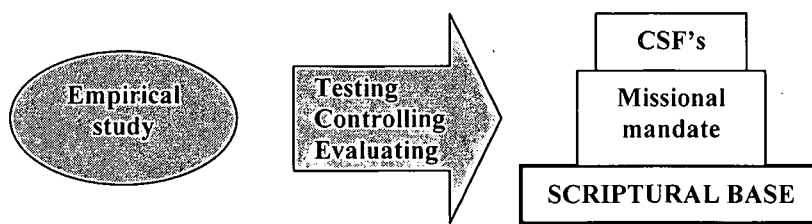
Figure 6.7 – Empirical study testing results of Scriptural insight (Chapter 2 and 5)

Now, in this chapter, the research results can be integrated to build a final model around the identified Critical Success Factors for the Church-on-mission.

6.4 Developing a model of CSFs for the Church-on-mission

The model resulting from this study has three major focus points. God, the cosmos (or world in a narrower sense) and the Church. The triune God is ultimately and sovereignly involved with and in His creation. He does this through His Church, but also in other ways, according to His sovereign will. Because the local Church forms the basis for this study we are concerned with God's working through His Body, the Church, to impact His creation.

The Church is His missionary people, mandated to proclaim the Gospel in a broken cosmic reality.

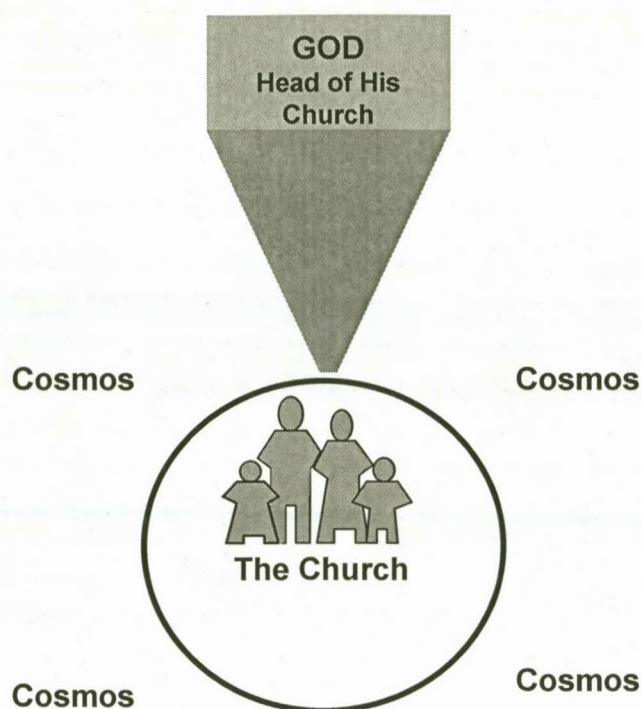**Cross references:**

❑ Paragraph 1.3

❑ Paragraph 3.1.1

148

Figure 6.8 – God, Cosmos and Church

6.4.1 The mission mandate, motive and involvement are firmly based on Scripture (CSF 1)

Throughout Scripture the mission mandate and motive form the very basis for the existence of His missionary people. His covenant people Israel, the New Testament Church and the 21st century Church find meaning and missional reason for existence in God's word.

The Church's holistic, balanced mission responsibility is soundly based on the whole Scripture. This understanding prevents the Church from diluting its responsibility to mere evangelism or limited geographical involvement. A clear understanding and interpretation of Scripture create a missional perspective through which mission and the Church are defined correctly. This forms a Biblically sound base for the mission involvement of the Church – ensuring that it is not caused by secondary motives. Understanding the true Biblical mandate and content of mission allow for continuous, lasting impact in the world – prohibiting event-like, cyclic mission interventions.

This view and insight are brought about through continuous, focused preaching on the subject of mission, trusting that the Holy Spirit will bring about a transformation in the understanding, attitude and actions of the local Church. Through preaching and training Church members are continually sensitised to understand the true being and essence of the Church. True preaching and teaching on the Scriptural base of mission includes emphasis on the *missio Dei* – Church members must understand that mission is ultimately God at work.

Mere cognitive understanding does not thrust the local Church out of an inward focused existence. Preaching and teaching also emphasise the responsibility to be "doers of the word."

Cross references:
- Chapter 3
- Paragraph 1.3
- Paragraph 4.1.1.2
- Paragraph 4.1.2
- Paragraph 4.1.2.1
- Paragraph 4.1.2.3
- Paragraph 4.1.4
- Paragraph 4.2
- Paragraph 4.3.1
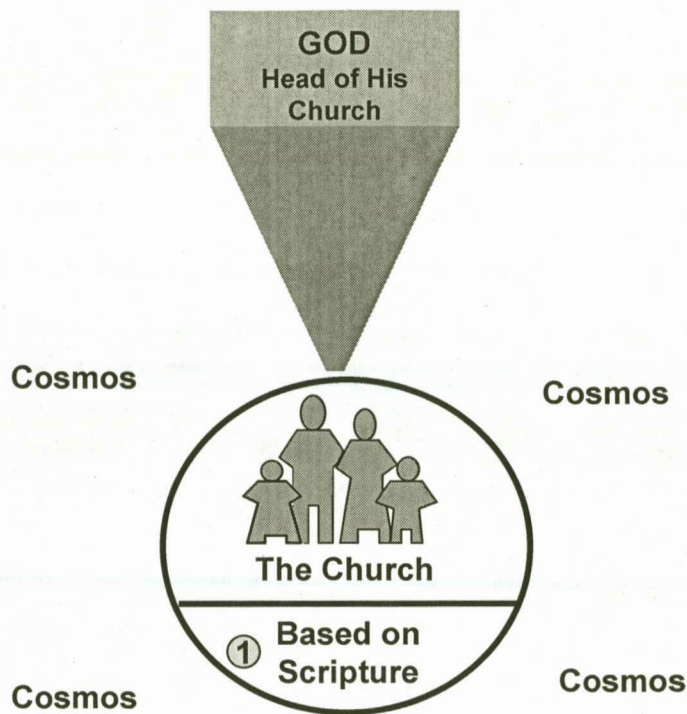- Paragraph 4.3.2
- Paragraph 4.3.4

Figure 6.9 – The Church's mission mandate firmly based on Scripture (CSF 1)

6.4.2 Its missiological character permeates the whole being of the Church (CSF 2)

Missional involvement is not perceived as an "event" in the Church's program. The missional intention of the Church permeates its whole being and finds utterance through its whole existence. Mission involvement is not an exclusive, ad hoc event, taking place through a few dedicated Church members. From the Scriptural foundation the local Church understands and manifests the fact that its missiological character penetrates and saturates the whole essence of being Church.

This entrenched missiological character of the Church influences all ministries and its whole being. If mission is seen as an activity or theological subject to be accommodated it will never penetrate the essence of being Church.

The missiological character of the Church leads to practical impact through all other ministries. This does not imply that a skew view of being Church exists - there is more to

being Church than to be involved with the Great Commission. A balanced understanding of the Churches mission responsibility is determinable in the very character of the local Church.

Cross references:

- Paragraph 1.3.1
- Paragraph 4.1.1
- Paragraph 4.1.1.2
- Paragraph 4.1.1.3
- Paragraph 4.1.4
- Paragraph 4.2
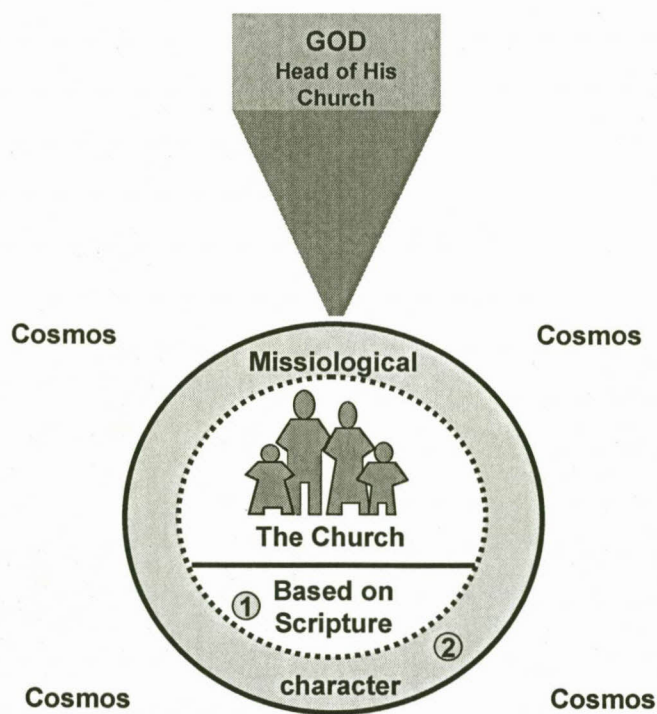- Paragraph 4.3.1
- Paragraph 4.3.2

Figure 6.10 – Missiological character of the Church (CSF 2)

6.4.3 Its Kingdom perspective propels the Church outward; taking the whole Gospel to the whole world (CSF 3)

The Church is a co-partner with God in the process of effecting the Kingdom of God by proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom of light in the midst of the Kingdom of darkness. Throughout the Gospels the central aspect of the teaching of Jesus is that concerning the Kingdom of God. Jesus appeared as the one who proclaimed the Kingdom; all else in his message and ministry serves a function in relation to that proclamation and derives its meaning from it. The Kingdom perspective forms a cornerstone of the Church-on-mission.

The Kingdom perspective prohibits the local Church from reverting to a self-centred, congregational or even denominational perspective. The Church-on-mission understand and appreciates its own unique role within the wider perspective of God's expanding Kingdom and manifests the ability to interpret its responsibility within a broader ecumenical framework. This view enables the local Church to have a broader, deeper and ecumenical insight of the Church. This understanding turns the Church "inside out," realising the implication of the "whole Church" impacting creation. Such a realisation also creates understanding, acceptance and appreciation for the existence, value and role of para-Church organisations when they support the local Church in the execution of its missionary task.

It is clear that lack of this ability is often grounded in a perception of being "threatened" by the rest of the Body of Christ. Lack of ability to work within a Kingdom perspective reflects back to a lack of understanding the one-ness of the Body of Christ. Such an attitude comes into direct opposition with the unity to be presented by the body of Christ (John 17).

Cross references:
- Paragraph 4.1.2.1
- Paragraph 4.1.3
- Paragraph 4.1.3.1
- Paragraph 4.1.3.2
- Paragraph 4.1.3.4
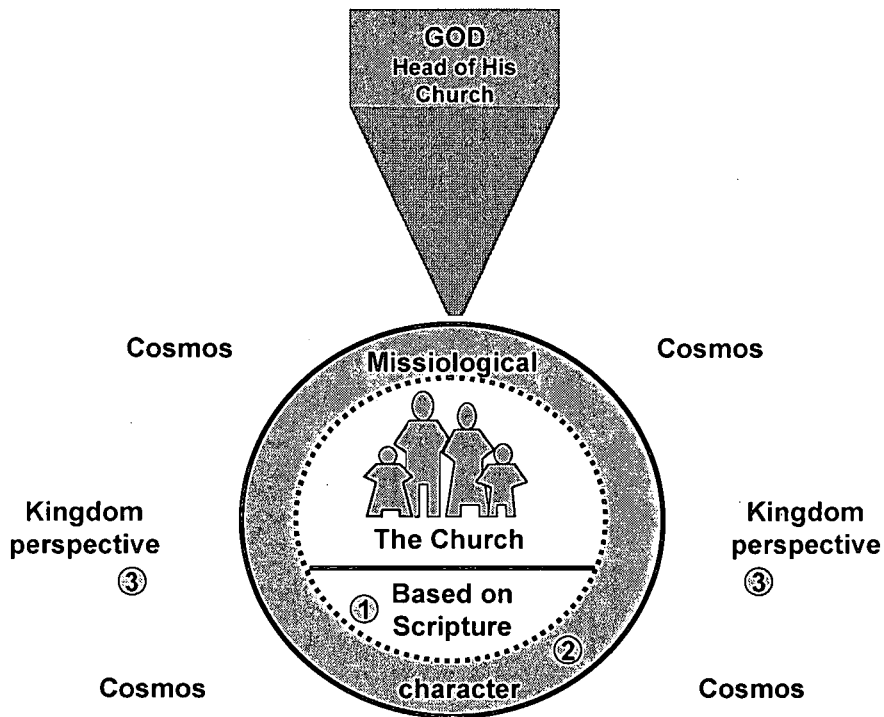- Paragraph 4.1.4
- Paragraph 4.3.1

Figure 6.11 – The Church-on-mission's Kingdom perspective (CSF 3)

6.4.4 Yearning for and working towards growth in God's Kingdom so that every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that He is Lord (CSF 4)

The Church-on-mission has an ethos of proclaiming the Good News and through that they experience how God brings sinners through His reconciliating love into a relationship with Himself. The Church is not content with the *status quo* and cannot be apathetic towards growth - in this way ignoring the essence of God's living Body.

Because the local Church is not geographically confined, Church planting and duplication are on the agenda of the Church-on-mission. The local congregation who stagnates in a "survival" existence has lost the very dynamic substance of vibrant, contextual impact in the world.
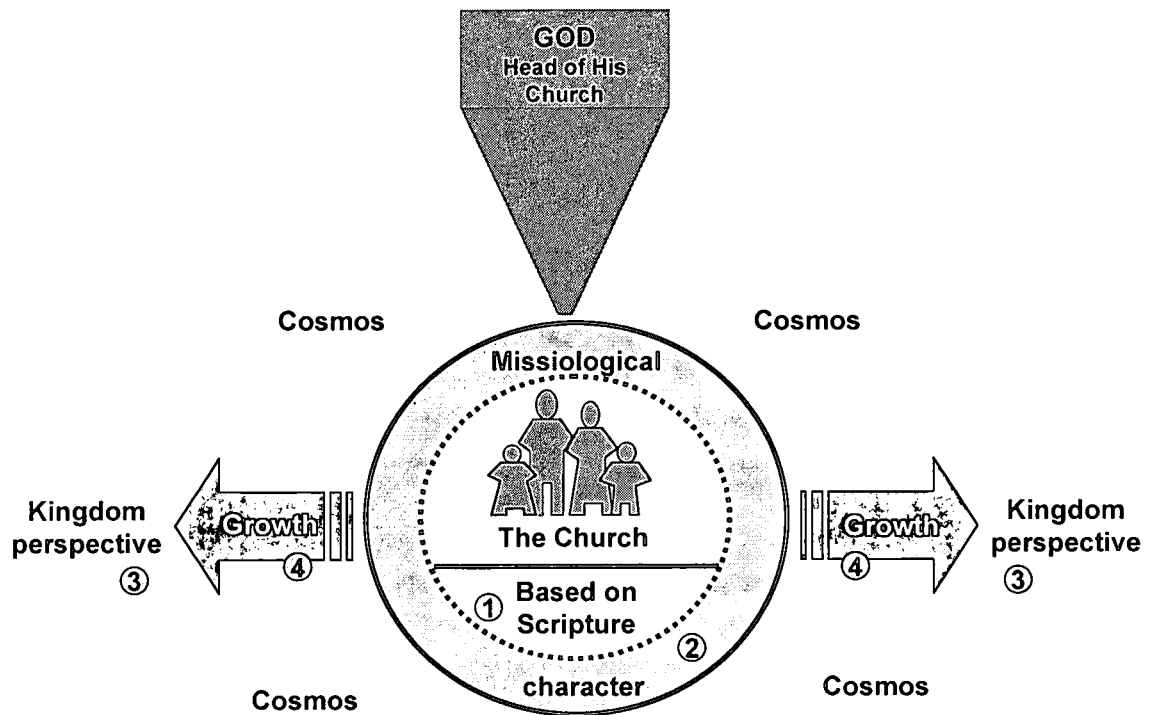
Cross references:

Figure 6.12 – The Church's inherent yearning for growth (CSF 4)

6.4.5 The balanced spirituality of the Church is soundly based on a living relationship with Jesus, the Head of the Church (CSF 5)

The dialectic tension that exists between the "from above" and the "from below" are discussed in chapters 1 and 4. The Church is always becoming what it already is through faith, but it exists in a broken reality. Through God the Son, the Head of His Church, the Church is commissioned to impact the cosmos. The Church (from below) is constantly under obligation to interpret and execute the will of God (from above) to be effectively the Church-on-mission. This obligation implies a balanced and sensitive spirituality through which the Church "seeks the mind and the will of God."

The Church is not just confessing verbally, but is also living out its faith that Jesus, as the Head of His Church, is practically leading, directing and equipping them to effectively and

uniquely impact creation. The missional Church understands, accepts and encounters God's unique calling and purpose.

The local Church accepts the God-given variety of spirituality. This variety, wisely accepted and integrated into Church-life creates the spiritual environment in which the multi faceted blessing of the gifts of the Holy Spirit are optimally utilised to build up the Body and to impact creation. Through this they truly experience that "they receive power" to be His witnesses.

The Church-on-mission believe that God speaks to His Church in relevant, specific ways and reveal the faith to interpret and execute His will. They understand and experience the reality of a living relationship with the Head of the Church – permanently and intently focused on His will. This implies an active prayer life – even if the theological and spiritual nuances of prayer are difficult to understand – the Church-on-mission is praying "without ceasing."

Cross references:
- Paragraph 1.3.1
- Paragraph 3.2
- Paragraph 4.1.3.1
- Paragraph 4.1.3.2
- Paragraph 4.1.3.4
- Paragraph 4.1.4
- Paragraph 4.3.1
- Paragraph 4.3.3
- Paragraph 4.3.5
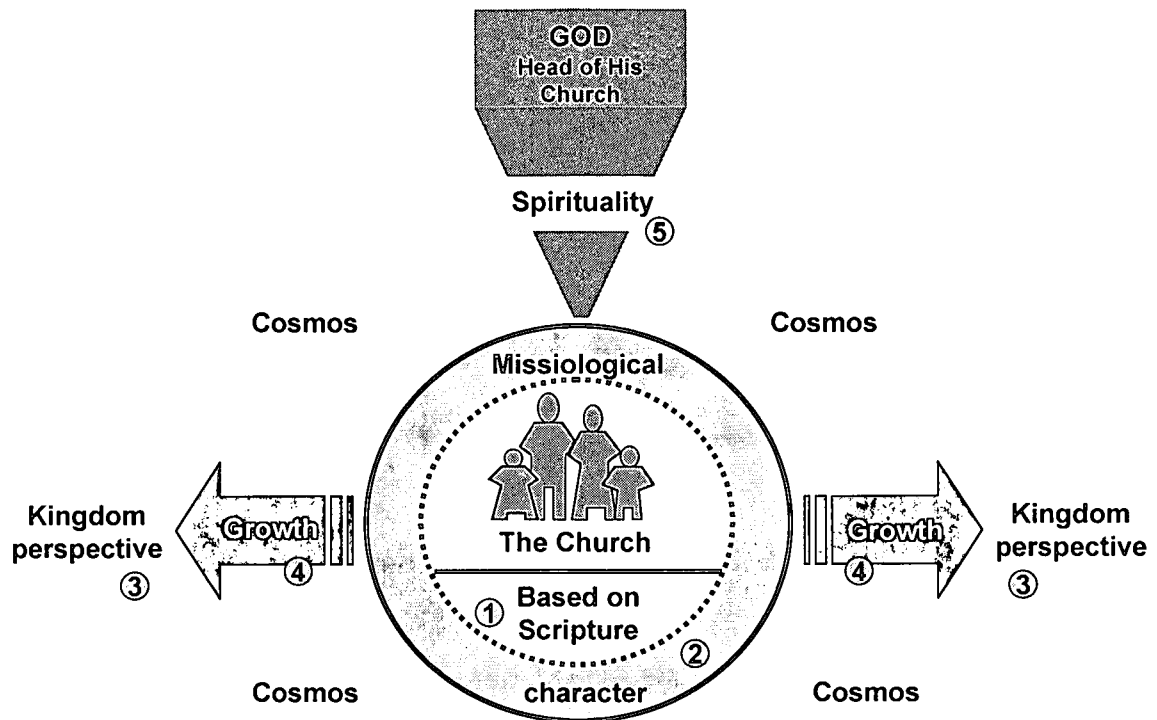- Paragraph 4.3.6
- Paragraph 4.4

Figure 6.13 – Spirituality (CSF 5)

6.4.6 Assertive, visionary and servant leadership enthuses, direct and empower people to effectively invest their gifts and talents to impact creation (CSF 6)

If Church leadership does not understand, accept and drive the mission involvement of the local Church – a noticeable impact is hardly possible. Leadership has the biggest influence on the Church – therefore the continuing Biblical emphasis on the responsibility of the leaders. The impact of leadership by example motivates members to be practically involved in mission. This example encompass a willingness and passion to see the Good News spreading to "the uttermost parts of the earth" and a commitment to personally make a difference.

Leadership creates opportunity and empowers members to impact the world with the Gospel and therefore creates, builds and maintains vision in the Church. They also understand the Biblical perspective of leadership and laity, facilitating dynamic growth and impact through a servant attitude. The management style allows for members to develop their own ministries and to be guided, facilitated and mentored by leadership - accepting that leadership does have a significant influence on member involvement.

157

Cross references:

- Paragraph 4.3.3
- Paragraph 4.3.4
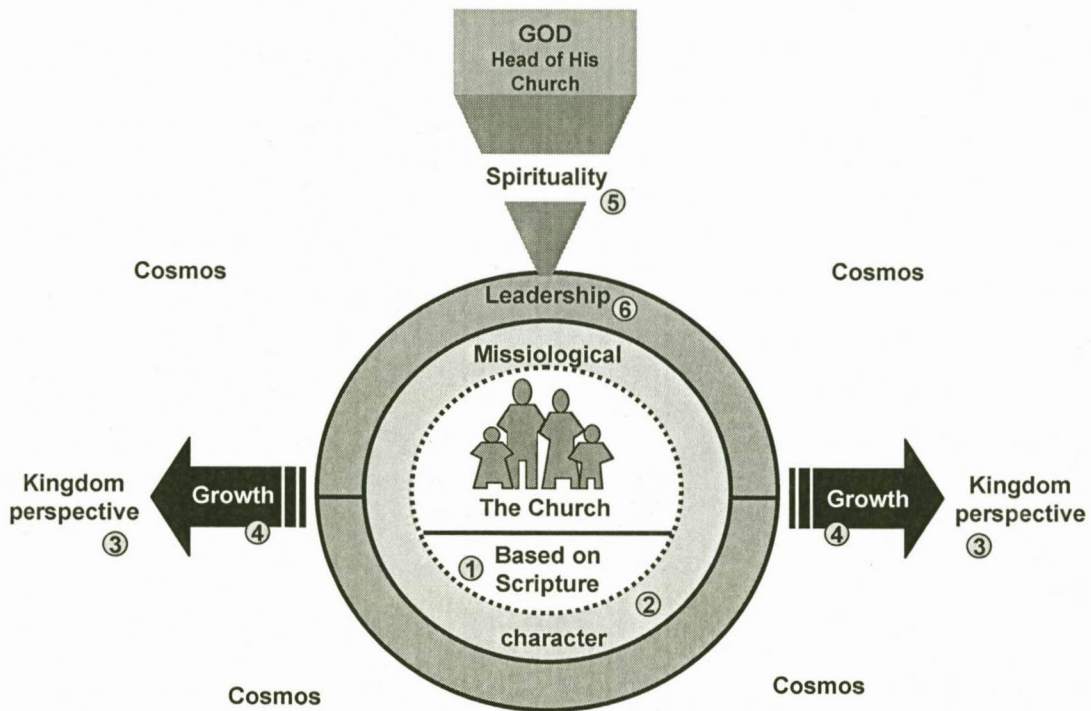- Paragraph 4.3.5
- Paragraph 4.3.6

Figure 6.14 – Leadership (CSF 6)

6.4.7 Enthusiasm, direction and essence is founded in an effectively communicated, God-given vision (CSF 7)

The empirical study emphasises vision as a powerful influencing factor in mission involvement. The vision of the Church-on-mission is credible, understandable as well as effectively and continually communicated. Therefore the vision unites and propels the Church towards fulfilling its impact responsibility – indicating direction and generating dynamic momentum.

Without a well-formulated vision, the Church can loose focus and urgency, in some cases even contact with its reason for existence.

Cross references:

❑ Paragraph 4.1.4
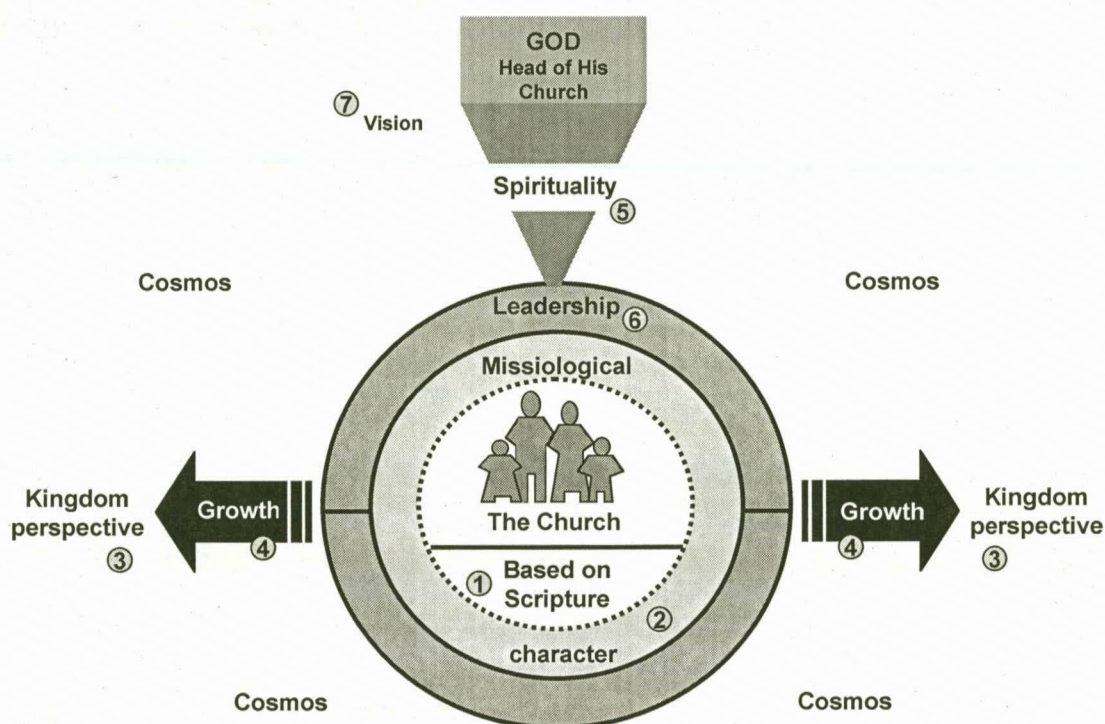
❑ Paragraph 4.3.5

❑ Paragraph 4.3.6

Figure 6.15 – Vision (CSF 7)

6.4.8 Effective, dynamic, strategic and operational management supports and accelerates the missional impact of the Church (CSF 8)

The "from above" perspective finds practical execution where the people of God develop and verbalise mission, strategies, structure and goals. By doing this, the local Church translates the statements of faith about the Church into statements of purpose. This points towards the Church becoming what it is suppose to be - the emerging Church. In this way, Church leadership and management, succeeds in reconciling the "form above" and the "from below"

– interpreting God's sovereign will for His Body through strategic and operational management.

Strategies, structure and goalsetting are part of the very existence of the Church-on-mission. It does appear as if small group structures and the implementation of sending cells for missionaries largely support the missional character of the Church-on-mission. Although structure is not a goal in itself, it is the supporting means to ensure operational effectiveness and efficiency.

Effective strategic and operational management will not lead to missional impact if the people filling the structures are not equipped for and dedicated to their calling. Because structure supports strategy, structure is indicative of the importance of certain strategies in the local Church. The missional character of the local Church should therefore manifest through strategic and operational practices.

Cross references:
- Paragraph 1.3
- Paragraph 1.4.4
- Paragraph 1.4.5
- Paragraph 3.2
- Paragraph 4.1.3.2
- Paragraph 4.1.4
- Paragraph 4.3.3
- Paragraph 4.3.5
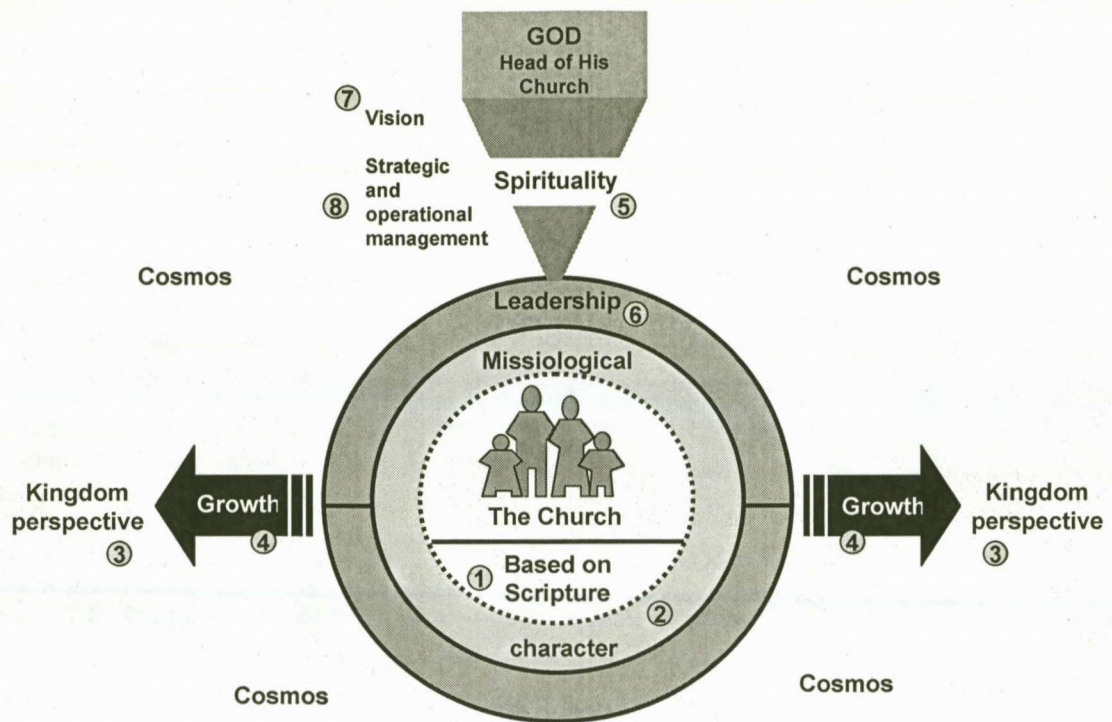- Paragraph 4.3.6
- Paragraph 4.4

Figure 6.16 – Strategic and operational management (CSF 8)

6.4.9 Invest every effort to create, develop and sustain loving and co-working relationships within the Body of Christ (CSF 9)

The relational basis of the Gospel finds meaning through the vertical and horizontal expression of relationships. The Church-on-mission cannot be a "bearer" of the Gospel of love without demonstrating and living the same truth. The Church cannot "deliver" what it does not "posses." Scriptural exhortations accentuating positive relationships underlines the responsibility of Christ-like relationships in the missional Church.

Cross references:

- Paragraph 4.1.1.2
- Paragraph 4.1.1.3
- Paragraph 4.1.2.1
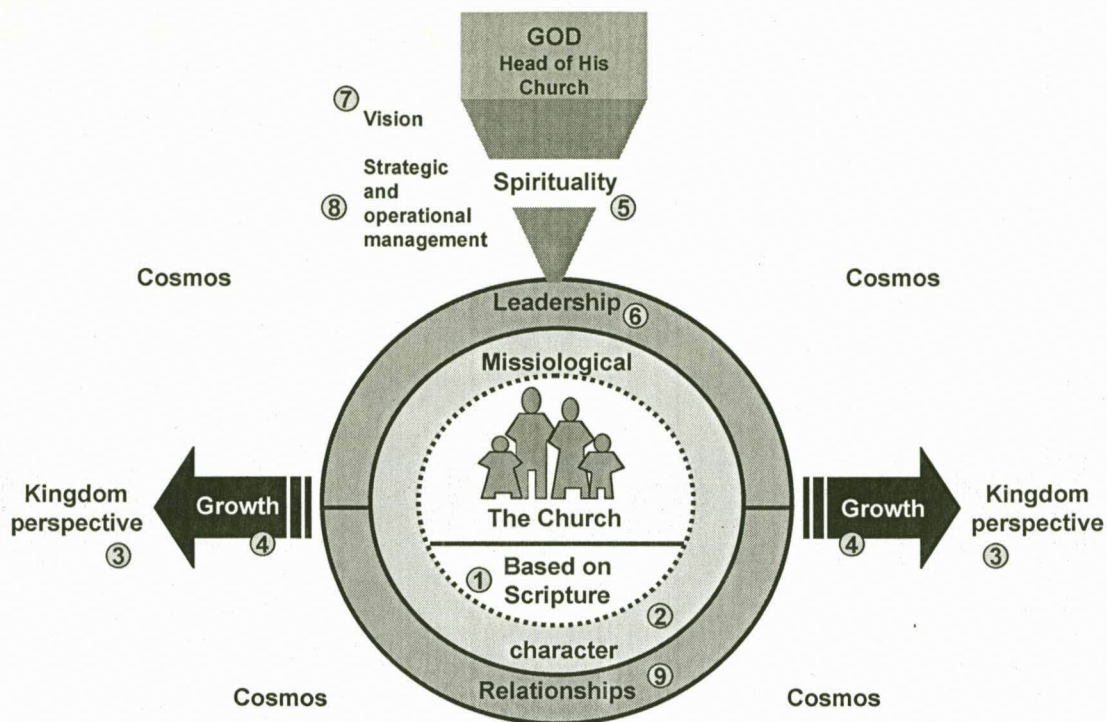- Paragraph 4.3.1.2
- Paragraph 4.3.4

Figure 6.17 – Relationships within the Body of Christ (CSF 9)

6.4.10 Mandate and vision are effectively translated into practical outcomes impacting creation (CSF 10)

In Scripture the Church finds its missiological purpose through *Kerygma, Koinonia, Diakonia* and *Martyria*. These missiological purposes inevitably lead to practical outcomes.

The study of the Gospels also reflects the importance of practical outcomes. If the local Church accepts its Biblical mandate but fails to interpret this mandate in a way to practically impact creation, it looses the ability to be "salt" and "light" in a world desperately in need.

The Church-on-mission is practically involved in living and proclaiming the Good News. This practical involvement manifests through the sacrificial investment of resources. If this CSF does not realise in Church life, there would be no impact in the world. Through its incarnational responsibility the Church demonstrates its sentness in a world desperately in need of a transforming impact.

The Church does initialise, develop and execute innovative ways in which their ability to impact the world is strengthened – faithfully trusting God to lead and guide them in doing this. They demonstrate a character of servanthood – following the example of their Master.

The Church creates opportunity for its members to get involved in mission in various ways. Special attention is given to ensure a broad movement of involvement – accommodating the different interest, social and age groups in the Church. Also implying effective mobilisation through the use of all human senses – to evoke involvement, mission must become "reality" – the Church must create a window through which the world to be impacted, becomes "visible."

Cross references:
- Paragraph 1.2
- Paragraph 1.4.5
- Paragraph 4.1.1.1
- Paragraph 4.1.1.2
- Paragraph 4.1.1.3
- Paragraph 4.1.3.1
- Paragraph 4.1.3.2
- Paragraph 4.1.3.3
- Paragraph 4.1.3.4
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- Paragraph 4.3.1.3
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- Paragraph 4.3.3
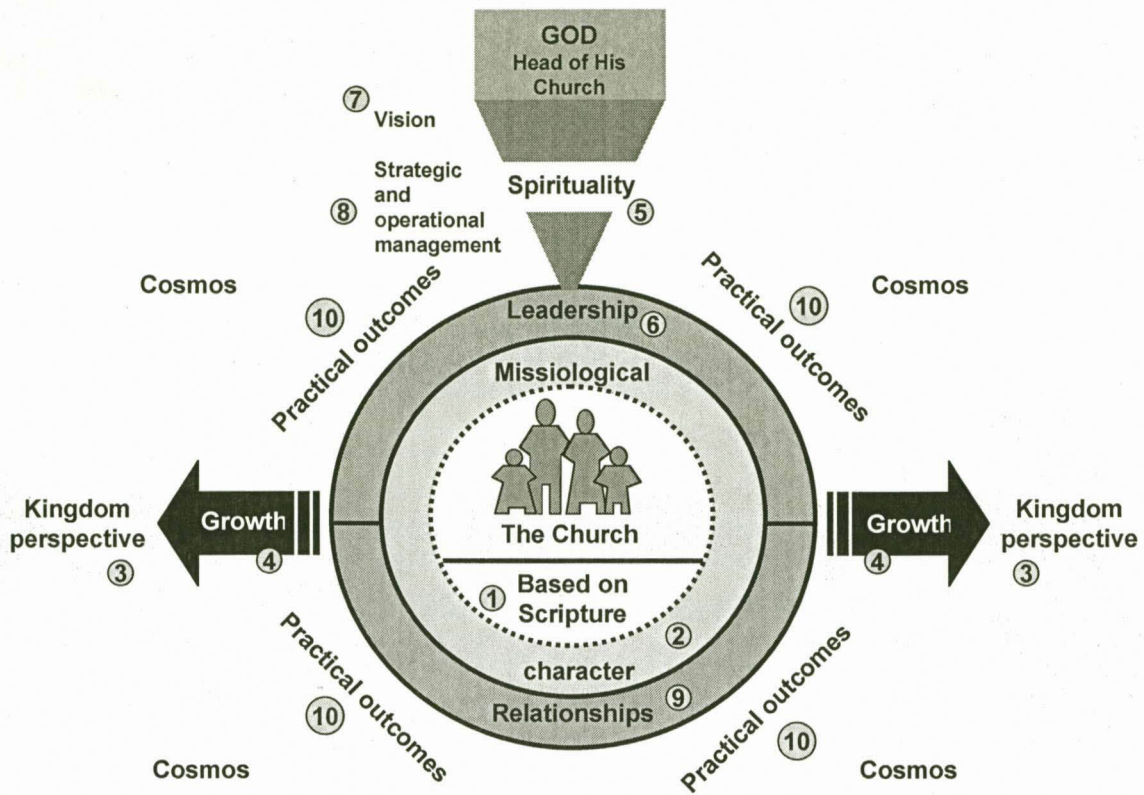- Paragraph 4.3.4
- Paragraph 4.3.5
- Paragraph 4.3.6

Figure 6.18 – The Church-on-mission practically impacting the cosmos (CSF 10)

Chapter 7

CLOSING REMARKS

The March-April 1998 issue of Mission Frontiers focuses on "The Six Spheres of Mission Overseas." The article gives particular attention to a growing trend in mission endeavour: by Congregation-Direct Missions (CDM) - direct involvement of the local congregation. According to Mike Phillips, a board member of the Antioch Network (an association linking CDM Churches), Churches today are simply "not content with just giving money and reading mission updates prepared by people they hardly know." Once they're caught by the vision, the people in the pew want more active involvement. Dr. Ralph Winter, as well, has recognised this "massive trend of initiative at the local, congregational level." We can therefore rightly deduct that there is nothing less than a surge of enthusiasm at the local Church level across the globe.

Rev. Steve Hughey, Director for Mission Partnership and Involvement in the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, sums up the story of their missions program expansion as "the decentralization of global mission," recognising that people today are no longer willing to "just give their money and walk away." Indeed, today's local congregation wants a more active part in world missions (Winter 1998).

Supporting this growing involvement by the local Church, Paul Borthwick accentuates the primary role of the local Church in a recent article by highlighting four truths:

❑ the local Church is primary in world missions because Jesus said it is;

❑ the local Church is primary because the body of Christ is there;

❑ the local Church is primary because it affords us training and care;

❑ the local Church is primary because it is both the beginning and the end of missions (Borthwick 1999)..

With a new acceptance of the local Church's mandate, responsibility and privilege to impact creation, the outcome of this study is very relevant. The results of this study can have a major impact on the holistic, Biblically sound involvement of the local Church in world mission.

Accepting the Scriptural basis for missions; understanding the essence and nature of "His missionary people" the Church and integrating empirical results with that, led to clearly identified Critical Success Factors. A balanced, holistic and soundly interpreted knowledge of these factors can sensitise and equip the local Church to be more effective in bringing the whole Gospel to the whole world.

The result of this analytical study lays the foundation for further research. The specific relationships between the CSFs and mission impact create the opportunity to develop a diagnostic and remedial model for the involvement of the local Church in mission. Although there are some material available on evaluating mission impact, the subject is much more complicated and theologically complex than what is generally accepted. Evaluating and weighing impact can open an interesting debate and should have a direct effect on the local Church and mission – leading to global acceleration of mission involvement.

The mission mandate of the local Church is deeply rooted in Scripture. The growing acceptance of congregations to take up their Godly ordained responsibility leads to acceleration in the expansion of Christianity. A growing sensitivity for the mission responsibility of the local Church is stimulated by this growth. My prayer is that this research result will contribute significantly to transform the missionally uninvolved Churches to become the Church-on-mission.

-oOo-

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2. Interviews

DRC Moreleta Park, Pretoria

Monday, 2nd April 2001

Interview 1

Marius du Plooy – Missionary/Final year Theological student

Interview 2

Hendrik Saayman – Pastor - Missions

Interview 3

Bennie Mostert – Pastor (Tent maker)

Interview 4

Karien Jordaan – Missionary

Interview 5

Jannie de Villiers – Vice Chairman Management Committee

Interview 6

Ben Bonthuys – Chairman Mission Committee

Tuesday, 18th September 2001

Interview 7

Dereck Bartie – Church Manager

DRC Lynnwoodrif, Pretoria

Wednesday, 21st February 2001

Interview 1

Emma Kriel – Church Board

Anita Joubert – Mission committee

Daan vd Linde – Church member

Louise Beukes – Missionary

Gerhard Marx – Director Missions

Duggie de Beer – Mission committee

Annette Hoon – Ministry

Interview 2

Sakkie Redelinghuys – Church Board

Johan Grosskopf – Church Board

Pieter Brink – Missionary

David Ramekosi – Missionary

Interview 3

Annalou Marais – Church Member

Annatjie Smit – Church Member

Interview 4

De Wet de Beer – Missionary / Mission committee

Johan van Schalkwyk – Pastor

Jorrie Potgieter – Pastor

Chris Franken – Pastor

Interview 5

Jacobus Verster – Church Member

Hannes de Villiers – Church Board

Carl Cronje – Church Member

Stefan vd Merwe – Candidate Missionary

Hensie vd Merwe – Candidate Missionary

Adolf Chongo – Church Member

Interview 6

Niel Louw – Church Member

Hannes Dupper – Missionary

Gerda Loedolff – Ministry

AFM Neo Doxa, Witbank

Monday, 17th September 2001

Interview 1

Neels de Klerk – Senior Pastor

Interview 2

W Saunders – Pastor

W Koen – Pastor

C Kruger – Pastor

Interview 3

A Nkabinde – Pastor (newly planted Church)

A Mkhomto - Pastor (newly planted Church)

J Andrew – Ministry homeless people

B Badenhorst – Theological student

C Ackerman – Youth Pastor

J van Schalkwyk – Lecturer, Mission School

Interview 4

M Vermaak – Mission Commission

M de Wet – Mission Commission

Hans vd Merwe – Mission Commission

Hannie vd Merwe – Mission Commission

G Smith – Chairman elder

H de Klerk – Mission Commission

Lewende Woord, Pretoria

Wednesday, 19th September 2001

Interview 1

Lourens de Klerk – Pastor

Stephen Claassens – Pastor evangelisation

Johan de Kock – Pastor

Tommie Prinsloo – Pastor

Ghibow Gerber – Pastor

Arthur Frost – Pastor

Fanie Coetzer – Pastor

Louwrens Bezuidenhout – Pastor Missions

W van Dyk – Pastor

Thursday, 20th September 2001

Interview 2

Blackie Swart – Missionary CCC; Mission Board

Jacques de Bruin – Missionary OM; Mission Board

Ilse Malanot – Mission Board

Interview 3

Konrad Pienaar – Missionary, Russia

Interview 4

Marlize Prinsloo – Missionary

Interview 5

Michelle Kok – Missionary

Interview 6

Nevil Nordon – Senior Pastor

Interview 7

Frieda van Niekerk – Board, Mission Russia

Rita Mare – Coordinator, Sending team; Board, Mission Russia

Interview 8

Danie van Zyl – Cell leader

DRC Bergsig, George

Tuesday, 13th February 2001

Interview 1

Charl du Plessis – Pastor

Interview 2

Anton Louw – Pastor

Hannes Pretorius – Pastor

Benjamin Bemmink – observer (student from the Netherlands)

Interview 3

Arie Coetzee – Church Board

Hester Coetzee – Church Member

Interview 4

Andre Buitendag – Church Board and Mission Consultant

Wednesday, 14th February 2001

Interview 5

Ds Michiel Burger – Missionary (Pastor VGK)

Interview 6

Pieter Kellerman – Chairman, Mission committee

Interview 7

De Mist van Zyl – Church Board

Interview 8

Johan Venter – Catechism

Interview 9

Johan Truter – Church Member

3. Meetings

DRC Bergsig, George

13th February 2001

Planning meeting for yearly Mission Conference.

DRC Bergsig, George

14th February 2001

Church Board – discussion about involvement of Church Members.

-ooOoo-

THE COMMON CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS DETERMINING THE MISSION IMPACT OF THE LOCAL CHURCH - AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

SUMMARY

From research referred to in this study it is clear that a growing missions awareness and involvement is developing across the globe. This statement is supported by the recent publication of growth figures in the Christendom. In apparent contrast, church leaders and Missiologists indicate that a vast number of local churches are not involved in the proclamation of the Gospel in the world.

This situation gives birth to the research problem which is addressed by this study: "What are the common critical success factors enabling churches, involved in mission, to mobilise people for the Kingdom of God?"

The goals of the study therefore are:
- to analyse and identify common critical success factors in congregations who are effectively involved in mission;
- to develop a conceptual model of such factors for the church-on-mission; and,
- to identify specific areas for further research, as a follow-up on this exploratory research.

The research approach can therefore be described as follows:
1. The founding of the Church's missionary task.

Is it Scripturally sound to describe mission as the essential calling of the local church? Can we accept that mission is not just a New Testament phenomenon but that it finds its roots in the whole Scripture? Does the whole Scripture support God's involvement with humankind, or do we find uniquely new attributes of God in the New Testament? Is God exclusively concerned with Israel in the Old Testament?

The study accentuates that God's plan of redemption is already made known early during Old Testament times. God calls Abraham in Genesis 12:3 and consistently promises His blessing in order for Abraham to be a blessing unto the nations – through Abraham all the families on the earth were to be blessed.

It is indicated that the Great Commission is not a surprising, isolated New Testament phenomenon, but that God is truly the God of the Nations! The whole Scripture testifies about His involvement with His creation.

2. The development of a biblical paradigm for the church-on-mission.

   With the mission mandate of the local church firmly based on Scripture this study proceeds to develop a biblical paradigm for the church. Various perspectives are reviewed in this process. Charles van Engen's book, *God's missionary people - Rethinking the purpose of the local church*, is used as essential reference in developing a biblical paradigm for the church-on-mission. A series of other sources are utilised to evaluate Van Engen's views.

3. Empirical research determine the critical success factors in the local church.

   Five churches were selected and are reviewed in the study. Through qualitative research, supported by quantitative data, the critical factors in these churches are isolated and described.

The study concludes by evaluating the empirical research against the created biblical paradigm. Through this evaluation ten critical success factors are integrated in a model supported by the biblical perspective of the missional church.

This research re-affirms the essential commission of the Church. It integrates the biblical being and essence of the local church with those factors detectable in churches impacting creation. Eventually, this study should contribute towards the whole Church taking the whole Gospel to the whole world.

KEY TERMS

1. Mission(s)
2. Church
3. Critical success factor(s)
4. Mobilisation
5. Local Church/congregation
6. Great Commission
7. Impact

THE COMMON CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS DETERMINING THE MISSION IMPACT OF THE LOCAL CHURCH - AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

OPSOMMING

Uit navorsing aangehaal in hierdie studie, blyk dit dat 'n groeiende sendingbewustheid en – betrokkenheid dwarsoor die wêreld ontwikkel. Syfers deur betroubare statistici gepubliseer, bevestig hierdie stelling. In kontras hiermee, wys kerkleiers en Missioloë op die tragiese realiteit dat talle plaaslike gemeentes weinig, of bykans glad nie, by die uitdra van die Evangelie betrokke is nie.

Hierdie situasie gee aanleiding tot die navorsingsvraag wat deur hierdie studie aangespreek word: "Watter kritiese faktore stel sendingbetrokke gemeentes instaat om suksesvol betrokke te wees by die Kerk se sendingtaak in die wêreld?"

Die doelwitte van die studie kan dus as volg beskryf word:
- om gemeenskaplike, kritiese suksesfaktore in gemeentes te identifiseer wat effektief by sending betrokke is;
- om 'n konseptuele model uit hierdie faktore vir die gemeente in sending te ontwikkel; en
- om spesifieke areas, as opvolg tot hierdie verkennende studie, vir verdere navorsing te identifiseer.

Die benadering wat gevolg is, lei tot drie navorsingsmomente:
1. Die fundering van die Kerk se sendingtaak.

   Kan die sendingopdrag as die Kerk se wesensopdrag bestempel word? Is die sendingopdrag 'n Nuwe Testamentiese fenomeen? Is die klassieke Nuwe Testamentiese fundering die kerk se enigste mandaat vir 'n holistiese sendingbenadering? Het die sendingopdrag 'n Nuwe Testamentiese geboorte? Vertoon God 'n ongekende fokus op die nasies van die wêreld, terwyl Hy tevore eksklusief met die volk Israel bemoeienis gemaak het?

   Die studie toon aan dat God se versoeningsplan vir die wêreld reeds vroeg in die Ou Testament gestalte kry wanneer Abraham God se opdrag en beloftes aanhoor. God roep Abraham in Genesis 12:3 en gee herhaaldelik aan hom die belofte van seën – maar, met die bedoeling dat, deur hom, al die families op aarde geseën sal word.

Daar word aangetoon dat die sendingopdrag dus nie 'n onverwagse, geïsoleerde, Nuwe Testamentiese fenomeen is nie, maar dat God waarlik die God van die Nasies is! Die hele Skrif getuig van Sy bemoeienis met Sy hele skepping.

2. Die ontwikkeling van 'n bybelse sendingparadigma vir die plaaslike gemeente.

Met die sendingmandaat van die plaaslike gemeente onwrikbaar in die hele Skrif gesetel, word daar voortgegaan om vanuit hierdie perspektief 'n bybelgefundeerde sendingparadigma vir die gemeente te ontwikkel. Verskeie perspektiewe word in die proses beoordeel. Die werk van Charles van Engen, *God's missionary people - Rethinking the purpose of the local church*, word in die ontwikkeling van die bybelse sendingparadigma as kernverwysing gebruik. 'n Omvattende reeks ander bronne word gebruik om, in hierdie ontwikkelingsproses, met Van Engen in gesprek te tree.

3. Empiriese navorsing bepaal die kritiese suksesfaktore in gemeentes.

'n Kritieke faset van die navorsing behels die identifisering van vyf sendingbetrokke gemeentes. Deur omvattende kwalitatiewe navorsing, gerugsteun deur kwantitatiewe data, word die gemeenskaplike sleutelfaktore wat hierdie gemeentes onderskei, geïdentifiseer en beskryf.

Die studie word afgerond deur die evaluering van die empiriese navorsing teen die bybelse sendingparadigma. Hierdie beoordeling gee vervolgens aanleiding tot die ontwikkeling van 'n model waarin tien gemeenskaplike, kritiese suksesfaktore geïntegreer word.

Hierdie navorsing herbevestig die wesensopdrag van die Kerk. Dit toon aan dat sendingbetrokke gemeentes duidelik waarneembare karakteristieke – sleutel suksesfaktore vertoon. Dit gaan verder voort om hierdie faktore te belyn met die Skriftuurlike uitgangspunt en wese van die sendingtaak. Op hierdie wyse poog die studie om by te dra tot die uitdra van die hele Evangelie deur die hele Kerk na die hele wêreld.