

a community called ...

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ABSTRACT

Different churches flourish in different environments. The main question of this study is what church plants will grow and flourish in Swedish soil. The study focuses on the qualities of the suitable plant and not on how to plant it.

The spiritual soil and climate in Sweden is different from that in the US. Secularization has gone so far that people have started to talk about the “theophobia” of the Swedish people. What kind of church plant will be able to reach ordinary, secularized, unchurched Swedes?

Through a multiple case study that examines three churches planted between 1992 and 1996, the study tries to answer that question. A comprehensive review of literature provided the framework for the study. It also surfaced a check-list of eighteen standard church planting principles. The study investigated the extent to which these standard principles were present in the case study churches and to what extent they were manifested in an indigenous way in these churches.

The final objective of this study was to develop an indigenous model for new Methodist Churches in Sweden based on the principles discovered in the review of literature, the employment of these principles revealed in the case study, and the historic and contemporary challenge facing Methodism in Sweden.

Therefore, the last chapter proposes a model featuring ten important characteristics that should mark new Methodist churches in Sweden which would be capable of reaching unchurched, secular people. These distinctives include: (1) a growth-oriented, Wesleyan theology, (2) inspiring worship, (3) fervent spirituality, (4) visionary leadership, (5) gift based ministry, (6) relational life and witness, (7) authentic Christian living, (8) cell/celebration church structures, (9) cultural relevance, (10) and a seeker-targeting approach.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

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A MODEL FOR NEW METHODIST CHURCHES

presented by

Peter Svanberg

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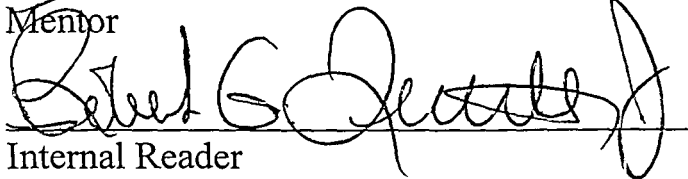
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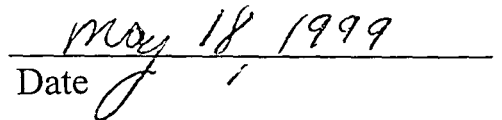
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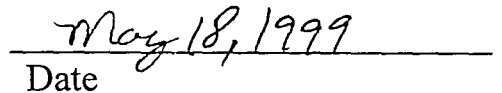


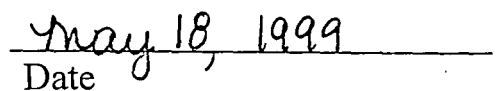
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CHURCH PLANTING IN SWEDEN IN THE 21ST CENTURY:
A MODEL FOR NEW METHODIST CHURCHES

A Dissertation
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the Faculty of
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In Partial Fulfillment
on the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Peter Svanberg

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To
Eva-Lena,
my beloved wife, best friend, and partner in ministry,
and to
Erik and Rebecka,
my joy and pride in life.
I love You.

CHAPTER 1

Overview of the Study

This chapter gives an overview of the study. It provides a background to and an understanding of the problem and states the purpose and methodology of the study.

Introduction

I love growing roses. If possible I would grow roses in every corner of my garden. The climate in Sweden and the location of my garden do not allow that. The part of the garden that is located north of my house is not suitable for roses. The house and some huge birches give too much shadow and roses would not survive there. That part of the garden, however, is perfect for rhododendrons. It is the same way with churches. Different churches grow and flourish in different places.

For as long as I can remember in my pastoral ministry, I have had a longing to see churches grow, new people come to Christ, and new churches started. I have seen new movements come to Sweden, plant new churches, attract people, grow, and do church in new and fresh ways. Often I have felt the frustration over the small possibilities I have seen within my own church to do what I always have longed to do. At times I have been tempted to leave my church to start over again in a new movement and ride on the momentum of newness and freshness. But I am a Methodist, born by Methodists. My children are fourth generation Methodists on their father's side and fifth generation on their mother's. It is through the Methodist church God has shown me his extravagant love. There I gave my life to him, there he called me to ministry, there I met my wonderful wife, there. . . .

The year in the Beeson program at Asbury Theological Seminary rekindled my confidence in the possibilities of Methodism once again becoming an aggressive multiplying church planting movement. I met colleagues with a burning passion for church planting. I saw thriving, cutting edge Methodist churches that reach the unchurched in new and exciting ways. I met men and women of faith with a burning desire to seek and save the lost. The year in Wilmore, Kentucky, gave my wife and me a renewed vision for reaching the unchurched and building a church that reaches the unchurched and glorifies God.

Theological Introduction

Since the first day of Pentecost the church has been God's main instrument for advancing his kingdom and proclaiming the gospel of salvation to humankind. Acts of the Apostles tells the fascinating story about how a group of petrified men hiding from the Roman authorities empowered by the Spirit went out and literally turned the world upside down (or maybe turned it right again). The immediate result of their witness was the growth of the church. New churches came into existence in area after area and in town after town. Even though the Bible does not mention church planting explicitly, that is what happened. And ever since, the spreading of the gospel is intimately connected to the formation of new churches.

Acts also gives us the narration of Paul's travels in Asia Minor and in Europe. Wherever he went people turned to Jesus and as a result new churches came into being. It is interesting to follow his first journey to Europe recorded in Acts 16-18. Paul came to Philippi and two different churches were born. He went on to Thessalolinca and later to

Berea. He came to Athens and eventually he ended up in Corinth. In all these places people became Christians and started to meet together as the church of Jesus Christ.

The point is that it is impossible to extend the gospel to new groups of people without also starting new churches. Paul's experience in Corinth is good example of that. He started his preaching ministry in the synagogue but the religious and cultural patterns of the synagogue made it impossible for it to embrace all who wanted to hear the gospel. Paul did the only thing possible, he moved next door and continued his ministry in Titus Justus' house.

In our days new churches are needed in order to reaching secular unchurched people as much as it was imperative for Paul to leave the synagogue in order to be able to proclaim the gospel in a way that non-synagogue-goers could understand. Ever since that first era of Christendom new churches have taken the gospel to new groups of people, to new countries, and to new continents. Among the many movements that have been a part of that great task of advancing the kingdom to all creatures we also find the people called Methodists.

Historical Review of Swedish Methodism

In order to understand the importance for the Methodist Church in Sweden to once again become a church planting movement the developmet of Methodism in Sweden has to be considered.

Influences From British Methodism

The contacts between Sweden and the Wesleyan movement go back to the eighteenth century. John Wesley had contacts with several Swedish Lutheran priests.

The most prominent of them was Carl Magnus Wrangel, with whom Wesley developed a close and lasting friendship (Hagen 16). Wrangel had for some years supervised the Swedish Lutheran Churches in America. In America he also met with many Methodists and in a meeting with Wesley, Wrangel tried to make him aware of the spiritual condition of people in the colonies. Wesley wrote about their meeting in Bristol on October 14, 1768:

I dined with Dr. Wrangel, one of the King of Sweden's Chaplains, who has spent several years in Pennsylvania. His heart seemed to be greatly united to the American Christians; and he strongly pleaded for our sending some of our Preachers to help them, multitudes of whom are as sheep without a shepherd. (Wesley, Journal III 346)

The friendship between Wesley and Wrangel inspired Wrangel to found in 1771 the Society called the "Pro Fide et Christianismo." This society is still in existence. It is quite interesting to note that Wesley was elected a corresponding member of the society (Hagen 17).

The first Methodist work in Sweden started in 1826. In the early years of industrialism in Sweden many workers and engineers from England settled around Stockholm and Gothenburg. Samuel Owen, a steam-engine engineer, settled in Stockholm in 1806 in order to build steam engines for the growing Swedish industry. He was the first steamship builder in Sweden. He also was a Methodist. In 1826 he managed to convince the Wesleyan Church in Britain to send a preacher to Sweden to care for the souls of the English speaking people in the Stockholm area. The first preacher stayed only for three years. In 1830, George Scott arrived. He soon established himself with his evangelical preaching. In 1840, a church was built, called the English

Church. Scott was not satisfied just to serve the English speaking population in Sweden. Challenged by the religious and moral decadence, he started to preach in Swedish. Together with some of the most prominent reformers of that time, he started a movement for temperance against the widespread and devastating drinking customs among the Swedish people, regardless of class. A Methodist congregation was formed; but according to Swedish law such a congregation outside the State Church was illegal. Scott was forced to dismiss the congregation after only two weeks of existence.

This, the first free church congregation in Sweden, came to have a great impact on the further development on the religious scene. In the group of followers Scott had gathered we can find C. O. Rosenius, the founder of the “Evangeliska Fosterlandsstiftelsen” (The Swedish Evangelical Free Church), and F. O. Nilsson and Anders Wiberg, who became pioneers for the Baptist movement in Sweden. Scott’s impact was growing, and that offended many conservative Lutherans as well as the liberal press. His enemies spread unfavorable propaganda, and threats from the hostile crowds caused him to leave Sweden in 1842 (Hagen 40).

A New Beginning For Methodism in Sweden

Great numbers of Scandinavian emigrants were touched by the ministry of the Bethel Ship and its founder Olof Gustaf Hedstrom during the years 1845-1875. As a result some returned to their home regions and preached the gospel of a “full, free and present salvation.”

“Betelskeppet John Wesley” i New Yorks hamn kunde torhända kallas den scandinaviska metodismens vagga. Faktum är att sjömän och emigranter, som där blivit omvända till Gud av glödande nitalskan och omsorg om vänners och

fränders eviga välfärd vände tillbaka för att “mana dem att undfly den tillkommande vreden”. (Hurtig 16)¹

The Bethel Ship was an old condemned brigg which was transformed into a seamen's mission.

The first Methodist² classes were organized in Visby, on the island of Gotland, October 11, 1866, with twenty-three members. Later a Methodist Church was organized. In Stockholm a revival broke out, which resulted in the organization of the first Methodist Episcopal congregation in Sweden, January 8, 1868. The first annual conference was held in Uppsala in 1876.

The period between 1876 and 1895 was a time of great growth for Swedish Methodism. Many outbreaks of revival were reported. The fact is that most Swedish Methodist congregations have their origin in this period. Another group of congregations can be dated to the first twenty-five years in this century. Only a few congregations are younger than that. In 1895 the total membership, including members on probation, was 16,397 (Hurtig 34).

The first youth organizations started in 1892 in Gothenburg, Örebro, and Stockholm. A theological seminary started in Örebro in 1874. It moved to Stockholm in 1886, to Uppsala in 1883 (Hurtig 35).

In 1896, a Society for Home Mission was founded. The target for its work was

¹ “The Bethel ship John Wesley” may be called the origin of Scandinavian Methodism. The fact is that seamen and emigrants who were converted to God there, by glowing zeal and care for friends' and relatives' eternal welfare turned back (to Scandinavia) to “urge them to flee from the coming wrath.”

² This time Methodist refers to the American branch of Methodism (the Methodist-Episcopal Church).

primarily the fast growing towns in the northern part of Sweden (Hurtig 47). During its first twenty-five years of existence, the Society supported the work in more than forty places. Later this independent society was integrated into the church organization as a department for home mission.

The beginning of the 1920s was in many ways a pivotal period for Swedish Methodism. The first Scandinavian bishop was elected. The old pioneers of early Swedish Methodism were all gone. The seminary moved in 1923 to Gothenburg. The Methodist Church in Sweden reached its peak membership number of 17,000 members in 1920 (Hurtig 64). The decline between 1920 and 1945 was mainly due to people leaving the church for other denominations. The Pentecostal movement was growing rapidly during this period and the spiritual atmosphere was turbulent. Since 1945, the yearly number of new members received is less than the number of deceased.

The bishops of the Methodist Church in Northern Europe have since 1946 been Scandinavians. During the 1950s and 60s many congregations built new facilities. This was a trend which quenched the vitality of many congregations. The new church buildings, in many cases with attached apartment blocks, caused severe economic problems for the congregations, and most of their energy was used to get the budget balanced. The decline of membership has continued and even accelerated in recent years.

In the early 1970s, the Methodist Church was engaged in trilateral talks with the Swedish Covenant Church and the Baptist Church about a church union. These talks did not result in anything.

According to Metodistkyrkan i Sverige 100 år, the most recently planted Methodist churches in Sweden are (1) Märsta, a suburb to Stockholm, in 1923, (2) Emmaboda, in 1926, and (3) Mölndal, in 1928. In 1965, the Methodist Church was involved in a multi-denominational church plant in Bollmora, a suburb south of Stockholm. Work among immigrants, mainly from Pakistan, resulted in organizing a new church outside Stockholm in December, 1996. A small international Methodist congregation was organized in Lund in December, 1998.

Table 1

The Methodist Church in Sweden, Membership.

1917	1937	1957	1977	1997
15,608	13,165	9,523	6,003	3,588

The Methodist Church in Sweden has a problem reaching unchurched people and attracting the young. A recent survey showed that out of 3,588 members in full membership 1997, 144 were born in 1970 or later; only 4 percent of the members are under 28 years of age.

Understanding the Problem

The Methodist Church in Sweden has a history of decline for the last seventy-five years. Many local churches have been closed and their buildings sold. All mainline

denominations in Sweden are declining. The Methodist Church in Sweden has never been a large denomination, and therefore the decline has affected it more than other larger denominations. The church peaked in membership around 1920 with about 17,000 members; today it has about 3600 members and 60 local churches. This decline has affected the Methodist self-esteem severely. Instead of developing an aggressive strategy for outreach, the focus has been on trying to help dying churches hang in just a little longer. During the period 1928 -1996, the Methodist Church in Sweden did not plant any new local churches. Some small churches have merged with other congregations from other denominations and formed new ecumenical congregations, but these churches are not new church plants. In December, 1996, the work among Urdu-speaking immigrants in a Stockholm suburb resulted in the forming of a new Methodist congregation with twenty-five adults and fifteen children. The members of this church mainly originate from Pakistan and their worship language is Urdu. An international United Methodist Church was formed in Lund, December 5, 1998. It is led by an American UM minister.

During the last thirty years many winds of renewal have been blowing over our country. The Jesus people and subsequent to them the Charismatic renewal were quite accepted. But they did not make much of a lasting impact on the religious life in Sweden due to the absence of new church plants. Some communities were formed but they did not last. In recent years two movements have appeared in Sweden with the intention of planting new churches. In the 1980s the Faith movement³ came and planted new

³ This movement is mainly connected to the teaching of Kenneth Hagain and his Rhema Bible School in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

churches. Most Swedish Free churches considered some of their teaching too extreme, and the issue of church planting became contaminated by this movement and their overly aggressive style. As a result of their aggressive presence as church planters, anyone planting a new church in the 1980s and early 90s was considered connected with the Faith movement.

During the last five years things have changed. One reason for the more positive climate for church planting is the influence of John Wimber and the Vineyard. Today the Vineyard has established about ten new church plants, but without the same bad reputation the Faith movement had. In addition to this, some denominations have realized that church planting is an excellent tool for reaching new people and they have decided to start planting new churches.

In October 1996 three "Baptist" denominations merged to form a new denomination, Nybygget-kristen samverkan. One focus of this new denomination is to plant new churches. Their vision is to plant 75 new churches by the year 2010. This is an exciting development considering the low value church planting had just five years ago.

Many of the newly planted churches in Sweden are clones of American patterns, especially the Faith churches and the Vineyard churches. Included in these patterns are some assumptions and beliefs which might best be referred to as American civil religion. My concern is to find a model for new Methodist church plants reaching out to secular unchurched people in a way that is culturally relevant and biblically true.

Context of the Study

Sweden has an area of 174,000 square miles--similar to California--and a population of 8.85 million. Half the land surface is covered with forest. Less than 10 percent is farmland. Nearly 100,000 lakes dot the countryside, which is relatively flat. Stockholm, the capitol, is almost on the same latitude as Anchorage, Alaska. The average temperature in Stockholm is about sixty-four degrees in July. Eighty-five percent of the population live in the southern part of the country. Life expectancy is high--about 75.5 years for men and 80.8 years for women. Sweden has a low birth rate. Over 40 percent of the population growth is due to immigration, mainly from the other Scandinavian countries but also from elsewhere in the world.

Sweden has had a fairly rapid population growth since the beginning of the 1960s. In 1960 Sweden had a population of 7.5 million. Thirty-five years later the population had grown to 8.85 million. The prognosis for the future is that the population will continue to grow but not in the same pace as in recent years. The population prognosis for 2005 is 9.0 million and in the beginning of the 2020s the population will reach 9.5 million. Today Sweden is in a period in which the percentage of old-age pensioners is on decline. This decline will continue until the Swedish "Boomers" born during the 1940s will start turning sixty-five.

A characteristic of our time is that the formation of unmarried couples and separations have become more common. Most people today live a part of their lives in couple relationships. About 85 percent of all women have children. Half of them have two children. Twenty-five percent have three or more children. The typical Swedish

family has two children. Separation and divorce have become more common. This means that many people live alone for a period of their middle age and that more and more people spend some time during their lives in a cohabitation relationship. About 20-25 percent of all seventeen-year-olds have experienced a separation between their parents and 5-10 percent have never lived with both their parents (SCB).

Sweden is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary form of government. The parliament consists of one chamber with 349 seats. Currently seven parties are seated in the parliament. The Social Democratic Party has held power alone or in coalition during the periods 1932-1976, 1982-1991, and is the ruling party today. During the periods of 1976-1982 and 1991-1994 non-socialist parties were in government.

About 4.3 million people are in the labor force. This high figure, 50 percent of the population, is due to the fact that 75 percent of all women age sixteen to sixty-four are gainfully employed. Up to the end of the 1980s the unemployment rate was low by an international standard. However, due to the recession that began in 1990, in December, 1996, the unemployment rate was 8.7 percent.

People in Sweden are not as mobile as Americans. They often stay where they were born. If they move to a bigger city to study, they very often try to go back to the area where they came from originally. This lack of migration, in comparison with America, is one of the major reasons for the absence of rapidly growing developing areas. Swedish people have a higher faithfulness toward institutions, organizations, and place of origin. This also impacts the religious scene. People seldom change denominations or shop around to find the church that best meets their needs.

Using the American Generational labels and time spans the numbers look like

this:

- G.I. Generation <1929 2.1 million
- Silent Generation 1930-1945 0.9 million
- Baby Boomers 1946-1964 2.4 million
- Baby Busters 1965-1976 1.7 million
- Echo Boomers 1977> 1.7 million

The two largest age groups in the population pyramid are those born during the 1940s and the 1960s.

It is interesting to notice in the survey shown in Tro och värderingar i 90-talets Sverige that more Busters than Boomers say they believe in a personal God, 14 percent compared with 12 percent. Another observation is that the Busters' beliefs are more polarized. Their figures for atheists are the highest in the survey. In addition to this the figures for believers and seekers have decreased from 56 percent for the age group fifty plus to 42 percent for the Busters.

Ninety percent of the Swedish population are nominal members of the Church of Sweden. Since 1520, Sweden has been a Lutheran country with a national state church. Not until the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century were Jews, Reformed, and Catholics allowed to exercise their beliefs. Of great importance to the religious development of the eighteenth century was the emerging Pietism, which stressed the freedom of the individual over against the established church.

In the middle of the nineteenth century many new Christian movements emerged. Some of these were renewal movements within the Lutheran church. It was also during

this time that the Baptist and Methodist revivals spread throughout the country. The Pentecostal movement came to Sweden in the beginning of the twentieth century.

Up to the year 1858, it was illegal to have an ecclessiola without a Lutheran priest presiding. After 1860, Swedish citizens could leave the state church, but only if they transferred their membership to another evangelical church. In 1868, the Methodist Church was the first denomination to be authorized to perform legally valid weddings. Not until 1951 did it become possible for people to be without a church membership.

Since the 1920s, the mainline churches have declined. The Pentecostal movement grew rapidly during its first fifty years but now their numbers have plateaued. Today the Christian map consists of three parts. The first part consists of the Church of Sweden and the Swedish Evangelical Free Church (EFS). The Church of Sweden had a total annual attendance of 7.8 million in 1994 (SCB). The figure for 1980 was 10.1 million in total annual attendance (SCB). This means an average attendance of 150,000 per Sunday in 1994. EFS has a membership of about 30,000 and is a renewal movement within the Church of Sweden.

The second part is the traditional Free Churches and Evangelical Churches.⁴ They had a membership of 237,710 in 1997 (Sveriges Frikyrkosamråd Årsbok). The third part is the Catholic, Orthodox and Eastern Churches. These churches are mainly immigrant churches and they had 259,655 members in 1997 (SST Årsbok 1998).

⁴ The Salvation Army, The Methodist Church of Sweden, The Holiness Union Church, The Pentecostal Movement, The Seventh Day Adventists, The Swedish Alliance Mission, The Swedish Baptists, The Swedish Covenant Church, The Orebro Mission, The Vineyard Churches and the Word of Life churches.

According to an article in Nerikes Allehanda, only 5 percent of the Swedish population regularly go to church. Fifteen percent claim that they believe in God and another 35 percent say that they think there is an higher power somewhere (Bergensten). Despite these depressing figures, people are open to talk about spiritual things. “Livsåskådning är ‘inne’, mystiken fascinerar folk och man ser ofta ett kosmiskt sammanhang utan tydliga gränser⁵” (Bergensten). It is appropriate to say that people in Sweden are interested in spiritual or religious things but that the church in the way it traditionally has worked does not have the ability to attract the seekers. For many Swedish seekers the church is a spent force.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to discover usable principles for reaching secular, unchurched people in Sweden through planting new churches, in order to develop an indigenous model for new Methodist church developments.

The study used a dual approach to accomplish this. The review of literature provided the theoretical frame of reference. The second part of the study, the field research of three new planted churches in Sweden provided evidence for the usability of the principles discovered.

Research Questions

Research Question #1: Which new church plants in Sweden will best serve for collecting the field data needed for this project?

⁵ “The issue of ‘view of life’ is ‘in,’ mysticism fascinates people and people often see a cosmic context without specific borders.”

Research Question #2: To what extent do the standard principles for church planting match the principles found in the field research.

Research Question #3: What additional principles are discovered by the field research.

Research Question #4: What indigenous manifestations of the standard church planting principles and the additional church planting principles can be identified in the churches studied?

Research Question #5: What model emerges for planting new Methodist churches in Sweden based on (a) the principles discovered in the review of literature and (b) the indigenous employment of these principles revealed in the case study, and (c) the historic identity and contemporary challenge of Methodism in Sweden?

Definition of Terms

The following terms need to be defined:

- *Church planting* and *church development* are used synonymously.
- *Indigenous* is a term which is used in various ways. In this study it will be used according to Dr. Darrell Whiteman's definition. Indigenous is "the way in which indigenes perceive and identify particular cultural elements introduced into their society. If they perceive them as their own, and identify them as 'own custom' then these elements have become internalized into the culture. That is, they have become

indigenous despite their origin” (Melanesians 375). The reason this definition is chosen is that the field research will partly deal with “cultural elements introduced” into the Swedish society and how these elements have become internalized.

- A *Model* is a holistic pattern or design consisting of principles and the approach to utilizing those principles fitted together.
- *Principles* are basic qualities or laws of healthy growth, the application of which is fundamental for every form of church development.
- When the phrase *Standard principles* occurs in the text, it refers to the eighteen principles established in and presented as a check list at the end of Chapter 2

Methodology

The methodology used was a multiple case study involving three churches. The reason was that the data needed for this kind of explorational study was primarily qualitative. The phenomenon studied was contemporary church plants in Sweden and the study was conducted within the churches’ real-life contexts.

The three churches for the multiple case study were selected from churches planted within The Methodist Church in Sweden, “Nybygget,” The Swedish Alliance Mission, The Swedish Covenant Church, The Swedish Baptist Convention, The Pentecostal movement, and the Vineyard Churches from 1992 to 1996. They were selected using the following criteria:

1. The church should have been planted during the period 1992 through 1996.
2. The conversion growth should be more than 50 percent of the total annual growth.

3. The church should have an expressed focus on reaching secular, unchurched people stated in its vision statement or mission statement.
4. The church should be willing to participate in the study.

The study was more interested in qualitative than quantitative data. The following vehicles for data collection were used: (1) review of documents and records, (2) interviews, (3) and on site observations. The interviews conducted in the case study churches were open-ended in nature. Questions used in the interviews are recorded in Appendix A. An observation guide was used to record the observations made during site visits. The observation guide is displayed in Appendix B.

Description of the Project

The study examined three churches in Sweden planted between 1992 and 1996 and mainly reaching unchurched, secular people. The result of the findings together with the review of literature and the historic identity and contemporary challenge of Swedish Methodism helped clarify a model for new Methodist church plants in Sweden.

With the assumption that much of what has been written in the U.S. about this issue is applicable to the Swedish situation, I searched for specific principles for church planting among unchurched people and evaluated them in the study.

It is of high importance for my study to gain knowledge of how unchurched people in Sweden view the existential and religious questions. Sweden is one of Europe's most secularized countries. Therefore, the whole issue of secularization, modernity, the new post-modern thinking, and the emerging youth culture proved to be very significant for my dissertation.

Another issue having a great impact on the outcome of this study was contextualization of the gospel into an indigenous culture. Usually this issue has been discussed in the context of encounter with third world cultures. The gap between Christian faith and the gospel and post-modern secular people is wider than one can imagine.

It was also important to lay a theological foundation for the study, investigating some crucial texts and concepts in the areas of evangelism and church planting.

Finally, I investigated the Methodist heritage in our own country and in the Wesleyan revival to search for models and patterns transferable to our own time and situation.

Importance of the Study

The need for churches and church plants in Sweden which are culturally relevant to seekers and secular people makes this study very urgent. There are, however, some limitation to the study:

1. The number of churches examined in the multiple case study.
2. The focus of the dissertation on planting new Methodist Churches.
3. The setting of the study in Sweden.

I hope, however, that the methodology will be replicable in other denominations and settings. In addition, the model resulting from this study may also be adaptable to other denominations in Sweden and Scandinavia.

Overview of Remaining Chapters

Chapter 2 contains the review of literature which constitutes the theoretical frame of reference for the study. The review of literature begins with a theological foundation for church planting and then continues to review literature from the fields of early Methodist history, sociology, demography, church growth, missiology, and church planting. It ends with a section which provides a model emerging from the review of literature.

Chapter 3 provides the design of the study, including operationalization of the thesis for the study, methodology, and finally a description of how the data has been analyzed.

Chapter 4 reports on the findings from the multiple case study. It answers the research questions mentioned in Chapter 1 and operationalized in Chapter 3.

Chapter 5 presents a summary of all the findings and draws the conclusions emerging from the study. Finally it proposes a model for new Methodist church developments aimed at reaching secular, unchurched people, which is the larger objective of the study.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

In order to create an indigenous paradigm for church planting with the focus on secular unchurched people in Sweden, a number of areas need to be considered. The theological study provides a framework for the whole study. It establishes a firm biblical and theological foundation. The historical literature helps illuminate the fact that many principles found modern and threatening today are not new but a vital part of the Methodist history and heritage. The sociological literature helps reveal the answers to questions about culture, society, and people's values and beliefs. The demographic study provides information on the Swedish population both currently and its projected development. The missiological literature answers questions about cross-cultural issues and how to contextualize the gospel in order to reach the vast mission field of secular unchurched people. Finally, the church growth literature provides knowledge about how and why churches grow, and the church planting literature will focus on strategies and a methodology for church planting. The chapter ends with the presentation of the model emerging from this review of literature.

Theological Foundation for Church Planting

Nothing is more important than the task of evangelism. This is shown by the fact that all the Gospels as well as Acts record the Great Commission in one or another form (Warren 104).

Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have

commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.
(Matt 28:19-20)

Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.
(Mark 16:15-16)

Repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning with Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. (Luke 24:47-48)
Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." (John 20:21-22)

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

Jesus is clear in his instructions. He wants all on earth to hear the gospel, turn away from their old ways of living, receive forgiveness for their sins, and become his devoted followers. The mission of the Christian church is to make this happen. The fulfillment of this mission ought to be the highest objective for every Christian church or congregation. It is evident that the church is called not to exist for itself. It exists for the salvation of the lost. No effort to fulfill the Great Commission, however, is true to the commissioner if it overlooks the important fact that the fulfillment of the Great Commission never can be separated from the Great Commandment. The driving force is God's love for every individual. We are called to be means for channeling that love to other people.

In the Great Commission as recorded in Matthew 28, Jesus focuses on two components that will be most helpful for this study. The first component is making disciples. This means more than just making converts. To make disciples involves the whole process of turning "irreligious people into fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ" (Willow Creek 63). The second component is the cross-cultural perspective. Jesus talks

about making disciples of all nations. This changes the perspective from the ethnocentric way of thinking that dominated the minds of Jesus' first disciples. It also ought to enlarge the perspective of all Christians in order to understand that the focus of God's activity is not only their kind of people. Donald McGavran said:

The goal of the Great Commission is the establishment of a church of committed Christians in every community, every neighborhood, every class and condition of people, where everyone can hear and see demonstrated the gospel from his own intimates, in his own tongue, and has a reasonable opportunity to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. (Qtd. in Chaney 130)

The Greek word *ἔθνος*, most commonly translated nation or people, means a unit of individuals, larger than the family or the klan, formed by people having the same lingual, cultural, or historical heritage (Kalén 85, Strong's #1484). The Great Commission includes every "nation, tribe, people and language" (Rev 7:9). Thus, unless the gospel is communicated cross-culturally, the church can not fulfill the Great Commission. Today's pluralistic society demands a cross-cultural approach if all are to hear and see the gospel demonstrated by their own intimates and in their own tongue. "There is only one way the Great Commission can be fulfilled, and that is by establishing gospel-preaching congregations in every community on the face of the earth" (David Womack qtd. in Chaney 180).

Church Planting in Acts: Paul and Silas In Philippi

Throughout the book of Acts we can see how the gospel was spread as the apostles traveled from place to place and planted new churches. "Church planting is the

New Testament way of extending the gospel” (Wagner 19). New churches are necessary in order to fulfill the Great Commission.

How did the apostles plant new churches? The story of Paul and Silas in Philippi is a good example. Their visit to Philippi resulted in the planting of two new churches. Acts chapter 16 tells the story. The first observation is that Paul went where the Spirit led him (v. 6-10). The Holy Spirit is the director of the expansion of the church (Sinclair 42). The Spirit enabled the early church to expand from Jerusalem and Judea to Samaria and to the ends of the known world. The Spirit led Paul and Silas to people who were receptive and prepared by God’s prevenient grace. The second observation is that Paul and Silas used the bridges of culture (v. 13). They searched for people with whom they could connect culturally. They went out to a place where they thought they could find praying people.

The third observation is the importance of the οἶκος, household (v. 14-15). Lydia was the first convert in Philippi. When she believed, she and her whole οἶκος were baptized. At that time, the οἶκος contained more than only the closest family. It contained relatives, servants, and even friends. The οἶκος was an individual’s span of contacts. It refers to the people we relate to on a regular basis (Neighbor 82). Lydia later invited Paul and Silas to stay in her home. That home became the base for the first Christian Church in Europe! The basic New Testament pattern for church planting was to form new churches on the basis of new converts’ οἶκοι.

The fourth observation is that opposition and persecution are a part of the New Testament pattern for church planting (v. 16-24). Paul and Silas were put in jail for the deliverance of the demon-possessed slave girl.

The fifth observation is that in spite of temporary backlash, Paul and Silas were praising God in the middle of the night (v. 25-26). God intervened and the prison was shaken by an earthquake. This is the prelude to the last observation (v. 27-35). Paul and Silas saw every person as only one prayer away from becoming a brother or sister in Christ. Even this jailer mattered to them because he mattered to God. In the conversion of the jailer, we can see the same pattern as with Lydia. The whole οἶκος was baptized and a new church was planted with that home as its base.

Do They Have to Become Like Us?

The rapid growth of the early church created some intricate problems. The number of Christians of Gentile origin was continuously growing. This created tension between the Gentile church and the Jewish church. The pivotal question was whether or not the Gentiles had to become Jews in order to become Christians (Acts 15:5). The principle at stake here is urgent also for the contemporary church to handle. It is simple but quite fundamental. “Was the gift of God for the selected few or for the world?” (Barclay 113). Another way of considering the same question is to ask whether it is by law or by grace that the world will be saved. If the Council in Jerusalem had followed the opinion of the Judaizers, the Christian church would never have become more than a small Jewish sect (Hunter, Unchurched 60).

The hazard today is that the established evangelical church, in trying to defend itself against the impact of the world, unconsciously is about to repeat the mistake of the first century Judaizers. The Jerusalem Council came out with a decision designed to secure the unity of the church and provide avenues for Jews and Gentiles to fellowship with one another (Barclay 116, Willimon 130-31). These principles will have great impact on how the evangelical church handles the question about how to reach the unchurched. George Hunter, over the years, has observed a number of unspoken goals people in traditional churches have for unchurched people. Some of them are “believe like us,” “behave like us,” “have an experience like ours,” and “become like us” (Hunter, Unchurched 37-8).

The decision of the Jerusalem Council established a case for the church ever after. The goal is not to conform people into the same mold. The goal is to reach the world for Christ. This made it possible for the Christian church to adapt to most of the major cultures in the Roman Empire and to become the most universal faith in the world today. The principle operating here is the indigenizing principle, and it was established at the Jerusalem Council. But, as Hunter alerts us, “its implementation does not come automatically for any of us. The culture in which any of us are raised seems ‘natural’ to us, so we would naturally extend ‘our kind’ of Christianity everywhere unless we know how important it is to adapt to other cultures” (61). We thus need to rediscover the validity of Donald McGavran’s observation that the barriers that keep people from becoming Christians are often not theological or religious but cultural and sociological (60). The result for us must be the same as for the early church, to become indigenous

with the kind of people we try to reach for Christ. The report from the Willowbank consultation on gospel and culture sponsored by the Lausanne movement and held in Willobank, Somerset Bridge, Bermuda, January 6-13, 1978, declares that “no Christian witness can hope to communicate the gospel if he or she ignores the cultural factor” (Willowbank Report 13). A faithful strategy calls us to adapt to other people’s culture rather than making them become like us. This is the legacy of the Jerusalem Council, and is today’s and tomorrow’s challenge for the Christian church in Sweden.

New Wine in New Wineskins

The parable about the wine and the wineskins will help us to understand the need for new forms and avenues for the gospel to reach today’s secular and unchurched people. We find this parable together with two other parables as an answer to the Pharisees’ question about the fasting habits of Jesus’ disciples (Mark 2:18-22, Matt 9:14-17, and Luke 5:33-38). Evidently, the Pharisees are not interested in the fasting issue. The Pharisees’ hidden agenda is: “Why are you breaking our traditions?” Jesus’ answer is clear. The new thing from God, which he represents, will ultimately break every man-made tradition or rule. The parable of the wine and wineskins is the climax of his answer to the Pharisees. “And no-one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, he pours new wine into new wineskins (Mark 2:22).”

There is an interesting difference between the adjectives new (νέος), which refers to the wine, and new (καινός) referring to the wineskins. When Jesus talks about the

new wine, he talks about something that is new and fresh in its character. The new wine, in Mark's gospel could very well refer back to the "new" teaching with authority (Mark 1:27) which Jesus exercised (Guelich 117). Snyder refers it to the gospel, which always is unchanging but still always new (Wineskins 15). The wineskins must be new, "in the sense unused" (Bauer 394), to be able to contain and preserve the fresh wine. The wineskins are the point of contact between the wine and the world around it. Snyder asks:

What kind of wineskins are most compatible with the gospel in our emerging global society? For the wineskins are the point of contact between the wine and the world. They are determined both by the wine's properties and the world's pressures. Wineskins result when the divine gospel touches human culture. (Wineskins 14)

The conclusion must be that while the gospel does not change, but remains the same true gospel, the ways in which that gospel is conveyed to people must change in order to communicate it in a relevant way. It is the "wineskin" that makes the gospel relevant to secular people. There is thus a need for new "wineskins" for every era and for every culture. The purpose of this study is to discover what the "wineskins" look like that are relevant to secular unchurched Swedish people. The easiest way to implement new, culturally relevant "wineskins" is to plant new, culturally relevant churches. I am, however, convinced that any church can become a new "wineskin." I am also convinced that many newly planted churches may look like old "wineskins" to many unchurched people.

While this study promotes the planting of new churches in Sweden, it does so with the profound conviction that this is the best way to break through the barriers

between church and unchurched people, and reach the nation with the gospel. Church planting, by its nature, is a ministry directed toward the world (Chaeny 11). It is directly involved in the fulfillment of the Great Commission. As Peter Wagner asserts, “The single most effective evangelistic method under heaven is planting new churches” (Wagner 11). Paul says in Ephesians 1:23 that the church is the body of Christ, “the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.” Evangelism and church planting bring the body of Christ to its fullness. “When we plant churches among any people, we make it possible for the character and beauty of Jesus to become incarnate in that culture,” (Chaeny 8) if they are indigenous.

Being All Things to All Men

It would be easy to compose a long list of biblical references on the importance of extending the gospel to new people and people groups. I will, however, only add an additional remark. Many authors, talking about the importance of the principle of using a flexible approach fitted to the cultural setting in communicating the gospel, refer predominantly to one important text in the New Testament, 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 (Logan Beyond 59, 67; Morris 102; Strobel 161; Warren 197). In order to win as many as possible, Paul adapted his communication approach to the situation and to the cultural setting. He tries to be “all things to all men” so that by all possible means he might save some. Warren remarks that someone might criticize Paul for being a chameleon and not acting with consistency. But then he answers the critique himself by referring to Jesus, who had no standard approach to people he met either. “He simply started where people were” (Warren 197). The Living Bible paraphrase of this passage (1 Corinthians 9:22-

23) is wonderful, “Yes, whatever a person is like, I try to find common ground with him so that he will let me tell him about Christ and let Christ save him. I do this to get the gospel to them and also for the blessing I myself receive when I see them come to Christ.”

Paul’s strategy in his ministry was to find something common in people’s lives to which he could connect the gospel. In order to do that he had to enter into the other person’s culture and thinking.

Church Planting in the Power of the Holy Spirit

One cannot read through the Acts of the Apostles without being struck by the role of the Holy Spirit as a driving force in the extension of the early church. It is fair to say that every new church planted was born through a mighty move of the Holy Spirit. The secret of the growth and success in that time is equally relevant to our day. It is summarized best in the words of the prophet Zechariah, “Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty” (Zach. 4:6). Below follows an examination of the planting of some of the churches Luke writes about in Acts.

The Jerusalem Church. Jesus’ last words to his disciples were that they should wait in Jerusalem for the fulfillment of the promise which the Father had given, the empowerment by the Holy Spirit. He was clear in his instruction. The disciples were supposed to do nothing until that promise had been fulfilled in their lives. The way the disciples together with some other of Jesus’ followers waited for that to happen was to join “together constantly in prayer” (Acts 1:14). As an answer to their prayers and as the fulfillment of the promise, God poured out his Spirit over that group of men and women.

Through that outpouring of the Holy Spirit the first Christian church was born. Acts chapter two tells us that story. Whenever God is doing something extraordinary in extending his Kingdom, there are two important moves of the Holy Spirit going on. The first move is what the Spirit does within the believers. Through prayer they open their hearts and lives for God and for his empowerment. Peter is eager to underline in his sermon what the people see and hear is a genuine move of God: It is not their own power or ability. It is the fulfillment of God's promise to their fathers. It is the work of the Holy Spirit.

The second move of the Spirit consisted of the work going on in the hearts of those who listened to Peter's sermon. They were "were cut to the heart" (Acts 2:37), as Luke puts it. The Holy Spirit was at work within them and made them receptive to the gospel. People repented, were baptized, were filled with the Holy Spirit and the church grew as "the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47). The pattern seen in the birth of the Jerusalem church is present also in many other examples both in Acts and throughout the history of the Christian church.

From the many examples of prayer, answers to prayer, and prayer releasing God's miraculous power, the evident conclusion is that prayer was one of the most important components in the life of the early church (c. f. Acts 2:42). It seems that the combination of quality and quantity in their prayer life is the main issue here. Some times they prayed for an extended period of time as was the case during the ten days before Pentecost or when Peter was in prison. Other times their prayers were short as when they gathered to pray when Peter and John had been commanded not to speak any more in Jesus' name.

But whether short or long prayers they were prayers of faith and integrity and God did mighty things. “After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly” (Acts 4:31).

The Samaria Church. After the death of Stephen a persecution broke out against the Jerusalem church. Philip, who was one of the deacons in the Jerusalem church, came to Samaria. He preached the gospel to the people there. He did miraculous signs. Many were healed, delivered, and saved. Philip’s ministry in Samaria was empowered and driven by the Holy Spirit. His sensitive heart to the directions of the Spirit is evident. In the midst of the revival in Samaria, the Spirit urged him to go out on an empty road to wait for a lonely traveler. Philip went. He led the Ethiopian eunuch to the Lord and planted the seed for the kingdom of God to grow in African soil.

Peter and John came from Jerusalem to Samaria see what was going on there.

When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8:15-17)

This shows how essential it is for a Christian church to act as a body filled by the power of the Holy Spirit. The point separating growing and not growing churches according to Christian Schwartz is, “Are the Christians in this church ‘on fire?’ Do they live committed lives and practice their faith with joy and enthusiasm” (26)? Peter and John wanted to have a church in Samaria that was on fire for Jesus. The only way to get that was, and still is, through a living relationship with the Holy Spirit.

The Ephesus Church. One mark of Paul's ministry as an apostle was the miraculous signs and wonders that followed his proclamation of the gospel. The churches in Phillipi, which were referred to earlier, were both established by signs and wonders. The slave girl was delivered from demons by the power of the Holy Spirit. The jail was shaken by God's power.

When Paul came to Ephesus he met twelve men who were disciples of Jesus. They did not know of the Holy Spirit and they were only baptized by "John's baptism." Paul baptized them and when he "placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied" (Acts 19:6). These twelve men became the core group of the new church in Ephesus.

Paul's preaching of the gospel was rejected by the Jews in the local synagogue. During two years Paul held daily discussions in the hall of Tyrannus. The result was, according to Luke, that "all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord" (Acts 19:10). What was the secret? Luke goes on to tell us that "God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and evil spirits left them" (Acts 19:11). The church in Ephesus was born through the work of the Spirit. It lived by the power of the Spirit. It extended the gospel to the whole region by the power of the Spirit.

Some forty years later, the church in Ephesus seemed to have lost its passion for Jesus and its empowerment by the Spirit. In Revelation, John delivers this message from

the Lord to the church in Ephesus. “You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you are fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first” (Rev. 2:4-5).

There is a pattern in how God moves and new churches are planted. It begins with prayer. Then the Spirit equips those praying to become effective witnesses. He also moves in the hearts of the lost to make them receptive to the gospel. A miraculous event takes place, an outpouring of the Spirit occurs, signs and wonders are performed, and extraordinary conversions happen. The church is planted and grows as the gospel is extended to new groups of people.

When dealing with the topics of church growth and church planting it is so easy to become merely technical, or be bogged down in details and strategies. The New Testament and the history of the Christian church teach us the importance of being dependent on the Holy Spirit and that the way we tap into the current of power is by prayer. The greatest models for church planting can be created, but if they lack the guidance and power of the Spirit they will never prevail and make an eternal difference.

Historical Literature

Maurice Sinclair says in Ripening Harvest; Gathering Storm that the same Holy Spirit, who drove the first apostles to reach out across their cultural comfort zone in order to communicate the gospel to individuals and nations, is the driving force of mission throughout the history of Christendom (42).

Lessons from Early Methodism

An important manifestation of the Holy Spirit's guidance is the revival movement that has its roots in eighteenth century England. The real take-off for this movement was a prayer night conducted one of the first nights of the year 1739.

Jan. 1, Mon. Mr. Hall, Kinchen, Ingham, Whitefield, Huychins, and my brother Charles were present at our lovefeast in Fetter Lane, with about sixty of our brethren. About three in the morning, as we were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us, inasmuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground. As soon as we were recovered a little from that awe and amazement at the presence of His majesty we broke out with one voice, 'We praise Thee, O God, we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord. (Wesley, Journal I 170)

With this event, remarks Snyder, the "stir of a new awakening was in the air" (Radical 30). This awakening broke out among the multitudes of poor and unchurched people in the coal mining districts in southwestern England. Due to the ecclesiastical laws of those days, the Church of England was unable to respond to the challenge created by the emerging towns and villages in the new industrial and coal mining areas. The parish system with its defined tasks and borders had no chance to adapt to the rapid changes of the new industrial era. The parish churches were located where they were most reachable in the old agricultural society. People had now moved and lived far off from the old parish churches. A legitimate question one might raise is whether the Church of England at that time was interested in the poor workers and coal miners in these new towns and villages. My point is that the first people the Methodist revival reached out to were secular unchurched people with little or no Christian memory (Malm 18). Wesley's

audience was largely people “beyond the range of the usual ministry of the Church” (Wood 137).

Preaching to the Unchurched. There was, however, one huge hurdle for John Wesley to overcome. In order to reach the unchurched of his day, he had to change his whole way of doing ministry. Up to April 2, 1739, Wesley had never preached the gospel outside a church building or a society meeting. The step he took that day was extremely important, a giant step for the advancement of the gospel. By taking this step he returned preaching to where it belongs, to the marketplace (Miller 14). Field preaching at Kingswood, outside Bristol, broke the ice for the new revival to reach the unchurched. It is not accidental, but nonetheless symbolic, that Wesley’s text that Sunday afternoon April 2, 1739, was from Luke 4:18.

At four in the afternoon I submitted to be more vile, and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation, speaking from a little eminence in the ground adjoining the city, to about three thousand people. The scripture on which I spoke was this, . . . “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor.” (Wesley, Journal I 185)

When George Whitefield later that summer returned to America, Wesley was left in charge of the work in Bristol. He traveled between London and Bristol frequently, concentrating on field preaching and the organizing of classes and societies. The Wesleyan Revival was from the beginning “a movement largely for and among poor people, those whom ‘gentlemen’ and ‘ladies’ looked on simply as part of the machinery of the new industrial system” (Snyder, Radical 33).

John Wesley--the Organizer. John Wesley was an organizer (Warren 121). If he had lived in our time we might have called him an apostolic church planter. Only a

few months into the new year of field preaching, he had set up the basic structure for the new movement. The organization was simple. It had three levels: the Society, the Class Meeting, and the Band. The objective of the Society was to “pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, in order to work out their salvation” (Wesley, Works VIII 250). The only requirement for membership was “a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and be saved from their sins” (Wesley, Works VIII 250). From 1742, every society was divided into classes of twelve persons overseen by a class leader. “The class meetings were not designed merely as Christian growth groups, however, or primarily as cells for koinonia, although in fact they did have that function. Their primary purpose was discipline” (Snyder, Radical 38). It would be equally true, however, to say that the primary purpose of the classes was evangelism. After 1742 every society member was also a member of a class where pre-Christians mixed with Christians. A majority of the converts in the 18th century Wesleyan revival were won to Christ in a class meeting.

The third component in the organization was the bands. The bands were small cell groups of either men or women, formed for pastoral care, which averaged between five and ten persons in size (Snyder, Radical 60). These were accountability groups with an expressed goal of growth for their members--going on to perfection.

In building the Methodist system Wesley was led to take measures he had not foreseen. Surveying the unshepherded crowds at Bristol, he determined “preaching the gospel to the poor” must take precedence over custom and “property.” And as awakened sheep flocked to him for guidance, he adopted and adapted forms to keep the sheep folded and growing. And Wesley saw--in surprise and confirmation--that this was “the very thing” the New Testament church was about. (38)

Arthur Skevington Wood comments in his book The Burning Heart: John Wesley, Evangelist on Wesley's ability to organize. The system he created to preserve the harvest showed his great skill as an organizer. "Some believe that this is where his real genius lay" (Wood 186). But his genius was not in the field of innovation. He was primarily an adapter. "He knew how to suit a plan to the occasion" (Wood 189). Here we have a very important point in Wesley's approach to evangelism. Both the field-preaching and the society-class-band system were ways in which he adapted his approach in order to reach and preserve as many lost people as possible for the kingdom. Wesley's "supreme standard for evaluating any evangelism approach was its outcomes, that is, whether or not the approach helped to achieve the perennial apostolic objectives of the discipling of people and growth of the true Church" (Hunter, Power 43). In a mood of envy Whitefield writes about Wesley: "My brother Wesley acted wisely. The souls that were awakened under his ministry he joined in class, and thus preserved the fruit of his labour [sic]. This I neglected, and my people are as rope of sand" (Qtd. in Wood 188).

John Wesley--the Mission Strategist. We often like to think about Wesley as an evangelist and sometimes even as an organizer. But behind these two great abilities, we will find that more than anything, he was a mission strategist. Besides the more recognized theological goals of renewing the church and spreading Scriptural holiness, Wesley also had what Hunter calls "more apostolic goals" (Hunter, Power 40). He saw in the Methodist movement an expression of the life of the early church. Wesley's objective was "none less than the recovery of the truth, life, and power of earliest

Christianity, and the expansion of that kind of Christianity” (40). Wesley’s strategy for doing this was clear. He said to his cadre of lay preachers: “You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work. And go always, not only to those that want you, but to those that want you most” (Wesley, Works VIII 310). In the implementation of this strategy Wesley was utterly pragmatic. He wanted to see changed lives. The ways that worked best were the ways he chose. Hunter gives an example of how the guidelines which appear to have shaped his practice may have looked:

1. If an approach or method ought to achieve your apostolic objectives, but does not, scuttle it--even if you like it!
2. If your employment of a method or approach is effective, use it to the hilt--even if you do not like it!
3. There is no perfect method which, like magic, will do the job for us. Rather, Christians evangelize, preceded and empowered by the Spirit, through culturally appropriate methods. (Power 44)

One example of this pragmatism in Wesley’s own life was that even though later in his life, when he became a famous man and he was given the opportunity to preach indoors he never quit preaching for the unchurched in the open air. This in spite of the fact that he always considered field preaching a cross to be borne (45).

Some interesting components emerge in Wesley’s “nothing to do but save souls” strategy. The first one was his awareness of receptive people. He knew that people were more receptive during certain times in their lives and that this receptiveness was like a flower in full blossom; it has to be picked before it fades. This readiness to receive the gospel is a work of the Holy Spirit in “prevenient grace.” Many of the successful evangelists and church leaders have also discovered this great secret. Today we know that people are more receptive to the gospel in times of change and transition (Warren

182-83). Wesley knew how to recognize these people; he was driven by an evangelistic urgency--“reaching receptive people while they are receptive, lest we miss the day of visitation” (Hunter, Power 52). This is the reason why Wesley taught his followers, both lay people and preachers, to identify and reach out to receptive people. “The strategy became a standard principle of Methodist evangelization” (53). In “Minutes of Several Conversations Between the Reverend Mr. Wesley and Others” we read the following:

- Q. Where should we endeavor to preach the most?
- A. 1. Where there is the greatest number of quiet and willing hearers.
2. Where there is most fruit . . .
- Q. Ought we not diligently to observe in what places God is pleased at and any time to pour out his Spirit more abundantly?
- A. We ought; and at that time to send more labourers [sic] than usual into that part of the harvest. (Wesley, Works VIII 300)

The second component in Wesley’s “nothing to do but save souls” strategy was the realization that “a people’s culture is the medium of God’s revelation to them” (Hunter, Power 53). Different people respond to different cultural forms. Even though John Wesley might have preferred the intellectual life at Oxford, he chose to preach in the open air in the vernacular language of ordinary people. Even though Charles Wesley might have preferred high class church music, he wrote new words to songs sung in the streets and at the pubs. Wesley writes in “The Character of a Methodist” that the “most obvious, easy, common words, wherein our meaning can be conveyed, we prefer before others, both in ordinary occasions, and when we speak of the things of God” (Wesley, Works VIII 340). Maybe it is along this track we ought to interpret Article XV “Of Speaking in the Congregation in Such a Tongue as the People Understand” in The Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church (Discipline, 1992 62). Hunter says, “John

and Charles Wesley led their apostolic movement by adapting to eighteenth-century British culture” (Unchurched 66). How could they do that? They exegeted the culture around them in order to indigenize the faith’s language, music, and style to that culture. If we, their twentieth and twenty-first century followers, will be faithful to their legacy to us, we had better to follow their example. “We do not honor our founders by blindly perpetuating in a changing world what they once did . . . we honor them by doing for our time and culture what they did for theirs” (67).

The third strategic component was the multiplication of classes. Wesley was driven to multiply classes. They were the backbone in the whole Methodist system of reaching unchurched people. They served “as recruiting groups, as ports of entry for new people, and for involving awakened people with the gospel and its power” (Hunter, Power 56). Hunter goes on to summarize Wesley’s approach in four maxims:

1. Preach and visit in as many places you can.
2. Go most where they want you most.
3. Start as many classes as can effectively be managed.
4. Do not preach where you cannot enroll awakened people in classes. (56)

We can see the importance of the class-meeting as an evangelistic tool in Wesley’s invitation at the end of his meetings. He simply invited people to meet with him later in order to form a class. William B. Lewis asserts that it was in the class meetings “the great number of conversions occurred” (Qtd. in Snyder, Radical 56). The more classes Wesley and his preachers organized the more lives they could touch; the more lives they touched the more people went from being sinners to becoming saints.

Wesley scholars argue about when Wesley's conversion took place. Was it at Aldersgate in 1738, or did it actually take place back in 1725? I think that both experiences are of great importance; but when it comes to the life-changing experience which turned Wesley into a burning evangelist, the Fetter Lane love feast New Years Day, 1739, is the pivotal point. Ever since that day, where Methodism is growing and expanding it happens through a mighty move of the Holy Spirit. One example is the camp meetings in frontier America during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Another example is the power with which Methodism encountered Sweden.

The Fire of Methodism Spread over Sweden

The first Swedish superintendent was Victor Witting. In a letter to Dr. J. P. Durbin, corresponding secretary at the Board of Missions in New York, he writes:

Nyårsnatten 1867 hölls den första metodistiska vaknatten i Stockholm. Salen var fullpackad af uppmärksamma åhörare. Herrens Ande var kraftigt närvarande. 'Hjelten från Edom' gick fram bland folket i sin stora kraft, och de 'slagna af Herren' voro många. Flera hundra uppstodo för förböner, och det fanns väl näppeligen någon människa närvarande, som icke var mer eller mindre påverkad af Herrens Ande. Mången fann frid och prisar till denna dag Gud för denna vaknatt. Herrens härlighet uppfyllde rummet, och de nyomvändas jubel samt de slagnas ångest gjorde det i sanning till ett heligt rum. Detta var en af metodismens första segrar i Sverige, och det var en härlig seger. (Erikson 56)⁶

This was the prelude to the organizing of the first Methodist congregation in Sweden. In his book Metodismen i Sverige, J. M. Erikson, who for more than thirty years was the

⁶ "The first Methodist vigil was held in Stockholm during the new years night 1867. The room was filled by alert listeners. 'The hero from Edom' went forth among the people with great power and many were slain by the Lord. Several hundred stood up for prayer, and there was hardly anyone who was not more or less affected by the Spirit of the Lord. Many found peace and praise God to this day for this vigil. The Glory of the Lord filled the room and the jubilation of the newly converted and the angst of the slain made it truly a holy room. This was one of the first victories of Methodism in Sweden, and it was a glorious victory."

Secretary of the Conference in Sweden, describes the development of Methodism in Sweden. He gives an interesting picture of a growing movement. In most places where the Methodist message was preached, revivals broke out. People were struck by the Spirit and were delivered from the agony of sin under loud groanings. Revival, radical conversions, and manifestations of the presence of the Holy Spirit characterized the young Methodist movement in Sweden.

Methodism as a Church Planting Movement. It is interesting to see how the first move of Methodism started new congregations. The first Methodist preachers who came to Sweden were emigrants and seamen who through the work at the Bethel Ship John Wesley in New York's harbor had been converted and returned to their homes with this new and vibrant faith. That is the reason why we find the first churches around the Swedish south coast from Gothenburg to Stockholm. There are mainly four ways new Methodist congregations were planted during this period (1868-1895):

1. Returning seamen and emigrants witnessing about their Methodist faith in their old home areas (Hurtig 19).
2. Methodist families, either returning from America or moving from a town with a Methodist congregation to another without one, requesting the Conference to send a preacher to their new home town (Erikson 84, 109).
3. Methodist lay preachers from a "mother congregation" extending the gospel to people in the towns and villages in the surrounding area (108).
4. Methodist preachers (ordained) who were sent to a new place to plant Methodism there (86, 112).

It is worth noticing that the Methodist movement almost from its beginning was clergy centered. Without a Methodist preacher nothing could be done. Erikson records many requests from places, both in Sweden and Finland, for a visit of a Methodist preacher, which were turned down (413). The harvest was great but the clergy were few. When I read the story of early Methodism in Sweden, it strikes me that with a more lay-oriented organization Methodism may have had an even greater impact on our country. Here is one of the most important differences between the Methodist movement and the other free church movements in Sweden. One of the significant characteristics of the Swedish free church movement was its profound democratic structure. In the Baptist or Covenant congregation, the cobbler or iron mill worker could be the chair person and the preacher. Erikson touches on this in his book, but defends, of course, the Methodist system. He refers to the Salvation Army and the Holiness movement. His argument is that these movements, which have a similar theology of sanctification to the Methodists, have damaged the Methodist cause with their use of preachers who were not educated in the way the Methodist clergy were (296). History tells us another story. While the Methodist Church strove to be recognized and respected especially by the State church, the Salvation Army had an enormous impact on the Swedish society. The Holiness movement impacted the Swedish free churches in modeling a revivalistic type of Christianity with a clear holiness message of the Keswick type.

An Indigenous Swedish Methodist Church? A question often raised is whether the tight connection to American Methodism made it hard for the Methodist Church in Sweden to be indigenous with the Swedish people and keep pace with the development in

the Swedish society. During 130 years of Methodism some have tried to answer this question by campaigning for an independent Swedish Methodist church separated from the American church (Hurtig 28). Erikson tells how the Conference expelled Superintendent Victor Witting from the church for trying to separate the Swedish Methodist Church from its mother church in America. Later it also expelled another of the leading pastors, the leader of the seminary, after a complaint in the Conference. The main reason, according to Rev. A. H. Berg, was his attempt to reform the Methodist Church in Sweden. He meant that it had betrayed its original calling. He wanted the church to pay more regard to the demands of the day, to adopt a more Swedish character (275). That A. H. Berg also had personal aspirations to become the leader for this new Swedish Independent Methodist Church should not eclipse the important fact that the question about how indigenous the church was had already been discussed in the middle of the 1870s.

Svenska Sändebudet quotes in 1894 a German magazine called

“Gemendchaftsblatt.” The title of the article is “How will the masses be reached with the gospel?”

Orsaken varför kyrkan ej lyckats vinna massorna i den omfattning som hon borde, torde förnämligast få sökas i följande tre omständigheter,

1. Kyrkan har förlorat ur sikte arten och omfattningen af sin höga uppgift
2. Kyrkan har blifvigt långt efter de förändrade tidsförhållanderna, då det gäller tillgripandet af nya hjälpmedel och användandet af nya metoder.
3. Det största felet uppenbarar sig likväl i saknaden af “kraften från höjden”. I ägandet af denna kraft ligger hemligheten af den stora framgång, som den första kristna församlingen hade efter den första pingsten, och utan denna

kraft står kyrkan än i dag alldeles vanmäktig gentemot världen. (Hur skall massorna nås med evangeliet?)⁷

The important observation in this article is that the lack of cultural relevance is only one reason for the church's inability to reach the unchurched masses. The lack of vision and the power of the Holy Spirit is maybe even more devastating in this context. We find here three important principles for a successful church:

1. There must be a clear vision.
2. The church must be culturally relevant (the indiginizing principle).
3. The church must be dependent on the Holy Spirit.

Unless this happens John Wesley's words will inevitably come true:

I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power. And this undoubtedly will be the case unless they hold fast both the doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they first set out. (Works XIII 258)

Sociological Literature

In order to reach secular unchurches people it is of great importance to understand their mindset and what shapes their vlues and worldviews. The prostmodern challenge is both a threat to the 21st century church and a window of never before experienced opporunity.

⁷ "The reason why the church does not win the masses in the way it ought to do would be found in primarily three circumstances: 1. The church has lost its vision of the character and extent of its task 2. The church is far behind the changed conditions of the time, when it comes to the utilizing of new technology and methods. 3. The greatest error is found in the lack of 'the power from above.' The secret to the great success the first Christian church had after the first Christian Pentecost lies in the possession of this power, and without this power is the church to this day powerless verses the world."

The Postmodern Challenge

A paradigm shift has taken place the last couple of decades, the shift from modernism to post-modernism. Thomas Oden maintains that the modern era lasted exactly 200 years, from the fall of the Bastille in 1789 to the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 (Veith 27). It is not so important to be able to set a specific date on when the shift to a post-modern society took place. The crucial point is the fact that this shift is a reality and that from now on whatever we do as a Christian church will be affected by this paradigm shift.

The Enlightenment was the foundation of modernism. An immanent world view, human autonomy, and a rationalist mind are some components of the Enlightenment thinking (Veith 33). The modern paradigm was formed by “cause-effect” thinking. It viewed humanity as basically good. Most people no longer expected miracles or supernatural things to occur. There was a strong belief in modernism that humanity could manage to solve its own problems. The religion of the Enlightenment was Deism. “According to the Deists, the orderliness of nature does, in fact, prove the existence of a deity, a rational mind that created the universe. This God is, however, no longer involved in the creation. He constructed nature in all its intricacy and then left it to run like a vast machine” (33). In the late nineteenth century the Enlightenment thinking developed into pure materialism. Out of this hard materialistic way of thinking emerged a new philosophical school called existentialism (37).

Existentialism asserts that there is no inherent meaning or purpose in life.

Nevertheless, “individuals can create meaning for themselves. By their own free choices

and deliberate actions, human beings can create their own order, a meaning for their life that they and they alone determine” (Veith 37). Existentialism is the ideological foundation for the post-modern thinking. The existentialist motto, which also is the post-modern motto, seems to be “What’s true for you, doesn’t need to be true for me.”

Post-modern thinking challenges the closed system of the Enlightenment on the basis of the total break-down of modernist thinking. The absolutes which were the foundation of the modernist thinking proved themselves unreliable. One example is Einstein’s theory of relativity which challenged the old Newtonian paradigm. Another challenger of that paradigm is the new Quantum Mechanics.

Newtonian mechanics assumes that one can apply the basic law of mechanics to any and every situation within the universe. However, atomic physics has shown that these laws cannot and do not apply at the atomic level because it is impossible to know both the momentum and position of an atomic particle with sufficient accuracy. This is generally known as the Heisenberg uncertainty principle. (Burnett 55)

In the post-modern worldview there are no absolutes. This is rooted in the postmodern distrust in the claims of modernism (McCallum 32). Postmodernists “live with and affirm the chaos, considering any order to be only provisional and varying from person to person” (Veith 42). The result is, as we have seen with existentialism, that people can deconstruct and reconstruct their own reality. Chart 1 tries to contrast some of the beliefs of modernism with postmodern beliefs. Leffel shows three postmodernist key beliefs in his article in the Dennis McCullum edited book The Death of Truth.

1. Humans are cogs in a social machine.
2. People are never really autonomous.

3. People are never objective or rational (31-37) .

Postmodernism is, according to Walter Truett Anderson, a conceptual shift as profound as any in human history. He distinguishes between “objectivists” and “constructivists.” Objectivists are those who believe in absolute truths. Constructivists are those who believe that human beings make up their own realities.

The constructivists . . . say that we do not have a “God’s eye” view of nonhuman reality, never had, never will have. They say we live in a symbolic world, a social reality that many people construct together and yet experience as the objective “real world.” And they also tell us the earth is not a single symbolic world, but rather a vast universe of “multiple realities,” because different groups of people construct different stories, and because different languages embody different ways of experiencing life. (Anderson qtd. in Veith 47-48)

Subject	Modernism	Postmodernism
Human Nature	Humans are purely material machines. We live in a purely physical world. Nothing exists beyond what our senses perceive.	Humans are cogs in a social machine. We are primary social beings.
Free Will	Humans are self-governing and free to choose their own direction.	People are the product of their culture and only imagine they are self-governing.
View of reason	People should be “rationalistic optimists” who depend only on the data of their senses and reason.	There is no such thing as objective rationality (that is, reason unaffected by bias) in the sense that modernists use the term. Objective reason is a myth.
View of Progress	Humankind is progressing by using science and reason.	“Progress” is a code-word used by modernists to justify the domination by European culture of other cultures.

(Jim Leffel in The Death of Truth 32)

Chart 1

Comparison Between Modernism and Postmodernism on Four Important Subjects.

The postmodernist sociology of knowledge makes the following two claims.

First, that human beings are what their cultural environments make them to be. There is a profound difference between modern existentialism and post-modern thinking. While in the modern existentialism the meaning is created by the individual, in postmodernism the creators of meaning is a social group and its language. Thus, postmodernists have a problem with the individual identity (McCullum 34-35). The individual identity becomes

a product of that person's social setting. This makes the group identity very important for post-modern people. This is one of the reasons why stories are so important in the postmodern culture. The narrative shapes and gives meaning to reality; it shapes people's perception of reality. This is why narrative counseling is the most growing area of counseling today (Dinkins). The goal of post-modernism is to live without any limits for what to think and how to think. This is to signal the death of all worldviews "whose secretly terroristic function was to ground and legitimate the illusion of a 'universal' human history" (Terry Eagleton, qtd. in Veith 49). Post-modernism is thus a worldview which denies all worldviews. Post-modern existentialism builds upon Nietzsche's emphasis on power as the driving force behind people's actions. This concept turns every issue into a power issue. Liberation, for example, comes "from rebelling against existing power structures, including oppressive notions of 'knowledge' and 'truth' " (48).

Second, all our thinking is a social construct. A profound absence of objective truth leads to a point where we have "no final bar of appeal" (McCullum 35). In the foundation for post-modernist theories lies the assumption that language is a cultural creation and thus cannot render truths about the world in an objective way. "Individuals always interact with reality through the medium of language" (37). Language shapes what we think, and while it is a cultural creation, "meaning is ultimately a social construction" (Veith 51). Marring this assumption with Nietzsche's emphasis on power issues, postmodernists find the necessity for deconstructing the text. The text here defined after the post-modernist slogan "The world is a text." Deconstruction is a subversive reading, built upon the assumption that language does not reveal meaning;

rather it constructs meaning. To deconstruct a text is to take it apart in order to reveal the power relationships within. It is uncovering the “opposing ideas implied in the text and demonstrating how the author has favored one side over the other because of his or her social context” (McCallum 283).

The First Postmodern Generation

What does postmodernism do to the values of up coming generations? Celek and Zander assert that the Busters are the first generation to grow up entirely in the postmodern era and that this has had a tremendous impact on them (46). Postmodernism is also, according to their opinion, “the single most powerful force in shaping the mindset, attitudes, and values of the Buster generation” (51). One can recognize some common postmodern values shared by most Busters and many Boomers today.

1. There are no absolutes; everything is relative. A postmodern person’s attitude might be, “Let’s respect each other’s truths. You have your truth; I have my truth. They might be radically different from each other. That’s okay.” Postmodern values can often contain diametrically opposite truths at the same time (46).
2. Community has been elevated to a higher value. Busters have done away with their autonomous selves and have their identity in their social community. They are people who have realized that they need each other to survive in this world. Here Busters hold together the paradox of being very individualistic and yet highly valuing relationships.
3. Life has no meaning or purpose. “Postmodernism has been described as a room without walls, floor, and ceiling” (50). This ultimately leads to despair and many

Busters cannot handle such a dark worldview. The suicide rate in the US for teenagers has doubled since 1968 (50). There is deep search for meaning going on among the Busters.

4. Pessimism is deep seated in Busters. They do not believe in this world nor in changing it. They are disillusioned, yet they do not give up.
5. The postmodernist mind processes truth relationally rather than logically (51).

Busters do not respect authority. They have lost faith in institutions (Kallenberg, Brakenhielm, and Larsson 7).

In his groundbreaking book, Megatrends, John Naisbitt calls our time “the time of the parenthesis, the time between eras” (279). The transition from a modern society to a postmodern society gives the Christian church a window of opportunity to reach secular people, an opportunity the church cannot afford to spoil. Diogenes Allen writes:

In a postmodern world Christianity is intellectually relevant. (It is also experimentally relevant). It is relevant to the fundamental questions, Why does the world exist? And Why does it have its present order, rather than another? It is relevant to the discussion of the foundations of morality and society, especially on the significance of human beings. The recognition that Christianity is relevant to our entire society, and relevant not only to the heart but to the mind as well, is a major change in our cultural situation. (6)

It is urgent for the church to respond with great authenticity to the cry coming from this first postmodern generation. In order to start such a process of ministering to Busters/Gen Xers, Leadership Network conducted a Gen X forum in March, 1996. Ten themes of how to minister to Busters emerged from that forum:

1. The foundation for ministry to and with Generation X is authenticity.

2. Ministry to Gen Xers looks different than ministry to Boomers.
3. The importance of music to Gen X and its integration into a new style of worship cannot be underestimated.
4. The stereotypes of Gen X should be dispelled and instead recognize the diversity of the generation and its alignment with Biblical values.
5. Use narrative stories to communicate with Generation X.
6. Go beyond the intellectual to hands-on demonstrations of the Gospel.
7. The most effective Gen X evangelism will be process evangelism.
8. The leadership paradigm for Generation X is a team, not hierarchy or superstar.
9. Leadership development is defined as the development of lay leaders, not staff, and the pastor's role is primarily one of an equipper and coach.
10. Ministering to Xers is a learn as you go process. (alt. ministry)

The Swedish film producer Staffan Hillbrand, whose film "Juvenis--The global generation," addressing the situation of the young generation throughout the globe, was shown at the United Nations fiftieth anniversary in October, 1995, talked about the dreams, values, and fears of young people from all over the world. He asserts that there seem to be some universal tracks for young people, regardless of continent today. Some of these universals were the distrust in institutions and political parties, a feeling of loneliness, disappointment over adults' inability to talk about beliefs and religious issues, and that music was the most important source for inspiration and has a strong impact on young people (Kallenberg, Bralenhielm and Larsson 7). We recognized many of the same things in our study on postmodernism and the values of American Busters. The

most important discovery here is that the Buster generation is not only an American thing, it seems to be universal.

Beliefs and Values in Sweden in the 90s

The question most important for this study is what are the beliefs and values of Swedish people in the 1990s. In the survey Tro och värderingar i 90-talets Sverige⁸, Kallenberg, Brakenhielm, and Larsson asked 2,889 randomly chosen Swedes, between fifteen and seventy-five years of age, questions about their faith, religious habits, and values. The questionnaire was answered by 2,003 persons (49). The two first questions, corresponding to questions used in several other surveys both in Sweden and internationally, were:

1. Which of the following statements is closest to your own conviction?
 - A personal God exists 15.5%
 - Some sort of spirit or life-giving power exists 35.5%
 - I don't know what to believe 28.5%
 - I don't believe in any God nor spirit nor life-giving power 20.5%

2. How often do you participate in a worship service?
 - Once a week 4.8%
 - Once a month 4.1%
 - A few times a year 17.3%
 - Rarely 42.0%
 - Never 31.8%

⁸ Beliefs and values in Sweden in the 90s

Table 2

Religious Beliefs in Sweden.

	Worship attendees		Non attendees	
A personal God exists	Church-Christians	6%	Private-Christians	10%
Some sort of spirit or life-giving power exists	Church-spirituals	2%	Private-spirituals	33%
I don't know what to believe		1%	Agnostics	28%
I don't believe in any God, nor spirit, nor life-giving power		0%	Atheists	20%

The six categories in Table 2 are created on basis of questions one and two above.

In comparison with the other countries in Europe, Sweden is top in “Church-spirituals” and “Private-spirituals,” but on the bottom in “Church-Christians” and “Private-Christians” (Kallenberg, Bralenhielm and Larsson 53). Sweden, together with Denmark, is considered as the most secularized country in the world (62).

In the table above some of the categories may correspond well with Strobel's categories in Inside the Mind of Unchurched Harry & Mary (162-63): Church-Christians is the same as Churched Christians, Unchurched Christians correspond with the category Private-Christians (the reason why I do not suggest a total overlap is that in the Swedish survey also some Jews and Muslims might have been included in the category Private-Christians), Churched unbelievers is the same thing as Church-spirituals, and

Unchurched non-Christians corresponds with the three groups Private-spirituals, Agnostics and Atheists. A table using Strobel's categories would look like the following:

Table 3

Churched Versus Unchurched in Sweden.

Churched Christians	6%
Churched Unbelievers	3%
Unchurched Christians	10%
Unchurched Non-Christians	81%

Table 4 shows how the survey fell out in different age groups (Kallenberg, Bralenhielm and Larsson 60).

Table 4

Religious Belief in Different Age Groups

		Gender	Gender	Age	Age	Age
	All	Male	Female	15-29	30-49	50+
God exists	15%	12%	19%	14%	12%	18%
Some sort of spirit or life-giving power exists	35%	28%	42%	28%	36%	38%
I don't know what to believe	28%	31%	25%	30%	29%	26%
I don't believe in any God, nor spirit, nor life-giving power	20%	28%	13%	26%	21%	15%
I don't know	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Some of the conclusions which could be drawn from Table 4 are: First, it is striking how few people confess faith in a personal God, which is a central Christian belief. We can see that especially among young people (15-29 = Busters in the US) the secularization and individualization has gone far. This group has the highest number of atheists in the survey. Second, we can see that men are most hostile to religion and especially younger men (Kallenberg, Bralenhielm and Larsson 55). The male dominance among the atheists and the female dominance among the Churched

Christians is striking. Third, Unchurched Non-Christians are younger (66 percent under fifty) than the other groups. In the whole survey 51 percent were over fifty years old.

Traditional Christianity appeals more to elderly people while New Age and para-church organizations appeal to younger people (Kallenberg, Bralenhielm and Larsson 55). Another difference between traditional Christianity and the new spirituality is that traditional Christianity (at least in Swedish Lutheran form) does not have the same openness to possibilities for human development as the new spirituality (80).

The survey also shows that traditional Christianity is stronger outside the metropolitan areas (Kallenberg, Bralenhielm and Larsson 56). If we should personalize the typical Swedish Christian, she is a woman over fifty living in a small town or a rural area. On the other hand, the personalized unchurched non-Christian is a man under fifty living in a metropolitan area.

One conclusion we immediately can draw from this is that in order to reach unchurched non-Christians the church needs to change its cultural approach from targeting elderly women to targeting younger men.

What the Unchurched Value

What are the values among Swedish unchurched people? First of all we need to be aware of that this category contains four different ways to view life: (1) the private-Christian, (2) the private-spiritual, (3) the agnostic, and (4) the atheist. Most interesting for this study are the first two, the private-Christians and the private-spirituals. More than 40 percent of the Swedish population belong to these two groups. It may be appropriate to label them as “seekers.” Of interest also are the agnostics.

The private-Christians or, with Strobel, the unchurched Christians are mainly white-collar people who live in metropolitan areas. Within this group, 46 percent are older than fifty years and 61 percent are women. The values of unchurched Christians eclipse those of the churchd Christians. However, their values lack the female profile we find among the churchd Christian values (Kallenberg, Bralenhielm and Larsson 161).

It is among the private-spirituals we find the middle class people; the average Swede; the “medelsvensson” (the Jones). They are satisfied with their lives, the material benefits, and the social welfare. Only 33 percent are older than fifty years. No group has so few singles. This group contains more white-collar than blue-collar people. They live mainly in metropolitan areas and have an above average income. They are often environmentally conscious and skeptical about technical development. One reason for this can be that an impersonal concept of God often is expressed by eclipsing God and creation. With this pantheistic view of God the experience of nature will contain religious dimensions which the technical development threatens.

The dominant group among the agnostics is men. Engagement in environmental issues is minor. Agnostics are mainly blue-collar people. Family, the welfare state, and the union are cornerstones in their lives. They dislike immigrants and international aid.

One observation occurs with redundancy in the survey. It is how small the differences in values are between all six groups. It is only in religious issues and issues related to the Christian faith we find real diversity. Otherwise it seems the Christian minority is well adapted to the secularized society (Kallenberg, Bralenhielm and

Larsson 68). It seems to be important for many Christians to be like everybody else and to not offend anybody (143).

While most people have a corresponding value foundation, there must be other explanations to the fact that 91 percent of Swedes are unchurched. One important factor is the fiery criticism of Christian faith in general and the hierarchic church in particular by the emerging labor movement in the beginning of this century. Christian faith has for many people in Sweden been connected with issues about obedience, subordination, and even abuse. It is hard for many people even today not to connect God with power and authorities, a predominant view among the agnostics and atheists.

Another explanation may be the emerging of a Christian sub-culture, which to an increasing extent distances itself from the majority of ordinary people. We have seen in the survey that Christians are over-represented among women over fifty. Unconsciously this group of people will have great impact on the culture in the churches. We have also noted the difference between Christian culture and culture among seekers. Thus, it is not the Christian message nor Christian values which shut seekers out. The barrier is cultural and cannot be penetrated unless the Christian church tears it down from within.

It is striking how hard the grip of modernism is upon the values of Swedish people. Some tendencies can be found however of an imminent paradigm shift. Many assert that we currently are in a time of transition. The Finno-Swedish philosopher, Georg Henrik von Wright, calls this time of crises and criticism late-modernism. This implies "a crisis for a great thought, born under the Enlightenment, hovering over the Western civilization in one and a half century, now turning against its own assumptions

and promises” (qtd. in Kallenberg, Brakenhielm, and Larsson 116-17). The result is that more and more Swedes approach the new millennium with an ever increasing existential agony.

Church Growth Literature

The church growth literature tries to answer three questions: (1) What makes churches grow? (2) Why do some churches not grow? What are the hindrances to growth? And (3) What principles can be taught to church leaders who want their churches to become more effective in reaching people with the gospel? George Hunter addresses these three questions in a magnificent way in To Spread the Power: Church Growth in the Wesleyan Spirit.

Church growth talks about four different types of growth:

1. *Internal Growth* is the growth which occurs “in depth, quality, or vitality in an existing congregation” (Hunter, Power 32).
2. *Expansion Growth* is the growth which occurs when new members are welcomed into the congregation. This kind of growth can be either *biological growth*, which means that children of church members become members themselves, *transfer growth*, which means that a person moves from one Christian congregation to another, or *conversion growth*, which occurs when people who have not been members turn their lives over to Christ, are baptized and join the church.
3. *Extension Growth* is the growth which occurs when a new local congregation is planted or when a church starts a new worship service in a different language or for people with a different culture/sub-culture than that of the “mother-church.”

4. *Bridging Growth* occurs “when a church sends cross-cultural missionaries across great cultural, linguistic, and geographic barriers to communicate the gospel and establish a church for a distinct group of people” (32).

When this study talks about church growth, its primary concern is in extension growth, the growth which advances the kingdom when new churches are planted. The Great Commission implies all four dimensions of church growth, though, “and healthy churches who have an apostolic consciousness and conscience pursue all four objectives” (Hunter, Power 33).

Six Church Growth Strategies

George Hunter also gives six “mega-strategies” to “help a floundering church adopt ideas that, when understood and acted on, can make a difference” (Power 34).

Receptive People. The first church growth strategy mentioned by Hunter is to identify receptive people. We have already seen how Paul and Silas went to the place of prayer in Philippi and connected with receptive people there (Acts 16). We have noticed how this strategy was used by the Wesleys and the early Methodists. We can also use our own experience and common sense and find that people in different stages of life or in different locations are more receptive to the gospel than others. “Indeed churches grow as they learn how to identify and reach ‘receptive people’ whom God’s prevenient grace has prepared to meet him” (Power 35). We need to follow Paul, Wesley, and many others in learning to identify these people who are particularly receptive for the gospel. The drive for the Wesleys was a deep desire to rescue people “from the coming wrath.” They both had experienced God’s grace in a heartwarming experience and now they were

equipped with eyes to see the harvest. Rick Warren writes in his book, The Purpose Driven Church, about surfing the waves. He talks about having eyes to see what God is doing among people and learn how to work with God in what he is doing, or with Warren's metaphor learning to surf the waves God creates (14). Then he adds: "The amazing thing is this: The more skilled we become in riding waves of growth, the more God sends" (15)!

How can we spot receptive people? Hunter gives a number of indicators for this (Power 77-86):

1. Use *kinship or friendship networks*. Friends, relatives, neighbors, coworkers, etc. of active credible Christians or of new converts are more receptive than others.
2. Look for people from *new groups and classes*. This kind of people are more receptive than people from established groups or classes.
3. Identify *people with needs*.
4. An *indigenous ministry* approach will sometimes reveal a group of people to be receptive. This is the secret of using cultural bridges so people feel that the gospel is communicated in their own language and in ways they like and can relate to.
5. You can see that a group of people is receptive by noticing *how any religion is growing* within that population. This includes also if the growing religion is another church or denomination.
6. On the other hand, *people among whom any religion has experienced decline* tend to be open to the gospel. People tend, both as groups and as individuals, to look for

something new to build their lives on. “The missionary congregation should constantly be on the lookout for people who are ‘between idols’ ” (80).

7. People who *experience major cultural change* tend to be very receptive. These changes can be very different in character. They can be changes in family life or life itself or be changes in values and beliefs. Warren asserts that one of the most receptive groups is people under tension. God uses a variety of ways, he says, “to get people’s attention: the pain of divorce, death of a loved one, unemployment, financial problems, marriage and family difficulties, loneliness, resentment, guilt, and other stresses” (182).
8. Look for *population mobility*. Warren talks about how important it is to find people in transition. At Saddleback Valley Community Church they have found that people who face change like a new marriage, new baby, new home, new job, or new school are more receptive than others (182). Thus, not only are people in areas of rapid urbanization receptive due to change in their lives, but people in general who face change and transition in their lives have a higher openness toward the gospel.
9. “In most seasons, in most nations, *‘the masses’ are more responsive than the ‘classes’* (Hunter, Power 81).
10. *People who are like the people already in the church* will more likely come to that particular church and will more likely be receptive than others. Warren says that the first question visitors ask when they walk into a church is not religious but cultural: “Is there anybody here like me?” (174).

It would have great impact and bring in great harvest for the Kingdom of God if churches developed specific outreach strategies for each of the most receptive groups of people in their community. “If you want to grow,” Warren underlines, “focus on reaching receptive people” (183).

Utilizing the Social Network. The second church growth strategy is utilizing the social network to reach out. We saw this principle at work in Paul’s ministry in Phillipi. The social networks of Lydia and of the jailer became the basis for two new churches reaching out in different social strata. Without doubt the Christian faith is most easily spread through interpersonal contacts developed during a extended period of time. The evangelism strategy of Willow Creek Community Church emphasizes this approach. Especially steps 1-3 in their seven-step strategy (Willow Creek 65-66). They say that it takes months of friendship influence together with attending a seeker service before a person is ready to make a decision for Christ. The emphasis is on friendship evangelism. Hunter summarizes the features of friendship evangelism in the following seven points:

1. Effective faith-sharing is more relational than verbal.
2. The evangelist does much more listening than talking.
3. The evangelist vocalizes suggestions more than propositions.
4. Christianity is more caught than taught.
5. Conversion is almost never instant, but takes some weeks or months from insemination to birth.
6. The occasions for evangelistic conversation usually arise situationally.

7. In evangelism, the credibility, sensitivity, and skills of the communicator's human relations matter a great deal. (Hunter, Power 105-6)

Multiply Recruiting Units. The third strategy for church growth is to multiply recruiting units. This is the way true Christianity has expanded and reached people during the whole history of Christendom. There is correlation between membership growth and the number of new units created. This is true at the local plan as well as at a national or global perspective. Churches that start new small groups grow. Denominations or organizations who plant new churches grow. Hunter states:

In the U.S. today, in most years, (1) the denominations that are growing are starting more churches than they are closing, (2) the denominations that are starting more congregations than they are closing are growing, (3) the denominations that are declining in membership strength are closing more churches than they are starting, and (4) the denominations that are closing more churches than they are starting are declining. (Power 111)

Carl George shows in Prepare Your Church for the Future how a multiplication of units, in this case small groups, will help churches to continuous growth. The system for multiplication is built on the Jethro principle found in Exodus 18 (121-2). In the basic structure of every small group we find both a leader and an apprentice. The apprentice is the seed for a multiplication of the group. George writes: "The pivotal roles in the church will be those of the cell-group leader (X) and the apprentice leader (Xa). The entire church structure will be organized to equip these men and women to shepherd and reproduce their flocks of ten. "The result? The worldwide harvest field of over 5 billion souls will be evangelized and disciplined as never before" (148).

Need-meeting Ministry. The fourth church growth principle is ministering to people's needs. Jesus brought in the crowds by meeting people's needs--physical, emotional, spiritual, relational, and financial. He often met felt needs "in order to establish a beachhead for evangelism in a person's life" (Warren 219). Hunter suggests four steps in creating a strategy to meet people's felt needs: (1) Gather information about people's needs using three different ways: interviewing people, observing the culture, and reading relevant literature. (2) "Design ministries that might the target population" (143). (3) "Communicate the offer of ministry to the targeted group" (143). (4) "Present the program, ministry, or service with the best management, execution, and human relations possible, and with evangelical follow-through" (Power 143).

Cultural Relevance. The fifth growth principle is to indigenizing the ministries of the church. "The greatest barrier to the gospel is not theology; it is culture" (Morris 100). This stresses the importance of growing churches which are culturally relevant to the people they try to reach. An indigenizing church takes this issue seriously. To make the gospel indigenous and culturally attractive to secular unchurched people is a crucial point for the Christian church today and in the future. It is in fact a matter of life and death (101). Many of the growing, seeker-oriented churches in America today maintain these two values among their top core values:

Core value #2: We believe that people matter to God, and therefore, ought to matter to the church.

Core value #3: We believe that the church should be culturally relevant while remaining doctrinally pure. (Willow Creek 72)

The Willow Creek Community Church: Church Leaders Handbook 1996 adds after the second value: “This includes the concept of sensitively relating to our culture through our facility, printed materials, and use of arts” (72). How does a church go about indigenizing its witness, ministry, and worship to fit the culture of the target population? Darrell Whiteman says that “the incarnation is the model; indigenization is the method” (Qtd. in Power 169). Indigenization is a broad concept; it contains all of the following components and certainly many more:

1. A genuine sensitivity for cultural factors and for people in other cultures.
2. Try to identify with the people in order to understand them, their feelings and mind set.
3. Use their language and dialect.
4. Use a style of clothing, music, and worship setting with which people can resonate.
5. Employ appropriate responses to the gospel.
6. Employ an indigenous leadership style.
7. Recruit and develop indigenous leaders.
8. Encourage indigenous theologizing. (Power 169-72)

Strategic Planning. The sixth principle for a growing church is to use strategic planning for the future. Robert Schuller says: “To fail to plan is to plan to fail.” Every church needs to know what its purpose is, what its target population is, what its vision is, and how it is going to make that vision into reality. There need to be specific goals set and plans for how to reach those goals. A church reaching out to the unchurched thousands in secular Sweden must be a purpose- and vision-centered church. The first

step in planting a new church is to define its purpose. The first step in the revitalization process of an existing church is, according to Morris, to re-define its purpose (121).

Worship, fellowship, nurture and evangelism are highlighted in the Bible as Christ's purposes for His church: (122). These four components are important in a growing church which reaches the unchurched. "A clearly stated, relevant, challenging purpose of the church allows both leadership and members to easily develop a strategy and plan that effectively carries out the purpose" (123). In order to do strategic planning the church needs to be vision-centered. Purpose asks the question: Why do we exist? Vision on the other hand asks: "What needs do we feel deeply burdened about and uniquely qualified to meet?" (129). The church that wants to impact society and reach a city for God must have both a clear purpose and a clear-cut vision. Vision distinguishes a strong church from a weak church! Purpose and vision are the foundations for the goals and plans for a growing church, regardless if it is newly planted or established.

The church with keen purpose and vision is on the way to becoming a high-impact church. The high impact church has a multi-faced purpose to glorify God through worship, fellowship, nurture, and evangelism- -and a targeted, specific vision to reach the city. (131)

Hunter defines planning for church growth "as the mental creation of the future we intend" (Power 188). Planning involves two stages: strategic planning, where the future is defined and the major tracks laid out, and operational planning, which answers the questions about how, where, when, and by whom the plans will be fulfilled. In the strategic planning process we find the following steps:

1. Church and community identification. Every church needs to determine the context in which it will work. Will it be the immediate neighborhood or a vaster area? The answer to this question will inform what kind of church will be created (Power 188). On the other hand, the vision for a specific kind of church will also inform the environment for the church. With the increasing mobility we see in our society nothing less than aiming for regional churches will be sufficient.
2. The next step is to do a situation analysis, analyzing the main facts about and trends within the church and community that will help to inform the planning process (194).
3. The strategic framework prepares the planning group for planning and it prepares the members to get ownership in and carry out the resulting plan (198).
4. The mission statement helps the church to focus on its purpose. It needs to answer the questions: What? For whom? How? (199).
5. Building on the mission statement, the church sets clear and measurable goals. Now the process changes from a general into a specific process. "Setting goals for which the people hold themselves accountable is a pivotal variable in Church Growth" (202). Goals must be specific, attainable and measurable.
6. Strategies are the broad actions a church will take in order to fulfill its goals (203).
7. Programs and activities are the tactics for implementing the strategies (204).
8. Operational plans answer for each program and activity: Who will do what by when? (206).

One of Wesley's lieutenants commented on planning: "Our Old Plan has been to follow the openings of Providence, and to alter and amend the plan, as we saw needful, in

order to be more useful in the hand of God” (209). This must also today be the goal for planning, not to create plans for their own sake, but to be more useful in the hand of God.

Apostolic Congregations

In his book Church for the Unchurched, George Hunter describes the features of congregations who reach out to the unchurched. He calls these churches “apostolic” because:

(1) Like the root meaning of the term “apostle” and like the experience of the New Testament apostles their leaders believe that they and the church are “called” and “sent” by God to reach an unchurched pre-Christian population. (2) Their theology and message center upon the gospel of early apostolic Christianity, rather than upon the narrower dogmatism, or the more vague “inclusive” theism, or the conventional moralism found in many traditional churches. (3) Like the early apostles and their communities, these churches adapt to the language and the culture of their target population to communicate meaningfully the meaning of the ancient message. (4) They are remarkably similar to certain key features we find in early apostolic Christianity, in the Anabaptist, Pietist, and Methodist apostolic movements within Reformation Christianity, and in many growing Third World congregations today. (28)

Distinctives of Apostolic Congregations. The distinctives of Apostolic

Congregations are:

1. They “take a redundant approach to rooting believers and seekers in Scripture”

(Unchurched 29). Jeff Spiller observes that people “want to know what *God* has to say about the simple and complex issues of life. They’re not even interested in what I think or some poet or writer--they’re interested in what God thinks” (21). Apostolic Congregations use a variety of ways to immerse people in “what God thinks” about the issues of life.

2. “They are disciplined and earnest in Prayer, and they expect and experience God’s action in response” (Unchurched 30). A good example here the prayer ministry in The Community Church of Joy in Phoenix, Arizona. Their prayer ministry gathers 1,000 to 1,200 people per week involving people in prayer groups of ten to twenty-five persons. Each prayer group targets a special group of people or a special need. People report answers to prayer, spiritual empowerment, healing, and victory in their daily living. “The church experiences a unity and power it had not known before” (31).
3. They “understand, like, and have a **compassion** [emphasis in original] for lost, unchurched, pre-Christian people” (31). By contrast, many traditional churches have a difficult time with unchurched people. Building on the Great Commandment, Warren states that one of the main purposes of the church is to minister to people. “Ministry is demonstrating God’s love to others by meeting their needs and healing their hurts in the name of Jesus. Each time you reach out in love to others you are ministering to them” (Warren 104).
4. They “obey the Great Commission--more as warrant or privilege than mere duty” (Unchurched 31). These churches see themselves essentially as churches especially for unchurched people. The mission to reach out to unchurched, pre-Christian people takes priority over ministry to the members! (31)
5. They have “a motivationally sufficient vision for what people, as disciples, can become” (32). The Apostolic Congregations have different goals for people than traditional churches. While traditional churches may have domestication as the major

goal in the assimilation process, the goals in Apostolic Congregations may look more like the five vital signs of growth, developed by New Song Church:

- I am growing in my intimacy with God and faithfulness to His word.
- I am growing in real relationship with others in a small group.
- I am growing in my service to God and others.
- I am growing in reaching my pre-Christian relationships for Christ.
- I am growing in my sensitivity toward the training of leaders and planting of groups and churches. (43-44)

6. They “adapt to the language, music, and style of the target population’s culture” (32).

Hunter asserts that the “cultural barrier between the church and the unchurched people of Europe is the largest single cause of European Christianity’s decline in this century” (62). Looking at the situation in Sweden, we regretfully have to admit that he is right. Even worse is that very few people are aware of the situation. A crucial question we have to ask is: How open are we to people different from ourselves with different behavior and opinions? In breaking the cultural barrier John Wesley’s advice to his preachers is helpful. He coached them to speak in “the most obvious, easy, common words, wherein our meaning can be conveyed” and to “never deviate from the most usual way of speaking” (66).

7. They “labor to involve everyone, believers and seekers, in small groups” (32). These churches are not just churches that utilize small groups as one of many strategies, they are churches built out of small groups. The small groups are the main building block and the main structure for growth in all four aspects of church growth listed above as well as for pastoral care and mutual encouragement, love and fellowship.

8. They “prioritize the involvement of all Christians in lay ministries for which they are gifted” (32). Small groups, done according to the apostolic model, are producing an apostolic laity. It is only in an apostolic church that the releasing of the laity is effective. The apostolic church has the framework, in small groups, many different ministries, and outreach, for lay people to not only get involved in the business of the church but to minister with their personal and spiritual gifts in areas they have a heart for. Involved in this issue is the importance for the clergy to give away ministry and trust the people. Hunter mentions “that many lay people, with training, can do 90 percent of what an ordained pastor does” (134). When lay people are declared competent, the result will be that they feel freedom to initiate new ministries and carry them out.
9. Their members receive regular pastoral care from people who are gifted for shepherding ministry (32).
10. They “engage in many ministries to unchurched non-Christian people” (32).

How Apostolic Churches Do Outreach. Hunter gives ten pioneering principles of outreach in Apostolic Churches:

- They prepare people in multiple ways. People are involved in pastoral care, small groups, and lay ministry, offering many ways to minister to pre-Christian people.
- They clarify the goal of outreach. The goal found in Willow Creek’s mission statement is a good example of that. Their goal is “to turn irreligious people into fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ” (Willow Creek 63)

- They understand evangelism as a process. Making Christians necessarily involves a process, which takes place in stages and over time. This is the concept of early Methodism.
- They regard outreach as a lay ministry. The laity has more contacts, they are not supposed to be professional Christians, and they stay in the church even if the pastor moves.
- They train their people for outreach.
- They practice social network evangelism. The laity are utilizing their natural network of contacts: family, friends, people at work, etc.
- They offer a plain straight forward Christian faith. No fake--the real thing.
- They address the "life concerns" of pre-Christians (and Christians). They are beginning with the seeker's felt needs and driving questions and proceed from there.
- They use the language of the target population. C. S. Lewis said that any fool can prattle academic or ecclesiastical jargon. The test is communication "in the vernacular."
- They represent the gospel with Generational relevance. They have discovered that the same concepts that attract unchurched people also attracts their own youth and young adults (Unchurched 153-62).

How Apostolic Churches Are Different from Traditional Churches. There are at least five ways in which apostolic churches are different from traditional churches: (1) They are reaching significant numbers of unchurched, secular people. (2) They use the

language and the music style of the people they are called to reach. (3) They are on the edge of their denominations (often looked upon with suspicion, sometimes even mocked -it seems to be part of the price one has to pay to do something great for God). (4) The establishment is anxious about the apostolic churches and at the same time they envy their capacity to reach out to unchurched pre-Christian people (13). (5) The apostolic churches, in communicating the gospel, always start where people are. They do this with the conviction that people's felt needs often are symptoms of their deeper need of forgiveness, justification, reconciliation, and power of the Holy Spirit. "The gospel addresses both the need and the Need; so should we" (Unchurched 163).

Missiological Literature

For a very long time mission has been referred to as what churches in the first world do in the third world. That is not the case any longer. Today our own backyards in the so called Christian world are some of the most unreached areas in the world. In order to reach out to secular people in a post-Christian era we have to learn from and adopt what we have tried to do on our third world mission fields.

Cross Cultural Evangelism

In his address, at the International Congress on World Evangelization in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1974, Ralph Winter defined three levels on which evangelism takes place:

Let's give labels to these different kinds of evangelism. Where an Ao Naga won another Ao, let us call that *E-1 evangelism*. Where an Ao went across a tribal language boundary to a sister language and won the *Santdam*, we'll call it *E-2 Evangelism*. (The E-2 task is not as easy as requires different techniques.) But then if an Ao Naga goes to another region of India, to a totally strange language,

for example Telegu, Korhu or Bhili, his task will be considerably more difficult than E-1 or E-2 evangelism. We will call it E-3 evangelism. (Let the Earth Hear his Voice 215)

According to Winter's definition only E-2 and E-3 evangelism could be considered as cross-cultural. E-1 evangelism involves the communication of the gospel to people of the communicator's own language and culture. Realizing that the step between E-1 and E-2 evangelism is larger than between E-2 and E-3 evangelism, George Hunter has modified the first step. He says that "E-1 evangelism connotes that some distance or barrier is involved, namely the 'stained-glass barrier' between Christians and non-Christians" (Power 160). If the church should be able to reach out beyond the stained-glass barrier it must identify the sub-cultures of its own society. In order to be able to communicate within the E-1 level the church "must adapt enough to begin where they are" (160). To help the church do that, Hunter has divided the E-1 evangelism into a number of steps:

Evangelizing at an E 1-A level of difficulty engages those people of the communicator's own culture and subculture who are his or her own intimates--relatives, colleagues, and friends. (166)

Evangelizing at an E 1-B level engages people very much like the communicator, but they do not yet know, or spontaneously trust, one another The communicator can therefore speak and relate quite naturally to them. (167)

E 1-C engages people of the evangelizer's culture but of a different subculture. As the evangelizer and (especially) the recipient sense their difference in customs, life-styles, education, vocabulary, class, aesthetics, or whatever, these differences are experienced as subcultural barriers. (167)

E 1-D engages people of a hyphenated subculture Many people are Afro-Americans, or Mexican-Americans, Polish-Americans, Cuban-American, Korean-American, and so forth...E 1-D is not as difficult as E 2, because they have experienced enough re-enculturation to provide some points of contact with, say, the Anglo-American evangelizer. (167-8)

Hunter asserts that the average congregation may primarily be able to reach out on level E 1-A and E 1-B. This is the distance limit for most Christians. However, if a congregation is going to reach out to pre-Christian unchurched people, it must break out of this limitation and start to befriend people on an E 1-C distance to them.

The Christian church in Sweden has become a sub-culture in itself. Many Christians have few contacts with non-believers within their closest friendship network. The only way to expand the kingdom is the cross-cultural approach at the E 1-C level. Hunter comments: "In most communities, however, these people will be disciplined in great numbers only by starting new congregations in separate spots that are indigenous to them in language, culture, liturgical style, and leadership" (Power 168).

The Creation of Culturally Relevant Churches

To create a culturally relevant congregation, three things need to be considered: the marks of an indigenous church and what makes its employment of certain principles indigenous, the indigenizing process itself, and the contextualization of the gospel.

Marks of an Indigenous Church. Building on Henry Venn's theory of selfhood, the three selves, Alan Tippet defines selfhood as total entity. In his book, Verdict Theology in Missionary Theory, Tippet gives six marks of a truly indigenous church:

1. The first mark is self-image. "Does the church see itself as the church of Jesus Christ in its own local situation, mediating the work, the mind, the word and ministry of Jesus Christ in its own environment" (Tippet 155)?
2. Self-functioning. The more people that are involved in ministry instead of being dependent on only one leader, the more indigenous it will be (156).

3. Self-determining capacity. Does the structure fit the decision-making patterns of the social structure, or is it foreign?
4. Self-supporting nature. This is the mark of stewardship. An indigenous church carries its own financial burdens. And even though it seeks financial support from outside trusts and agencies, the initiative should come from the young Church and not from contributing agencies (157).
5. Self-propagating nature. "Does the young church see itself as being directly addressed by the words of the Great Commission? Is the matter of quantitative church growth from the pagan regions beyond of real concern to the young church" (158)?
6. Its devotion to self-giving. This is the mark of service to society out to a wider secular world.

Commenting on these six marks, Tippet declares that "they are marks of an indigenous church when the young church undertakes them of its own volition, when they are spontaneously done, by indigenes and with their own pattern of life" (158). This last notion seems to be the most important mark of the selfhood which constitutes the foundation for a truly indigenous church.

William Smally's approach to the question of what constitutes an indigenous church is somewhat different from that of Tippet. He asserts that to use the three selves--"self-governing," "self-supporting," "self-propagating"--is a false diagnosis of whether a church is indigenous or not. At least it is not sufficient. And if these three selves are to be used, the issue of self-propagating is the most crucial for an indigenous church. He

says, "In few areas of the world it may be precisely the foreigners of the church which is the source of attraction to unbelievers" (365). To be indigenous in this case will be, according to Smally's definition of meeting people's felt needs, one criteria of indigenusness, just not being self-propagating.

Smally defines an indigenous church as "a group of believers who live out their life, including their socialized Christian activity, in the patterns of the local society, and for whom any transformation of that society comes out of their felt needs under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures" (366).

Two things mark an indigenous church, according to Smally. First, the church is a society and a society has patterns of interactions among people. In an indigenous church, these patterns will be based on the patterns existing in the local society. Second is the presence of the Holy Spirit who implies transformation both of individual lives and of society. "An indigenous church is precisely one in which the changes which take place under the guidance of the Holy Spirit meet the needs and fulfill the meanings of that society and not of any outside group" (366). An outside group will be missionaries, a supporting agency, etc.

Smally finds the picture of what an indigenous church is in the New Testament. It is the picture "of a church in which the Holy Spirit has worked its transformation within the society" (366-7). He mentions that the cultural expressions of the Jerusalem church and the church in Corinth were very different without either of them considering the other less Christian. "Until we are willing for the church to have its different manifestations in different cultures as between the Jewish Christians and the various kinds of Greeks, rather

than export the denominational patterns rooted in our history and often irrelevant to the rest of the world, we will not have indigenous churches” (372).

Four types of socio-cultural integration were considered helpful by Whiteman in analyzing the degree of change, advocated by the Melanesian Mission, which became integrated into contemporary Anglican villages in the Solomon Islands. Cultural integration is “the way in which different elements of a culture relate to each other, forming webs of logic and interconnection between the various parts” (Melanesians 477). These four types of integration follow Spicer’s discussion of cultural change in American Indian societies in his book, Perspectives in American Indian Culture Change.

1. Incorporative integration refers to

the transfer of elements from one cultural system and their integration into another system in such a way that they conform to the meaningful and functional relations within the latter Incorporative integration is a type of tradition combination which results in totally new forms being accepted into a culture in such a way they enhance the existing organization of that culture. (Spicer qtd. in Melanesians 374)

The meaning of this is that “although new forms are adopted they are used to express traditional meanings and fulfill traditional functions” (375).

2. Assimilative integration is the opposite of incorporate integration. The emphasis is on “the acceptance and replacement of cultural behaviors in terms of the dominant society’s cultural system” (Spicer qtd in Melanesians 375). No attempts occur of harmonizing “the introduced cultural elements with the indigenous cultural system” (375).

3. Fusional integration occurs “where cultural forms introduced by the dominant society become fused with meanings from the subordinate society and a syncretism results” (375). Two or more cultural systems are combined into a single system.
4. Isolative integration occurs where “cultural elements introduced into a society are adopted, but they remain isolated from other aspects of the society and become compartmentalized” (375). “The accepted elements lack linkage with other complexes, despite serving very similar or identical functions” (Spicer qtd. in Melanesians 375).

Whiteman’s hypothesis of cultural integration can be summarized as follows: “An important index of indigeneity is the degree to which introduced change has become integrated into a society by those members who have adopted the new idea, institution, artifact, etc. as their own” (Melanesians 375). This hypothesis correlates best with incorporative or fusional integration. Whiteman’s use of the term “indigenous” refers to the way in which indigenes perceive and identify particular cultural elements introduced into their society. If they perceive them as their own, and identify them as “own custom” then these elements have become internalized into the culture. That is, they have become indigenous despite their origin. (375)

When we weigh all these sources together we find that the criteria of determining if a church or custom found in a congregation is indigenous or not will be:

1. The degree of selfhood found in the church.
2. How much the customs of the church are lived out in patterns of the local society or patterns of the specific cultural setting in which the church lives.

3. The presence of the Holy Spirit as an agent of transformation of individuals and society.
4. The ability of the church to address the felt needs of people in the surrounding society instead of the needs of any outside supporting group or agency.
5. The employment of certain principles is perceived and identified as our “own customs” by indigenes in a particular church or congregation.
6. The fact that indigenous does not necessarily mean traditional.

The Indigenization Process. Indigenization is “the process of taking something from outside the culture and adopting and adapting it in such a way that it naturally belongs to the culture and becomes native to it” (Whiteman, Melanesians 478). Hunter gives the following steps for this process. First, “to acquire a genuine *sensitivity* to cultural factors and to people of other culture is to win the half battle” (Power 169). Second, try to identify with the people in order to understand them, their feelings and mind set. “Cross-cultural identification is never complete, for some things are learned only in early enculturation, but partial identification seems to be usable by the Holy Spirit, who makes up the difference” (169). Third, use their language and especially their dialect or “heart language.” “In the subcultures of the various cultures, the Word must be spread in the language and cultural forms of the subculture if it is to become flesh” (170). Fourth, use a style of clothing, music, and worship setting with which people can resonate. Take advice from people within the target population about what “fits” them and what does not. Fifth, employ appropriate responses to the gospel. “To discover the best method or methods, observe those methods God is already blessing amongst these

people” (170). Sixth, employ an indigenous leadership style (171). Seventh, recruit and develop indigenous leaders (171). Eighth, encourage indigenous theologizing. Darrell Whiteman asserts that “theological reflection emerges, typically, as the church in a given culture seeks biblical answers to important questions raised by the culture” (Qtd. in Hunter, Power 172).

Contextualization of the Gospel. The last step above introduces the second important task for a culturally relevant church: to contextualize the gospel. Contextualization means “to communicate the Gospel in words and deed and to establish the church in ways that make sense to people within their local cultural context. Presenting Christianity in such a way that it meets people’s deepest needs and penetrates their worldviews, thus allowing them to follow Christ and remain within their own culture” (Whiteman, “Theory” 2). Leslie Newbigin maintains that true contextualization “accords to the gospel its rightful primacy, its power to penetrate every culture and to speak within each culture, in its own speech and symbol, the word which is both No and Yes, both judgment and grace” (152). There is a need for a true contextualization of the gospel also in our post-modern Western world.

Contextualization has a function of offending, but only for the right reason. The reason should not be poor contextualization but that the gospel is so well contextualized that its claims will be understood and therefore offend people. Poor contextualization leads only to the possibility that people will be culturally offended.

There is also a need for critical contextualization. Critical contextualization uses four steps, according to Paul Hiebert. The first step is exegesis of the culture. That

means to study the local culture phenomenologically in order to understand culture, the old ways of doing things, the traditions, etc. All this must be done non-judgmentally. Second, exegesis of the Scripture and the hermeneutical bridge. This is a study of the Bible related to the questions raised from the cultural exegesis. "The leader must also have a metacultural framework that enables him or her to translate the biblical message into cognitive, affective, and evaluative dimensions of another culture" (109). This is crucial, for if the biblical message is not grasped as originally intended, the view of the gospel will be distorted. "The third step is for the people corporately to evaluate critically their own past customs in the light of their new biblical understanding" (110). In some occasions, people want to modify old practices by giving them new meanings. Hiebert gives Charles Wesley's use of the melodies of popular songs from the bars, but with Christian lyrics added, as an example of that (110). This illustrates the fourth step, to create new contextualized practices.

Critical contextualization does not operate from a monocultural perspective. It seeks to find metacultural and metatheological frameworks that enables people in one culture to understand messages and ritual practices from another culture with a minimum of distortion. It sees contextualization as an ongoing process in which the church must constantly engage itself, a process that can lead us to a better understanding of what the Lordship of Christ and the kingdom of God on earth are about. (111)

Contextualization "develops contextualized expressions of the Gospel so that the Gospel itself will be understood in ways the universal church has neither experienced nor understood before, thus expanding our understanding of the kingdom of God"

(Whiteman, "Theory" 4). What a wonderful opportunity and challenge this gives to the church! It forces the church to have a more adequate view of God as the God of all

persons. In a conversation with Darrell Whiteman, a church leader said: "Unless we present the Gospel locally in ways that connect to people's language, culture, and worldview, we will fail in our efforts at world evangelization" ("Contextualizing the Gospel" 4).

In his editorial in *Missiology*, January 1997, Darrell Whiteman asks:

How do we carry out the great commission and live out the great commandment in a world of cultural diversity, with a gospel that is both truly Christian in content and culturally significant in form? Contextualization leaves us with 3 challenges: (1) contextualization changes and transforms the context--this is the prophetic challenge, (2) contextualization expands our understanding of the gospel because we now see the gospel through a different cultural lens--this is the hermeneutic challenge, (3) contextualization changes the cross cultural witness because people will not be the same once they become a part of the body of Christ in a context different from their own--this is the personal challenge. ("Contextualizing the Gospel" 5)

The incarnation is the best model for contextualization. "The incarnation, life and ministry of Jesus Christ as recorded in the New Testament provides us with the supreme example of biblical contextualization" (Chaney 133). Newbigin concludes:

True contextualization happens when there is a community which lives faithfully by the gospel and in that same costly identification with people in their real situations as we see in the earthly ministry of Jesus. When these conditions are met, the sovereign Spirit of God does his own surprising work. (154)

Church Planting Literature

The Church planting literature deals primarily with two issues: first, why church planting is so important and, second, how to plant new churches. The first question may be more urgent in the old world than in the US. Peter Wagner comments about the work group "Christian Witness to Nominal Christians Among Protestants" at the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization in their meeting in Pattaya, Thailand, in 1980. He

says that in the fourteen pages long report with strategies for reaching nominal Christians in the old Western world, church planting was not mentioned. Later he found out that church planting was mentioned during the committee discussion but not considered to be a useful means (24). One of the reasons so few churches have been planted in Europe, and why so many Christian leaders oppose new church plants is that the focus for most churches has been on church renewal. Writes Wagner: "I am one of the strongest supporters of church renewal, and I believe that if renewal comes to our existing churches, much subsequent evangelism will be done" (25). I agree with Wagner. On the other hand, when old churches start to reach out to the unchurched and start to plant new churches, they will be renewed to a new strength and vitality which no renewal movement could ever have brought.

Monica Hill acknowledges in the preface to How to Plant Churches how irrelevant church planting has been in most parts of Britain during the last sixty years (since the 1920s). "But the tide is turning," she says. People now recognize that Britain no longer is the Christian country it once was. "With this recognition comes a challenge to the Christians in Britain. What more should we be doing to make sure that the gospel is heard by all?--and further, that new converts are gathered into meaningful communities?" (9). Hill concludes: "The challenge is there to plant churches which are attractive and meaningful to those who do not fit easily into the more traditional patterns" (10).

As we have seen, the situation in Sweden is much the same as in Britain, with one huge difference: the secularization process has gone further in Sweden. Today only 9 percent of the population claim an active church affiliation. Hill's questions are highly

relevant to the Swedish scene; and so is the answer she gives. How shall Swedish people hear the gospel? Through the planting of new, culturally relevant churches, targeting the unchurched! Wagner states that “the single most effective evangelistic methodology under heaven is planting new churches” (11). It is also his conviction that this principle is valid in the old world, in Europe (24). Over the years we can observe, both in the US and in Europe, that church planting denominations also have experienced substantial growth. It might not be any coincidence that the membership decline of the Methodist Church in Sweden started at the same time as the major church planting period ended in the beginning of the 1920s.

Why Plant New Churches

What are the reasons for planting new churches?

1. It is biblical that the Christian church expand and the gospel advances. The most natural way to do that, in the biblical perspective, is to form the new believers into new churches. The Acts of the Apostles is full of examples of how new churches were formed wherever the early Christians shared the gospel. Jesus called his church to be fruitful. He wants the church to grow, to expand, and to multiply (Warren 62-63). When new churches are planted it will bring more people into the kingdom and more unchurched people will be turned into “fully devoted follower of Christ.” It is the nature of the church to reproduce. In his book Planting Churches Cross-Culturally, David Hesselgrave remarks that the relationship between gospel proclamation and church planting is so intimate that “they cannot be divorced without doing violence to the mission of the church” (33)

2. Historically, Christianity has expanded through church planting. We are Christians today because earlier generations planted new churches. "It is axiomatic," says Logan, "that the church is always only one generation away from extinction" (Beyond 193). Extinction will inevitably be the result if no new churches are planted to reach the new emerging generations for Christ.
3. The planting of new churches is a means for denominational survival. As Hunter makes it clear, denominations that plant more new churches than they close old ones will grow (Power 111).
4. The realities of the growing world population force the global church to be aggressive in its church planting strategy. Thousands of different people groups can only be reached by new cross-cultural church plants. The urbanization process is rapid. By the year 2000 more than 50 percent of the world population will live in an urban area. The metropolitan areas are the least evangelized of all areas in the world. Ninety-one percent of the Swedish population are unchurched and have no meaningful church connection and only 5 percent are regular church attenders. There is plenty of room for, as well as a crying need for new churches to reach the thousands of lost people in our world.
5. New churches have a vitality not existing in old established churches. They are attractive to unchurched people and often the necessary component for catalyzing that unchurched people come to Christ (Logan, Beyond 194). These new churches also have been proven to have a greater growth potential. This not to say that new churches always grow and that old churches cannot grow, but growth is more likely to

happen in new churches and with less effort. New churches also help to create new options for the unchurched. Rick Warren observes that it takes different kinds of churches to reach different kinds of people (61). Many hesitate to plant a new church in proximity to another existing church, but the reality is that the social network is more important than the location (Wagner 33). The vitality of a church targeting mainly unchurched people will also help people already Christian to grow in their faith. It will especially be helpful for the emerging generation of young people who often feel alienated in the traditional church.

6. The positive motivations for planting new churches are: a compassion for the lost, the unwavering faith that new church plants are needed, a desire to expand God's kingdom, a burden to reach a specific target group, and God's specific call to be a church planter (Logan, Toolkit 1-4).
7. New churches provide opportunities for development of new leaders. In old churches most leadership positions are already filled and hold few possibilities for upward mobility. The roles are fixed since long. New churches, on the other hand, "open wide the doors of leadership and ministry challenges and the entire Body of Christ subsequently benefits" (Wagner 20).
8. Church planting stimulates existing churches. "In more cases than not, a new church in the community tends to raise the religious interest of the people in general and if handled properly can be a benefit to the existing churches" (20).

Objections to Church Planting

Four major objections to church planting need to be addressed here. First, to take a group of dedicated members from an existing church to start a new congregation will harm the parent church. This may not be true. With proper planning the reverse is more likely. It will most often help the present church. Many churches can testify about how God has filled the seats after the church planting group with abundance (Wagner 37-38). The second objection to church planting is that the start-up costs are too high. "The truth of the matter is that in terms of dollars spent by sponsoring church or agency, new church planting can be the most cost effective method of evangelization" (38). Third, Christian love tells us to help others, not to harm them. The fact is that a new planted church can help to vitalize already present churches. Religious consciousness in the whole area will rise, which all churches will benefit from. Fourth, to plant new churches is just another example of the disunity of the Christian church. This objection would be valid if an area was "over-churched" and all churches really reached out to the unchurched. That is rarely the case. Most places have a large unreaped harvest. It is important for a new church is to stick to its vision to reach the unchurched and not give in for the temptation of "sheep-stealing." The best strategy for the kingdom of God is that old and new churches go together and form a Christian unity that helps to evangelize the lost (37-42).

The Spiritual Aspect of Church Planting

Wagner underlines two important aspects of church planting. The first one is the spiritual aspect. Every church planting enterprise must be conceived, born, and raised up by prayer. "The more deeply I dig beneath the surface of church growth principles," says

Wagner, “the more thoroughly convinced I become that the real battle is a spiritual battle and that our principal weapon is prayer” (45). Therefore, the church planter needs to improve his or her own prayer life. Besides that, the church planter needs to develop a community of prayer together with those God has called to come along with him to do the church plant. It is important to start early in a church’s life to develop the habit of praying together and of corporate prayer. It is also important for the new church plant to have individuals who intercede for the church planter and other leaders. The church planter needs to recruit these prayer partners, starting from before the church is planted, and then enlarge the prayer partner ministry as the new church grows.

All these components in an effective prayer support to the new church plant must be aware of the spiritual warfare in which they inevitably will find themselves. The spiritual warfare takes place on at least two levels: the level of personal deliverance and wrestling with principalities and powers. Planting new churches to reach the unchurched and save the lost is a direct declaration of war against the powers of darkness. Therefore the new church and the church planter need to be alert and neutralize Satan’s attacks through prayer so that the gospel can be preached with power and boldness (45-50). Sometimes it also will be necessary to enter into a spiritual warfare to dethrone spiritual power that keep people and a place in its grip.

The Technical Aspect of Church Planting

The second aspect of church planting mentioned by Wagner is the technical aspect.

The Church Planter. The first component of this aspect is the church planter himself. The main characteristic of a catalytic leader is that he wants the church to grow and is willing to pay the price to make it happen. This will also be true about a good church planter. The profile Wagner gives is built upon the assumption that the church planter will be the founding pastor of a church that will go beyond 200 in attendance.

The church planter is:

1. A committed Christian worker. Church planters need to be people of God who love him and want to serve him with all their hearts.
2. A self starter. Church planters are their own boss. This requires self-discipline and time management skills.
3. Willing to endure loneliness. To plant a church is at the beginning a lonely job full of frustrations and backlashes. This is why church planters need to be people who are not easily discouraged. They need to be people of faith, possibility thinkers.
4. Adaptable. They need to be able to adapt to different situations and to flex with circumstances. The church planter is willing to do whatever it takes to reach the lost.
5. A person with a high level of faith. The church planter need to have faith not only in God but also in themselves. They need a healthy self-esteem and be grounded in a calling from God to be his servant. Elmer Towns says that the pastors who have “the strongest perception of their faith also have growing churches” (Qtd. in Wagner 53).
6. A person with total support from spouse and family. Wagner never recommend a person to enter into a church planting situation unless the spouse and family is in full support.

7. A person who is willing and able to lead. “Everything rises and falls on leadership” (Maxwell x). This is also true in the church planting business. Maxwell continues: “The effectiveness of your work will never rise above your ability to lead and influence others. You cannot produce consistently on a level higher than your leadership. In other words, your leadership skills determine the level of your success- -and the success of those who work around you” (x).
8. A friendly, likable person. The church planter has the ability to relate to unchurched people and not to be intimidated by non-Christians or uncomfortable in contact with people with a worldly life-style.
9. A person clearly called by God to plant a church. This is crucial to being able to endure the hard days in a church planter’s life (Wagner 52-55).

I want to add a tenth component in the church planter profile. I tested the profile on one of my church planting friends and he said, “You need to add ‘a passion for the lost’.”

10. A person with a burning passion for the lost. The main motive for a church planter to enter into the task of planting a new church must be to reach unchurched secular people who otherwise would be eternally lost. As Wesley puts it, “We do not have anything else to do but save souls.”

A Core Group. The second component of the technical aspect is that the church planter need a group of church people to support him in the church plant. Wagner says: “Even if your goal is to reach the unchurched, it is good to have people around you who have had some experience in what a church is and how it usually works” (56). The church planter needs to have some church people in the core group. These people can

come from a mother church, be formed by unchurched Christians, or, more risky, be dissatisfied Christians who are looking for a new church home.

Philosophy of Ministry. The third component is the need for a well-developed philosophy of ministry. The philosophy of ministry flows out of a church planter's vision and mission and states what kind of church he or she will plant and how he or she will going to do church. It basically answers the questions: Who is God calling us to reach? And how are we going to do that? (Wagner 57).

Research. The last component for the planning stage is the research. Charles Chaney talks about the importance of "exegeting" the community. To do a thorough exegesis of the community in which the new church plant is going to be located, five factors may be involved:

Geographics tell us where the people are located. *Demographics* tell us who the people are in terms of social characteristics. *Geodemographics*, a sophisticated combination of the two first, identify segments of populace that tend to cluster in certain habitats and to follow certain behavior pattern. *Psychographics* tell us how the people behave from a specific psychological and sociological perspective, focusing on common values and life styles. *Ekklegraphics* tell us how a church or denomination is similar to or different from the neighboring community. (137)

Chaney also states the importance for church planters to do a thorough work in the exegesis of his or her society.

Useful Ways to Plant a New Church

There are as many ways to plant a new church as there are new church plants. However, some methods are better than others. Here comes a brief list of some useful methods.

1. The most common way to plant a daughter church is branching. In branching the parent church is hiving off a group of church people to form a core group for a new church plant. This core group will then join a church planter and plant the new church.
2. Colonization is a more radical form of branching. It means relocating a core group to plant a church in a new community.
3. Seeding is to send out a key lay person to form a nucleus for a church plant in a new community.
4. Adopting is to embrace core groups and/or churches who approach a denomination or church planting agency for help.
5. Partnering means that two or more churches go together in a co-venture to get a new church started.
6. Pioneering is to start a new church from scratch. This can be done by a catalytic church planter, a person who goes to an area, develops an nucleus, and then moves on. The pioneer can also be the founding pastor who goes to a place, plants a church, and stays.
7. The mission team model is used when a church or a church planting agency recruits, finances, and sponsors a team to go into a new area to plant a church.
8. Revitalization takes place when a church planter comes in and takes over and restarts the church at the same site.
9. Transplanting a church is relocating it to a new location and giving it a new start there.

10. Propagating is to multiply a network of cell groups through theological education and evangelism by extension (Logan, Toolkit 4-3, Wagner 60-71).

A New Paradigm

As already noticed, the mindset of people has changed dramatically during the last couple of decades. We now live in a post-Christian society, which is pluralistic in its values and indifferent toward organized Christianity. In many ways our time is very much like the first century. We have left the time of Christian hegemony and entered into a mission situation. Some of today's greatest missionary challenges lay within the field of re-evangelizing the Western world, especially the old world. The implications for church planting include the change of church planting paradigm from a church culture paradigm to a mission culture paradigm. The mission culture paradigm focuses on multiplication where the earlier paradigm has focused on growth. The focus of the new church planting paradigm is on group conversions instead of individual conversions. Evangelism takes place on unbeliever's turf instead of on believer's turf and the Scripture is taught for application and not only for information. Where the old focus was on finding Christians, the new is on spotting people of peace--receptive people, prepared by God's prevenient grace. In this new mission culture, new church plants begin with small cell groups in homes and not with large celebrations in facilities. The new paradigm focuses on enabling people and building leaders. The new church plant is a "your" church and not an "our" church in contacts with unchurched people (Childress).

The church structures in the new church planting paradigm focus on the needs of the community instead of the needs of the Church. They are centered, driven, and

dependent on the gifts of lay people and not on the clergy. The church is not only the body of Christ, as in the old paradigm, but also God's army and the structures are built for reproduction beyond facilities in a seven-day a week church, while the old structures focus on growth, bound to the facilities in a Sunday-only church (Childress). The new emerging paradigm, according to Carol Childress, is the paradigm of a church which balances evangelism, worship, fellowship, edification, and ministry. It is a church where the pastor's role primarily is the role of a equipper and the people are the ministers. The key term is "to be and to do" and effective, Christ-like lives is the central value. The worship style is seeker sensitive, the source of legitimacy is changed lives, and the church uses a development system to bring people to maturity.

One of the most important paradigm switches is the change of turf. The church cannot reach the masses of unchurched people and still remain on its home turf. From now on, we are in a mission situation and every effort to reach unchurched people must be done on their home turf. That is why it is so important to plant churches which are indigenous to the kind of people we want to reach.

For an indigenous church, the focus is on the inner meanings and needs of the society in which it is planted. A strategy for indigenous church planting must consider the following points: (1) It must separate culture from Christianity. This is of course hard to do, but unchurched people have a right to know what is the real message of the gospel as distinct from the messenger's culture. The only way to do this is for the messenger to identify with the targeted people in as many ways as possible. The method in indigenizing is incarnation. Jesus is our model. He was able to identify with lost,

sinful people, without loss of identity, and it is toward this we ought to strive (Hill et. al. 50). (2) It must be culturally relevant. The basic principle in this is to start with people where they are and meet their felt needs. We cannot assume that unchurched people will buy into traditional “churchianity.” That culture is too far off from where they are. As already underlined, the main hindrance for unchurched people to become Christians is cultural and not theological. (3) It must trust young converts with leadership. “The young converts must be involved in decision making and evangelism from the initial planting of the church. Certainly, they will make mistakes, but through them they will learn and grow” (51).

From this we may conclude that in church planting, a careful distinction must be made between those aspects of the Church which are fundamental and unchanging, and those which are sociologically negotiable. Members of every Christian community must be able to express their faith and worship in ways which are meaningful and relevant to them.

This will require the church planter to identify his own cultural bias, recognise [sic] the validity of other’s cultural forms, and also to discern where these deviate from the teaching of Scripture. To expect all churches to be replicas of the kind in which we are happy is to restrict the growth of the Church and the spread of the gospel. (Hill et. al. 51-2)

A Strategy for Planting a New Church

Church planting is a responsibility of the local church. As it should be natural for every believer to multiply new converts and lead them to maturity in Christ, it should be natural for every congregation to multiply itself in new church plants and expand the kingdom of God into new areas and cultural strata, locally as well as nationally and globally. Chaney says that church planting “refers to those things one existing Christian fellowship does to share its faith in Jesus Christ with another community of people and to

form them into a new congregation of responsible disciples of Jesus Christ” (61).

The missionary responsibility in church planting belongs to the local church.

“Being a real New Testament church means believing and doing what the New Testament church did. It means planting new churches as the New Testament church did”

(McGavran, qtd. in Chaney 163). This is the reason why local churches ought to develop a congregational strategy for church planting. A local church strategy for church planting begins with an evangelistic responsibility and commitment to a specific geographical area. It demands flexibility within the primary task to evangelize that area. The parent church must have a transferable philosophy of ministry with a commitment to direct evangelism done by laity. It must be solidly founded in God’s Word and have a forward-looking attitude in a wholesome faith in God. Last, but not least, the parent church must have a pastor, dedicated to the task of parenting new church plants and with a God-given passion for the lost (123-27).

One Way a Church Can Be Planted

What are the main steps in the planting of a new church? The following is a model used by the Southern Baptists. It has its place in this section while it shows different steps in the church planting process which need to be thought through. Step number one, according to Chaney, is to select an area. When the church planter or the parent church select an area they should look for one with a growing or changing population. They should look for unmet needs. Unchurched people must be able to say: “God speaks my language.” In churches where that happens, growth may be fast and sure (189). The church planter should also look for interested people with the same vision.

Several families with the same vision to start that particular church should join the church planter and form a core group for the new church. Finally, in selecting an area the church planter needs to have a specific burden given by the Holy Spirit for that area. When someone is ready to weep over an area, her or she knows that is the place (187-91).

Step number two is to define a target. To do this we need to answer the questions “Who are the unchurched?” “Where are the unchurched?” and “Why they are unchurched?” On the basis of the findings about the target population, the church planter can go on to the third step, developing a strategy. This strategy must take into consideration the needs of the unchurched, how the new church should become a non-threatening place where seekers can become finders, and how to build casual and friendly relationships with the target population. Everything we do strengthens or neutralizes the objections of the unchurched (Chaney 192-197).

Step four is to build a church planting team or core group. The ideal size of the church planting team is five to eight committed families, which could be recruited from a number of sources. It is best if they come from the community. “During the survey, interested families usually can be identified that already have a good level of spiritual maturity and are not plugged into an existing church” (Chaney 198). There may also be committed people who are called out of their churches by God to become a part of a new church plant. Chaney estimates that it takes six to eight weeks for the team to start bonding and becoming excited about the new church plant.

The primary role of the church planting pastor at the team-building stage is to cast the vision so everyone will buy into it and feel excitement about what God has set before

them to do. “The bottom line when this team-building and dream-building is complete is, Do we agree about the direction God wants us to go? Are we convinced that our primary motive for being a part of a new church is to honor and glorify God?” (Chaney 199)

An important part of the team-building stage is that every team member discover his or her spiritual gifts and start to develop their ministries according to these gifts. As said earlier, the foundation for every church plant is prayer, prayer, and prayer! A church that starts as a praying church will continue to be a praying church (Chaney 200).

The church planting team is also the task force for the practical work which is needed to launch the new church, networking the community, telemarketing, direct mail, etc. At the bottom line, however, comes the fact that relationship and the development of these are the key part of any strategy (Chaney 203).

The fifth step is the launching of the event itself. It is important to be thoroughly prepared for the first worship service. Plan a rehearsal on the Sunday before in order to provide the necessary confidence for the launching day. This is also a great opportunity to get together to pray for the launching of the new church. In the preparation process the church planting team must consider things like greeters and how to register the visitors. Finally, the team need be realistic about how many attenders they will have for the first Sunday. At the same time there is no reason not to be excited about the new church. “Ultimately God is the one who is in charge, so leaders should just sit back and enjoy what God is going to do” (Chaney 207).

The sixth step is to assimilate attenders. Once the new church has drawn the crowd, the hard work starts to assimilate them into the new church. If the leaders do not

have the resources to do this, it is better to postpone the launching of the church. The guiding axiom is: “The right relationship produces the right commitment” (Chaney 207). It is important for the church planting team to build personal relationships with the people who come to the church. The pastor needs to be a person who has the ability to build bridging relationships. It is also important to get the attenders in the church to start relating to one another. After the first service an effective follow-up of the new contacts needs to take place by for instance inviting new attenders to become members of a cell group (208-10).

What Model Emerges from the Review of Literature?

In the review of literature for this dissertation one specific resource stands out as being more significant for the model for new Methodist church development in Sweden than any other. That resource is The High Impact Church by Linus Morris. The reason for this is that the author in most of his work uses many of the same resources and relies on many of the same authorities that are important to this work. Second, the model presented in The High Impact Church is tried and proved valid in an European setting. Linus Morris has been a church planter in Geneva, Switzerland and in Amsterdam, Holland. Currently he is the leader for an organization with the goal to plant new “contemporary high-impact churches” in forty major cities in Europe. Third, Morris’ book displays much of the same spirit and theological considerations as can be recognized in early Methodism. Fourth is the focus on extending the kingdom of God and the total dependence on the Holy Spirit for fulfilling the task.

Linus Morris asks, “What kind of churches will attract unchurched people to Christ?” (62). The provided answer is what he calls high-impact churches. High-impact churches are purposeful and expectant, faithful and flexible, gracious and relational, attractive and encouraging, loving and caring, joyful and celebrative, vital and dynamic, and finally growing and reproducing (62-3).

At the core of a high-impact church is the life-giving spiritual dimension, the supernatural life of the Holy Spirit. The mark of a high-impact church is spiritual vitality, where God has imparted spiritual life and believers have a “dynamic relationship with God’s Son, Jesus Christ” and “receive the life-giving Holy Spirit as an inner gift” (Morris 77). A high-impact church is marked by a kingdom heart, which is a special passion for the advancement of the God’s kingdom. “A love for God and others is the clearest evidence of a kingdom heart” (83). This love is expressed by a passion for reaching the lost. The high-impact church realizes that the Western world cannot be won for Christ without entering into warfare against the rulers of this age. “The high-impact church faces conflicts with the evidence that Jesus is Lord and King. He will pour out His power on those who trust Him alone and see the world with kingdom eyes” (97).

High-impact churches are culturally attractive. Morris mentions “creative programs using popular music, lovingly taking time to listen to questions, understanding another’s point of view, relating to their burdens, and communicating in their language” (100) as some of the ways the church can break through to people unfamiliar with Christianity.

Believing that the church is called to bear fruit, high-impact churches are committed to growth. They give no room to a “maintenance or status quo mentality” (Morris 113). They push forward toward their God-given design.

The high-impact church grows up as it embraces spiritual truth, worships God and appropriates supernatural power. It grows together as Christians care for one another in close-knit fellowship and commit themselves to build Christ’s Body. It grows out as members live as Christ’s witnesses in the world. Only this three-dimensional growth allows a church to be healthy and bear good fruit for Christ. (116)

High-impact churches are purpose and vision driven. They desire to glorify Jesus through worship, fellowship, nurture and evangelism. They envision becoming regional churches that reach cities and regions for God. Rich Marshal, pastor of the Community Church at Foothill in Los Altos, California, illustrates this well. He says, “The average pastor’s vision is to fill his building, my vision is to reach the city!” (Qtd. in Morris 131). The evangelism strategy is based on this vision to reach a city or a region and to do that by penetrating its diverse cultural subgroups. Another key to reaching unchurched people in these cultural sub-groups is to “build friendships with them and relate to their felt needs. A harvest awaits those churches who use this strategy,” concludes Morris (149).

The substance of the high-impact church is to be found in the mobilized ministry of every believer. This means that high-impact churches go beyond just having cell groups to being a cell-structured church (Morris 152), with multiplication of cells as a fundamental ingredient. Within the cell structure, the high-impact church mobilizes all believers. A traditional approach to ministry could be illustrated with a triangle where the leadership is at the top and the laity are at the base. The leadership does the ministry

while the people receive ministry. The high-impact church model of ministry is to turn the triangle up side down. The base is up--the people do the ministry and receive ministry from each other. The leadership supports and coaches the people in their ministry. "The high-impact church multiplies cell groups, cell group leaders, supervisors, and zone pastors so that it continues to grow as it provides high-quality pastoral care" (189).

The high-impact church builds its evangelism strategy on the conviction that everyone is called to evangelism and that everyone can do it. Through friendship building the members of a high-impact church can reach out to the unchurched in non-judgmental ways. The following four steps outline a plan that everybody can use in building friendships leading to opportunities to share the faith with others:

1. Reach out to people, caring about their needs, frustrations, and problems without reservation or through manipulation.
2. Establish a trust relationship where genuine two-way communication takes place.
3. Share what Christ has done in your own life and encourage a personal commitment to Him.
4. Continue communicating on a supportive and encouraging level until you free the other person from dependence on you to serve for others. (Morris 193)

This strategy is backed up by seeker-friendly events to assist believers in "everybody evangelism" (Morris 198). The worship services are fresh and exciting. The key word is celebration. Thus, high-impact churches talk about "celebration evangelism." Morris defines "celebration evangelism" as "the impact that the gospel has on non-Christians as they come into a gathering of believers and sense the presence of God and the living reality of the Christian faith" (206). There are some components that

make it so powerful and effective in reaching unchurched people: friendliness, a positive emphasis on grace, love, acceptance and forgiveness, expectancy and hope, credibility, a contemporary and winsome style, and a commitment to excellence (208-13). Morris gives the following summary of what the high-impact church is about:

The high-impact church has a spiritually dynamic core, mobilized members, attractive events, effective organization and visionary leadership The multiplication of high-impact churches is the most viable way for modern Christians to carry out the missionary mandate given by Christ. (287-88)

The Eighteen Standard Principles

The model that emerges from The Impact Church and this review of literature contains the following eighteen standard principles:

- ☐ Holds a biblically-based evangelical theology
- ☐ Promotes spiritual vitality and dynamic work of the Holy Spirit
- ☐ Clarifies and keeps central its purpose, priorities and vision
- ☐ Targets and designs ministry to reach the unchurched
- ☐ Mobilizes and empowers every Christian to minister
- ☐ Instills a “Great Commission vision” in its members
- ☐ Penetrates the community through a proliferation of cell groups
- ☐ Makes cell groups the primary provider of pastoral care
- ☐ Structures for an expanding network of cell groups
- ☐ Multiplies lay leaders
- ☐ Holds seeker-sensitive services and events
- ☐ Offers positive, practical, inspiring preaching

- ❑ Emphasizes God's grace and mercy
- ❑ Creates an atmosphere of love, acceptance and forgiveness
- ❑ Utilizes creative, contemporary, culturally relevant worship style
- ❑ Visionary leadership equips others to minister
- ❑ Organizes to break through growth-restrictive barriers
- ❑ Reproduces other high-impact churches (Morris 287)

This check-list mirrors what this review of literature has shown to be a sound model for a new, culturally relevant church in the Wesleyan tradition, reaching the unchurched thousands in a secular Swedish context. The model might have the weakness in the actual implementation that cultural relevance will be too narrowly defined, i. e. the same cultural approach, music style, and leadership style will be used in different parts of Europe. However, as was said in the introduction to the book, the model is adaptable in any cultural setting. The expressed focus on reaching cities may be a weakness in the Swedish context. Even though Sweden does not have many large metropolitan areas most people live in an urban setting. Only a very small part of the population actually live in rural areas. Another weakness the high-impact church model might have, even though not shown in the check-list, is that the working assumption behind many of the church plants made by or supported by Christian Associates International is that the core group for the new church plant is formed out of English-speaking expatriates and that the church later will switch to become an indigenous church.

Nevertheless, this check-list will provide the base for the case study, which will be designed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

Design of the Study

This chapter will give a comprehensive description of how this study was designed and carried out.

Review of the Problem

The background of the study is the seventy-five year history of decline of the Methodist Church in Sweden. One of the reasons for this decline is the lack of new church plants. The main church planting period ended in the 1920s and since then only a few churches have been planted. Also since 1920, about two-thirds of the churches existing at that time have been closed.

Even though in recent years new Methodist churches have been planted in Sweden, they were not planted due to any intentional plan. At the Central Conference in Pärnu, Estonia, in March, 1997, the Northern Europe, the Baltic, and Euroasia Annual Conferences were recommended to develop a program for new church developments within the conference. As shown in the review of literature, the need for culturally relevant and biblically sound churches is great in Sweden. About 90 percent of the population are unchurched. The harvest is great but the workers few.

The purpose of the study is to discover usable principles for reaching secular, unchurched people in Sweden through planting new churches, in order to develop an indigenous model for new Methodist church developments.

Research and Operational Questions

The following are the research and operational questions emerging from the purpose statement and guiding this study.

Research Question #1

Which new church plants in Sweden will best serve for collecting the field data needed for this project?

The churches eligible to be selected for the project are churches within the Methodist Church in Sweden, Nybygget, the Pentecostal movement, the Swedish Alliance Mission, the Swedish Baptist Convention, the Swedish Covenant Church, and the Vineyard churches planted from 1992 through 1996. They should have an expressed focus in their mission or vision statement of reaching secular, unchurched people and render a major part (more than 50 percent) of their annual growth to conversion of previously secular, unchurched people. The three churches having the highest rate of conversion growth from secular, unchurched people will be selected.

Research Question #2

To what extent do the standard principles for church planting match the principles found in the field research?

The review of literature and particularly its last subsection entitled, *What model emerges from the review of literature?* presents a checklist featuring eighteen principles for a culturally relevant church reaching unchurched people. The multiple case study will answer to what extent the principles from the two sources match.

Research Question #3

What additional principles are discovered by the field research?

Research Question #4

What indigenous manifestations of standard church planting principles and the additional church planting principles can be identified in the churches studied?

Operational Questions.

1. Which of these principles could be considered manifested in a universal way or without cultural biases?
2. Which of these principles could be considered manifested in a way which is culturally biased by American or other foreign culture?
3. Which of these principles could be considered manifested in a specifically indigenous way culturally relevant to Swedish conditions?

Research Question #5

What model emerges for planting new Methodist churches in Sweden based on (a) the principles shown in the review of literature and (b) the indigenous employment of these principles revealed in the case study, and (c) the historic identity and contemporary challenge of Methodism in Sweden ?

Operational Questions.

1. How does the utilization of the indigenously manifested principles contribute to the growth of the churches in the study?
2. Are there other more important reasons for the conversion growth from previously secular, unchurched people in these three churches?

3. In what way have the standard principles been contextualized to fit the special cultural circumstances?
4. How will the feedback from Methodist church leaders (Bishop and district superintendents) inform the model?
5. What will an indigenous model for new Methodist church developments look like?

Methodology

The methodology of this study was a multiple case study. The reason is that the kind of data that needs to be collected to inform the study is primarily qualitative. Robert Yin states that “a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (13). New church plants fit well into the two criteria set by Yin. They are contemporary phenomena and the boundaries between them and their context are not always evident.

In order to reach the goal for this study, which was to create a model for new Methodist church plants in Sweden, it was important to utilize more than just one case. When the same principles occurred in a number of cases (three cases in this study), replication is said to have taken place. In order to assure that, this was a multiple case study involving three cases.

Selected Churches

The churches selected for this study were churches in Sweden defined by the following criteria:

1. Churches planted during the period 1992 through 1996.
2. Churches in connection with or affiliated to the following denominations or church groups: the Methodist Church in Sweden, Nybygget, the Pentecostal churches, the Swedish Alliance Mission, the Swedish Baptist Convention, the Swedish Covenant Church, and the Vineyard churches.
3. Churches answering the initial letter in a positive way and providing information on the areas asked for in that letter.

In order to identify appropriate churches the author contacted the Home Mission Departments or similar organizations within these seven denominations or church groups for necessary information in order to be able to contact these churches.

The next step was to send a letter to each of these churches and ask for some specific information.

1. When was the church planted and by whom?
2. Has the church expressed a specific focus on reaching secular, unchurched people.
3. Do the statistics for each year the church has existed show how much of the growth is biological growth, transfer growth, and conversion growth?
4. Is the church willing to participate in the study?

From the churches defined by the four criteria listed above, three churches was selected. The criteria for the selection of the churches in the multiple case study were the following:

1. The church should have been planted during the period 1992 through 1996.

2. The conversion growth should be more than 50 percent of the total annual growth.
3. The church should have an expressed focus on reaching secular, unchurched people stated in either its vision statement or its mission statement.
4. The church should be willing to participate in the study.

If no church measured up to the second and third criterion, the churches which were closest was selected for the study.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

This study has been more interested in qualitative data than in quantitative data. The interviews made in the various cases were of an open-ended nature. The primary instrument for data collection was the researcher. According to John W. Creswell, “data are mediated through this human instrument, rather than through inventories, questionnaires, or machines” (145).

Two vehicles were developed to help the researcher gather the information needed for the study, a set of semi-structured interview protocols geared for different groups of interviewees (see Appendix A) and an observation guide for recording observations during site visits (see Appendix B). Both were thematically built up around the eighteen standard church planting principles presented in Chapter 2.

A pretest of these vehicles was planned in a church in Örebro but the pastor resigned and the opportunity to conduct the pretest there disappeared. The open-ended nature of the questions in the interview protocol, however, gave a great freedom of improvisation during the interviews and the protocols have worked well. These kinds of interviews are also the most common in case studies (Yin 84). Yin underscores that in

open-ended interviews, the interviewer “can ask key respondents for the facts of a matter as well as for the respondent’s opinions about events. In some situations (the interviewer) may even ask the respondent to propose his or her own insights into certain occurrences” (84).

The Interviews. The following four categories were interviewed:

1. Pastors, elders, board members, or equivalent (eight interviews)
2. Cell group leaders (ten interviews)
3. Newcomers or/and new converts (ten interviews)
4. A person in the denominational leadership (two interviews)

In all, thirty interviews of various lengths were conducted. The first category was interviewed on site or at a location chosen by the respondent. The interviews were not limited in time, but lasted between one and two hours. Some cell group leaders were interviewed on site but mostly by phone. The interviews took about forty-five minutes. Newcomers and new converts were interviewed both on site and by phone. The interviews lasted for about twenty to thirty minutes. The denominational leaders were interviewed by phone and the interviews took about fifteen minutes.

The pastors in the contacted churches selected the interviewees and sent me a list of names and telephone numbers. Then I called and arranged for a meeting or to set up a time for a telephone interview. One reason so many interviews were conducted by phone was the difficulty of finding dates I could travel to Stockholm (Stockholm Karisma Center and Tomaskyrkan) that matched the interviewees schedules.

On Site Observations. “Observational evidence is often useful in providing additional information about the topic being studied” (Yin 87) The observations have focused on the facilities, atmosphere, and status of the church. Through participation in worship services, cell group meetings, evangelism, and outreach events, the observer has gain a deeper understanding of the principles which make the particular church attractive and growing. An observation guide (see Appendix B) was used to record the observations made during site visits.

Review of Documents and Records. Documentary information is likely to be relevant to every case study topic (Yin 81). The kind of documents that were important to this study were bylaws, reports from annual meetings, minutes, vision/mission statements, all kinds of information brochures, other studies or evaluations made of the same site, and clippings from newspapers, magazines, and periodicals.

The most important use of documents for case studies was “to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources” (Yin 81). “Because of its overall value, documents play an explicit role in any data collection in doing case studies” (81).

The archival records most useful for this study were records of member and attendance statistics and budgets for the churches studied for the period 1992 - 1996.

Three Principles of Data Collection. The first principle is to use multiple sources of evidence. This gave the researcher an opportunity to utilize different sources of evidence to build a strong case for the facts discovered in the study (Yin 90-94). With this kind of triangulation, “the potential problems of *construct validity* also can be

addressed, because the multiple source of evidence essentially provide multiple measures of the same phenomenon” (92).

The second principle is to create a case study data base. A case study data base may contain four different types of data: case study notes, case study documents, tabular materials, and narratives. Under the heading “narratives” we find the reports from the open-ended interviews made in the study (Yin 94-98).

The third principle of data collection is to maintain a chain of evidence. “The principle is to allow an external observer . . . to follow the derivation of any evidence from initial research questions to ultimate case study conclusions” (Yin 98). This will also increase the reliability of the information in the study.

Data Analysis

“Data analysis consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating, or otherwise recombining the evidence to address the initial propositions of a study” (Yin 102). Four different major analytic techniques can be used: pattern-matching, explanation-building, time-series analysis, and program logic (102). The best preparation for the data analysis is to have a general analytical strategy. Yin mentions two different strategies. The first is relying on theoretical propositions. This strategy is the most preferred. It follows the theoretical propositions that led up to the study. “The original objectives and design of the case study presumably were based on such propositions, which in turn reflected a set of research questions, reviews of literature, and new insights” (103).

Another general analytic strategy is to develop a case description which is “a descriptive framework for organizing the case study” (Yin 104). In this case the strategy relying on theoretical propositions was chosen.

Out of the four dominant modes of analysis, the study benefited most from pattern-matching. The main reason for that was that the research questions ask for principles and patterns emerging from the study. The case study is also explorational in character. I used the different topics from the observation guide for this pattern-matching exercise. This way the observation guide became not only a tool for on site observations but also a tool for observations during the data analysis process. For each topic I scanned the material to see how much and in what ways the interviews, the on site observations, and the documentary material informed the topic. This I did for each church separately. The Case Study Guidelines for the Doctor of Ministry Program was also to a great help in developing the three case studies and analyze the material. When the material was analyzed according to the observation guide I asked the question, What else is in there that these standard principles do not cover? Three new principles were identified this way.

In order to determine the degree of importance of each principle noticed, an assessment tool was created. On basis of the frequency and the weight of the occurrence of a specific principle in the material it was graded from zero to three, where zero means that the principle is not present and three means that it is very much present.

Some additional remarks need to be added here about the importance of doing everything possible to make sure that the data analysis will be of highest quality. Four principles have been considered:

1. The analysis should show that it relies on all the relevant evidence.
2. The analysis should include all major rival interpretations.
3. The analysis should address the most significant aspect of the case study.
4. The analysis should bring the researcher's own prior expert knowledge into the case study (Yin 123-24).

Feedback

In order to establish rapport with leaders within the Methodist Church in Sweden and create ownership in the results of this study, it was important to be continuously in contact with bishop, district superintendents, and the conference lay leader. Their feedback was sought during the process of analyzing the case studies as well as in composing the indigenous model for new Methodist church developments. The intention was to provide a natural platform and interest for the implementation of this model.

CHAPTER 4

The Project

This chapter provides the report from the field research and answers the research questions for this study.

Introduction

In the field research project three newly planted churches have been studied. They differ from each other in history, location, social profile, and target audience. The oldest was planted in Örebro in 1993. Örebro is Sweden's seventh largest town with about 122, 000 inhabitants. Traditionally it was dominated by blue-collar workers. Today, with the new university, it is a town where people come for education. Not surprising, Mötesplatsen's main target group is students in their twenties. Örebro is also at the heart of the Swedish Bible belt, if there is such a thing in Sweden. The town has nine Baptist churches and many other free churches as well. The head office of the Baptist denomination InterAct is located to Örebro.

There is quite a different atmosphere and rhythm of living in Stockholm, the capitol of Sweden. Stockholm is the only really big city in Sweden with more than 1.2 million people in the greater Stockholm area. Stockholm Karisma Center was launched during the summer, 1996, in downtown Stockholm. It seems to me that SKC's main audience is younger and less educated than Mötesplatsen's. This affects also the culture of that church.

In a semi-suburban environment in south Stockholm, Tomaskyrkan reaches out to seekers and secularized ordinary Swedes. This part of Stockholm may be the most

unchurched area in all Sweden. Through a laid-back relational strategy, Tomaskyrkan tries to reach through strong barriers of mistrust and prejudice against Christian faith and the Christian church. The target audience is mainly people in their upper twenties and their thirties. Tomaskyrkan started its ministry in south Stockholm during the fall of 1996.

Församlingen Mötesplatsen

What makes the newly planted church Församlingen Mötesplatsen (MP) a growing church? More precisely, why does it reach secular unchurched people to a higher extent than other new churches? What distinctives or principles make this happen? MP was studied during May, 1998. The study contained site visits, interviews and review of different documents.

Background

In the early years of the nineties, Kjell-Axel Johansson worked as a home mission secretary for the Örebromissionen (ÖM). His main responsibility was the programs for church development and church planting. In the beginning of the 90s ÖM made a strategic statement to plant fifty new churches in Sweden by the end of 2010. Johansson did not want to urge others to do something he did not do himself, so he decided to plant a church in Örebro. Together with Lars-Olov Molin he formed a prayer group starting in November, 1990. The group launched their first public worship service in March, 1992. The original core group was formed by nineteen people; today only five of them are members of the congregation. Seven have moved to other places; seven chose to go back to their mother congregations. There are some natural reasons for that. In the early days

the focus of the church was on middle-aged unchurched people. It turned out, however, to be difficult to reach this group. At the same time, the church started to attract students in their twenties, most of them moving to Örebro to study at the university or the Free Theological Seminary. This move toward a younger target caused three of five of the families in the original core to move on. Today MP is a growing congregation still attracting people in their twenties or early thirties. In November, 1997, MP had 130 members, 30 of whom were new Christians, 30 were unchurched Christians, and 70 transferred from other churches. Only fifteen of the transfers came from other churches in Örebro.

Description

The vision of MP is to reach unchurched seekers and to a certain extent also unchurched Christians. Today their main target is Gen Xers.

Mötesplatsen holds an evangelical theology and refers to the Lausanne declaration in its bylaws. MP also stands in the Baptist tradition. Membership is open for all believers, but the congregation only baptizes adults. There is a relational touch to MP's theology. Much of what goes on within the congregation is referred to as "based on relations." This is true about the house-groups, the way MP talks about evangelism, sermon illustrations, and so on.

MP stresses the importance of worship and adoration. "We exist to glorify God," says Bengt Johansson, one of the pastors, and continues, "We are sent by God and he is missionary in his character. Our task is to go on to send others so that God will be even more glorified."

The importance of intimate worship also helps to enhance the spirituality of the congregation. In their worship services for believers, called celebrations, about half an hour before and fifteen minutes after the sermon are used for intimate worship and songs of adoration. There is an opportunity for prayer and for intercession at the end of the service. Also, in the house groups people are encouraged to pray for each other. The leaders are encouraged to be good role models in their prayer lives. "Prayer is the key to growth and maturity both for individual Christians and for a congregation" (Manual 5). The atmosphere of newness adds to the vitality of MP. Young people especially are attracted to a congregation that is new, where things are different from established congregations. The pioneering spirit is attractive.

A Church for Seekers. From its beginning MP has been a church for seekers and unchurched Christians. Its purpose is to "give the gospel to those who do not already have a conscious faith in Jesus Christ, and to move them and ourselves into a life in full communion with God and trusting him completely" (Bylaws 1). The vision is to "reach new people and new groups of people with the gospel in a plain and culturally relevant way that will help them to hear what is being said" (Andersson). The vision is of a place where the thresholds are low, and where people can come and find God. Bengt Johansson has made a painting of a pump which illustrates the vision of a place where people can come and drink of the living water. This painting has become like an icon for what the congregation is all about.

The congregation is organized around the fulfillment of its purpose. It has developed a specific strategy for evangelism: (1) Build a relationship. (2) Tell your story.

(3) Provide Alpha groups and seeker services. (4) Offer different worship formats like Apocalypses and Celebrations. (5) Get people involved in house groups. (6) Help people to discover their spiritual gifts. (7) Train people in stewardship (Evangelism Strategy 1-2).

MP targets unchurched people in its ministry. It is a church for seekers. Its ministry is process oriented in order to help seekers become believers, starting where they are. MP affirms that seekers have different needs from believers. Their ministry is designed to meet the needs and answer the questions of seekers. “When planning and doing a seeker service or some other outreach event, we have to take the seeker’s point of view as the starting point and not our own point of view” (2). As a complement to seeker services and seeker oriented banquets MP uses the Alpha-group program.⁹ This program helps answer many of the questions seekers have about Christian faith. It also helps build relationships between seekers and believers. For some of the interviewees these Alpha groups were the place where they committed themselves to Christ. The Alpha groups did not only open a door to the world of Christian thinking but, what is more important, they were the entrance into a living relationship with Christ.

Every Member a Minister. MP encourages every member to take an active part in the ministry of the congregation. The house group leader’s manual mentions the importance of discovering spiritual gifts. Some house groups have worked with a book by Bruce Bugbee called What You do Best--in the Body of Christ in order to study

spiritual gifts and utilize them in ministry. It is the house group leader's "task to help the members of the group to discover their gifts and eventually lead them into their right function in the congregation based on these gifts" (Manual 5). In spite of this, it seems to be quite hard to get people involved in different tasks and in leadership. This problem was discussed at a gathering for house group leaders I attended. People in that group connected the problem to several causes: many university students, people fear getting burned by too much involvement, and the mentality of the Generation X. To solve the problem the relational benefits of, for instance, social involvement need to be lifted up more clearly. People also need to see the big picture in order to get involved.

A slight difference exists between the vision described by the pastors, found in the documents, and the view given by grassroots in the congregation. MP is driven by a "Great Commission vision." That comes through in many ways: in the view of worship, in the dedication to evangelism and reaching the unchurched, in involvement in mission, and in ecumenical involvement in the work among young people in downtown Örebro on weekend nights.

In interviews with some new Christians some other things came through concerning the most important task of the Christian church. One mentioned the need of being an alternative and the need of supporting those who are having a tough time. Another person answered, "To help each other to live a Christian life." The importance

⁹ Alpha started within the ministry of Holy Trinity parish church in Brompton, London at the end of the 70s. Today over 500,000 people around the world have experienced Alpha. About 85 churches from different denominations in Sweden use Alpha in their outreach ministry.

of acceptance, of never being left alone, and of becoming a family were mentioned in yet another interview.

A Church of Small Groups. At the core of MP's congregational life are small groups, called house groups. There are fourteen house groups. Each group has a leader and an apprentice leader. The group leaders are organized in two groups, meeting about every third week under the leadership of a house group leader coach. When this group gathers it is for mutual support, for leadership training and development, for sharing information, and praying together. The house group is formed by eight to twelve people. The primary intention for the house groups is to help and support each other and to live as devoted Christians in everyday life. The house groups are one important reason why MP is a growing congregation.

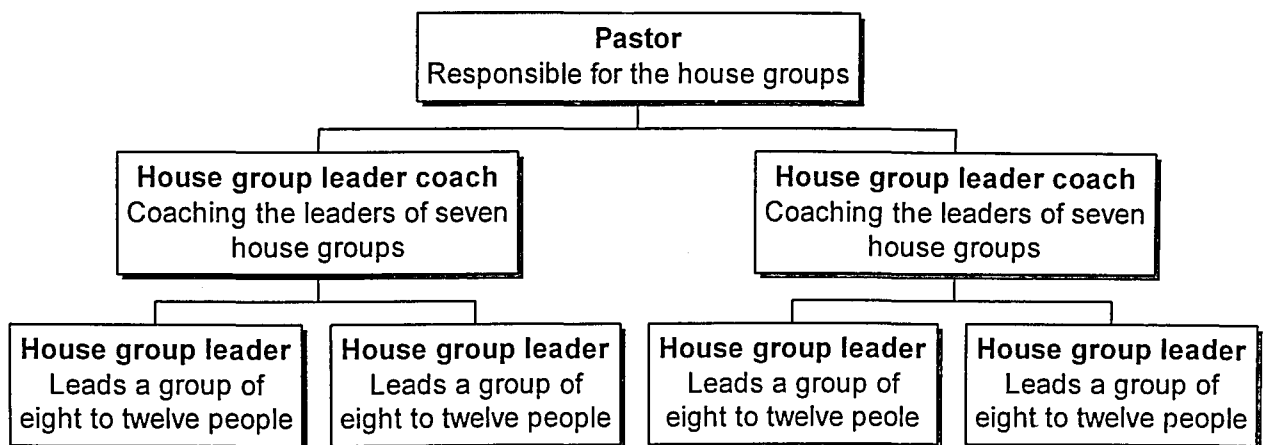


Chart 2

Mötesplatsen's House Group System, May, 1998.

This system is designed for further growth and multiplication. In order to be able to multiply, each group needs to go through four stages. First, it needs to grow in number; then comes a stage of empowerment; the third stage is training before the last stage, which is multiplication. When a group multiplies it divides itself into two “buds,” one larger and one smaller. To become a house group leader a person must have been a member of a house group for awhile in order to understand the ethos and vision of MP. Then he/she can become an assistant or apprentice house group leader. New house group leaders emerge from these assistant leaders. Sometimes they get into leadership of a “bud,” sometimes they form a brand new group.

All new believers I interviewed mentioned the impact of the house groups when asked why they became members of MP. One woman mentioned the importance of having a forum where she could ask questions. The house groups also provide a fellowship where a new Christian or a person who recently has moved to Örebro can get to know other Christians on a deeper level. One man mentioned how important it was for him to have the house group fellowship as a peer group who could help him avoid getting laziness in his Christian life. In MP the house groups and the house group leaders are the primary providers of pastoral care. “The group leader is responsible for the spiritual maturity of the group and this task can never be taken too seriously” (Manual 3). The leader is encouraged to have frequent and close contacts with the members of the house group in order to be able to care for their well-being. In this important task the pastors offer themselves to be coaches of the house group leaders.

The MP membership is connected to membership in a house group. MP calls it a dynamic membership, an organic fellowship. This reduces the boundaries among the congregation and shows openness toward all people. “We gather in openness around a center, not within a fence. You do not need to be a member to participate. If you participate, you are a member” (Manual 2).

Some people I interviewed felt a little isolated in their group. There is, in their opinion, a lack of natural meeting places in the congregation. One suggested that MP needed to run a café where people could meet outside the boundaries of either small group activity or a worship setting. The house group leader’s manual states, “The congregation can grow to any size, if the felt need of community and fellowship is met.” Apparently there is a need for some kind of meeting place bridging the small group and the worshipping body.

Worship Formats. MP uses three kinds of worship service formats. Their seeker services are designed to connect with people who are in a process of discovering the meaning and content of the Christian faith. This year the seeker oriented events have shifted from services to banquets. The experience is that the banquet format fits the target group better than the service format, but the idea is still the same.

To bridge the gap between seeker-oriented events and the believer’s service, MP offers something they call Apocalypse. This service has a liturgical form which is the same every time in order for people to know what is going to happen and to feel comfortable. The historical background of this liturgy reminds people of the early roots of Christianity. The service is meditative in character and uses more instrumental music

and sometimes even classical music. The believer's service is called Celebration. In this service there is plenty of time for songs of praise and adoration. Here the congregation gives its heart in glorifying and magnifying God. There are also time for testimonies and prayer. The sermon starts after about forty-five minutes. At the end of the service is more singing, and those who want to pray together with someone are asked to go to the space in the back of the auditorium which is prepared for this. People there help, care, talk, and pray with those responding.

Most of the people who attend MP are in their twenties or early thirties. The culture of the congregation is clearly flavored by the intellectual environment of a university. This also affects the preaching at MP. Marcus Andersson, the senior pastor, does most of the preaching. His preaching style is conversational, and he uses many illustrations from a variety of sources. He expounds the text clearly and in a relevant way with many practical applications in the sermons. He is not afraid to talk about the meanings of certain Greek words or of Greek syntax. The preaching in MP is effective and clearly biblical. One of the interviewees, however, said that it was hard to follow the sermon before she went through the Alpha course, regardless of who preached.

In many of the interviews people talked about the importance of being culturally relevant. This is a core value that leavens everything in MP. When asked why MP is a growing congregation, one person said, "It goes with the time. The music fits us who are born in the sixties or younger. The preaching does not use old fashion bureaucratic language. The message is clear and plain. It appeals to you." Another answered, "MP is much more marked by the surrounding society then the traditional free-churches." Pastor

Marcus Andersson says, “We have succeeded to crack the code to a group of people who sees us as genuine and true.” “Being culturally relevant is extremely important. The consciousness is high. At the same time it is very hard to find the right instruments to really find the right way,” says worship pastor Bengt Johansson.

Mötesplatsen plans to plant a daughter church in the western part of Sweden. Some contacts are already made and they hope to launch within two years. They have had this vision of planting new churches from start.

MP rents the auditorium where they worship every Sunday at 5:00 p.m. It was a little hard to find the way to the auditorium. The signs were small and I had to ask some people for directions. About a hundred chairs were placed in rows with an center aisle. There were problems with the lights. The air conditioning blower was too strong and some people had to move to other seats because of that.

Analysis

In this section I will try to identify specific principles and issues which are at work in making MP a growing church plant. I also want to consider to what extent these principles are indigenous to Swedish conditions in general and specifically MP’s target group. I will look for cause-effect relationships that build the case for a certain finding or principle.

Relational Focus. Let me start with something that almost seemed to be a buzzword within MP. In many conversations and in the interviews people talked about things being “based on relations.” The way MP thinks about evangelism is truly relational. The small group system is basically relational. Why do they take this

relational approach? We must consider two important answers here. The first one is more general: the overall need for true fellowship in our society today. In order to share the gospel in a trustworthy way, Christians need to build relationships with people in a way that people do not feel that they are just an object for evangelism. Jesus was relational in his way of meeting people and the way the church witnesses also need to be relational in order to be true to the gospel. The other reason is MP's main target, the Gen Xers. One of the characteristics of this generation is how highly they value relations. They are relational people, they value belonging to a group, and they relate to that group as their family. Community means much to them. When I mentioned this observation in a coach group gathering, people first looked a little surprised, but then one by one they confirmed how important this was to their generation.

There seems to be a cause-effect relationship between the fact that MP is a fairly new congregation and its attraction of people in their twenties and early thirties. There is some kind of spin-off effect where the one leads to the other and so on. Young people are attracted to an environment that is young and fresh. The sense of pioneering something new and exciting is attractive. Here the music plays an important role. One interviewee said that it was nice to come and listen to the music. It was like a concert except that it was free. Rick Warren states in his book, Purpose Driven Church, that the first thing people ask themselves when coming to a church is "Is there anybody here like me" (174)? Apparently many young people in Örebro have come to MP and discovered that was the case.

Evangelism Strategy. Another relationship I have found to be important for the growth of MP is the relationship between the evangelism strategy and the ability to reach unchurched non-Christians for Christ. The strategy is at its core relational and I have many records about how people have become Christians through friendship with a credible Christian. They were invited to seeker-oriented events. They ended up in an Alpha group and eventually committed themselves to Christ. There is a process here which is not only sociological but profoundly theological in nature. In the process of moving toward Christ, people need to be met where they are. The testimony from new Christians in MP is that they were met, accepted, and valued where they were in their spiritual journey. It is easy to see the kinship between MP's evangelism strategy and of Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago. But the point is that MP has not just copied an concept, but indigenized it into the cultural environment which is the framework for its ministry.

As we already have seen, MP is devoted to small group ministry. The basic structure is that of a cell-celebration church. One of the main inspirations for their small group ministry is Ralph Neighbour's book, Where do We Go From Here? The small groups meet every week, they decide themselves what to do in their gatherings. So what is going on? What dynamics are at work in these small groups? The informal atmosphere of a home is important. It is not a building, nor what happens on Sundays that lies at the core of what MP is all about. The homes and the fellowship within them is what makes MP a church. The homes are important in order to offer stability to the life of the church. They are natural meeting places. The house group fellowship emphasizes

the importance of a whole and holy Christian life every day in the week. Some people mentioned how important it was for them to have the opportunity to ask their questions of people who listen. The house group provides an accepting and loving environment where people can be themselves. People know they are seen and listened to in the house group. There they have a place to explore, develop, and use their spiritual gifts in ministry to others, a vital part of MP's house group life. The house group also provides a community to which an individual is accountable for his or her Christian edification.

Dynamic Membership. Even though the groups not are open for everybody they are the main entry into membership. MP talks about a dynamic membership, something I think is very important. People grow into membership in MP. They may come to a small group as a visitor. Whenever they decide to become permanent members of a house group they are regarded as members in MP. Thus membership in a house group constitutes membership in the congregation. This is the way the early Methodist societies worked. Through membership in a class a person became a member of a Methodist society. The interesting thing was that not only born again Christians could be members of a Methodist class but also earnest seekers; all who sought to escape the "wrath to come."

One critique of MP's house group system might be that the groups are not open enough to seekers and people without a professed Christian faith. Another critique that I heard through the interviews was the danger of isolation. The house group becomes the church, the only sphere of fellowship that its members have within the congregation. Someone said that the same people who met during the week often sit together on Sunday

and after the service they drink coffee together. There is, as already mentioned, a need for a meeting place in between the house groups and the worshipping congregation where a person can get to know a broader range of people. This can be a café, or different seminars, or other social events.

There seems to be a problem, though, to get people really involved in ministries and engagements outside the small group life. A close relationship appears here between this problem and the fact that MP is a Gen X congregation. Gen Xers need more motivation to get themselves involved than ordinary church members in a traditional church. One way of getting over this hurdle might be to emphasize more the relational aspect of ministry together as teams.

As we have seen, worship is a very important part of MP's ministry, a vital part of MP's mission. Through worshipping God the church fulfills its missionary task. The freshness of MP's worship services is an important reason people within their target group find MP attractive, and then stay. The musical style is relevant to these people. As one interviewee said, "It was like coming to a concert, but it was free." Cultural relevance is a core value at MP. People on all levels talk about it as something very important for MP. The reasons for this are many: Marcus Andersson's missionary experience, Bengt Johansson's experience of being a Christian rock musician for more than twenty years, the acknowledgment by new converts that the culturally relevant way of conveying the gospel was crucial for their own encounter with Christ, the experience of being a new and different church, and the experience of living a seven-days-a-week Christian life.

Conclusion

Seventeen out of eighteen standard principles were found in this case (see Table 5). Some of them were more evident than others, but they were there and they all play a vital part in making MP a growing, newly planted church. Additionally, it is important to recognize the relational approach MP uses in all its ministry, whether evangelism, preaching, or small group ministry. Their theology and practice are also process oriented. This is evident in the way they look at becoming a Christian and becoming a member in MP. That gives us two new principles: Standard principle #19: A relational approach to evangelism and ministry. Standard principle #20: A process oriented view of conversion and membership.

The only standard principle which could be considered culturally unbiased is that they have a biblically-based evangelical theology (Standard Principle #1). The reason for that is that MP refers to the Lausanne declaration, which is international in nature. Otherwise it is impossible to talk about any principles which are manifested without cultural bias. The way MP targets and designs ministry to reach the unchurched is a good example of how they have used an American model and adapted it in a way that is culturally relevant to Swedish conditions.

We have found that cultural relevance could be considered a core value at MP. If any of the principles manifested in MP could be accused of being biased by American culture, it is due to the Americanization of the culture to which they are being indigenized. That is true especially when it comes to contemporary music and contemporary trends within the youth culture.

The utilization of sixteen of the eighteen standard principles and the two specific principles that were found in the case study makes MP a growing church. I am convinced that as MP continues to grow they will be forced to organize to break through growth-restricting barriers. I am also convinced that the missionary vision of MP will eventually make it reproduce other new churches equally culturally relevant to their specific environments.

Stockholm Karisma Center

In only three years Stockholm Karisma Center (SKC) has grown from one original cell group to a church with about 250 members. What is the secret behind this attractive and growing church? What distinctives or principles can be found behind its growth? Stockholm Karisma Center was studied during October and November, 1998. The study involved site visits, interviews and a review of different documents.

Background

For many years church planting was taboo for Pentecostals in Sweden. When Danish Pentecostal pastor Jørgen Christiansen preached about church planting at the annual preacher's convention at the Filadelfia church in Stockholm in December, 1992, it was a sensation. At the end of that meeting he made an altar call for everyone who felt the Spirit moving them to go into a pioneer work and plant a new church to come forward. About 500 preachers responded. Sven Almkvist, the senior pastor of Stockholm Karisma Center, was one of them. From that moment he got "pregnant" with a vision about a new church plant in Stockholm. He carried that vision for quite a long

time before one day he said to God, "I need a catalyst." God sent Thomas Ardenfors to become that catalyst.

During a visit to the USA in 1994, Thomas Ardenfors received a prophesy about a new church in Stockholm. On the flight back to Sweden he wrote down his vision on a piece of paper. He heard an inner voice urging him to get in contact with Sven Almkvist. Sven Almkvist had also written down his vision and when they met later that summer they compared their visions. "I will never forget what happened," Thomas Ardenfors says. "When we compared our documents they were identical. We talked about a location in Stockholm, about a congregational model, and even certain numbers were the same" (Thoms).

The breakthrough came at the Pentecostal movement's annual conference, Nyhemsveckan, in June, 1995. The Argentine evangelist, Carlos Anacondia, knocked at the door to the camping caravan where Sven, Thomas, and three other pastors were gathered. He spent several hours with them and ended his visit with a strong prophesy about the vision God had put on their hearts. This was a confirmation they could not deny. During the next six months they tested the vision. They consulted leading persons within the Pentecostal movement. Everywhere their vision was approved. Some question marks were raised, however. What will come out of this? Will similar things happen in other places around the country? There is what one could call an unwritten law within the movement not to have two Pentecostal congregations in the same village, town, or city. In Stockholm there were already two. August 4, 1996, the new church

launched. The membership was twenty-five. Today SKC has more than 300 in worship every Sunday.

Description

The vision is to build “a continuously growing congregation in the greater Stockholm area.” “We believe that God wants to rise a great and dynamic Pentecostal congregation in the capitol,” writes Almkvist (Nyhetsbrev 2-96, 2). That congregation has as its main target families with children, high-school and college youth, the night club people, and passive Christians. The three first target groups are formed of secular, unchurched people. The fourth is formed by unchurched, rootless Christians who they want to “buy into the vision.” The way Stockholm Karisma Center wants this to happen is “through the community in the small groups and the joy of the big worship celebration.”

Stockholm Karisma Center holds a classic Pentecostal theology with strong influences from the faith teaching, the Vineyard, and from other charismatic movements. The Pensacola revival and evangelists like Rodney Howard-Browne and Carlos Anacondia also have influenced SKC. The cell concept is highly influenced by Ralph Neighbour’s Where do we go from here? and Bill Beckham’s The Second Reformation. Beckham’s seminar on the cell church in the spring of 1997 was a milestone in the young congregation’s life.

Vibrant Spirituality. In four of seven core values the importance of anointed teaching, freedom in the Holy Spirit, strong celebrative worship, and a devoted prayer life are stressed. In many of the interviews the high temperature spiritual life of SKC was

mentioned. It is no exaggeration to say that SKC is born, founded, upheld, and expanded through prayer. One Friday night per month there is a night of prayer. In every Sunday Celebration there is intense, fervent, and strong prayer. There is also always an opportunity for intercessory prayer at the end of every meeting. No one should go home from SKC and say, “They did not have the time to pray for or counsel me.”

The celebration is a worship service “built on festivity and joy, crying and laughter,” says Almkvist. It is built on three important ingredients.

- Worship that is contemporary and uses a musical style with edge. The people on stage are all under twenty-five and the band is dominated by percussion and base. There are some parts with more adoration worship but upbeat and high tempo music is dominant.
- Prayer before the meetings and congregational prayer during the celebration. A well-trained staff of intercessors pray for people at the end of the service. Sometimes they use what the Vineyard calls “body-ministry,” which means that people pray for each other all over the place.
- Radical and good preaching with plenty of time set aside for teaching and preaching. SKC is blessed with two of the Swedish Pentecostal movement’s best young preachers. In a meeting I visited, a guest pastor preached. The congregation seemed to like the sermon but it bothered me how poorly the preacher used the Word of God. Radical and good preaching must also show evidence that the preacher has worked

with the text. The preaching must help the listener to gain greater confidence in God's Word.

A Purpose Driven Church. SKC is truly a vision and purpose driven congregation. Everything they do goes back to the main purpose to fulfill the vision. The church is organized with different ministries to meet the four different targets.

- Levande Familjer¹⁰ is an organization affiliated with SKC. They run the family ministry at SKC but they also build a network in order to support families around the country. Levande Familjer runs a clinic for families in crisis.
- In order to reach out into the youth culture, SKC work together with a ministry called Ny Generation (NG).¹¹ NG is a ministry that works in two areas in Sweden: Skåne, which is a "landscape" in the south of Sweden, and the Stockholm region. In Skåne NG works together with Skåne Karisma Center and in Stockholm with SKC. NG was born in cooperation between Almkvist and Magnus Persson, the current leader of NG. NG works with an unconventional and aggressive evangelism style. It is a cutting edge ministry which reaches into the heart of the youth culture. NG also works together with SKC in running a Bible school.
- Pastor Thomas Ardenfors and a couple of other people in SKC frequently visit Hägges Bar in order to build relations with secular, unchurched people.

SKC is an evangelistic church where almost everything is geared toward the main goal of getting people saved. In order to reach that goal, SKC uses various avenues.

¹⁰ Living Families

¹¹ New Generation

Some examples include seven teams that work in the greater Stockholm area in cooperation with NG. The latest team started is a street team formed by former Guardian Angel members. Stockholm Camp Meeting is a rally held during a week in the beginning of August. During the same period, a big event called Stockholm Water Festival goes on in downtown Stockholm and hundreds of thousands of tourists come to the city. During Stockholm Camp Meeting a massive effort of street evangelism is made. The main philosophy of evangelism, though, is that every believer is an evangelist. The motto “Each one, reach one!” is used frequently.

A Cell Church. SKC is basically a cell church, one where every member is expected to be involved in a cell group. It is not a church for Christian tourists it is a church, that stresses the importance of being a devoted follower of Christ. In the cell groups people get the opportunity to discover their spiritual gifts, grow spiritually, and mentor each other.

The great commission vision is really instilled in people at SKC. They focus on evangelism and outreach. The “each one, reach one” motto lives in their hearts. The most evident proof for this great commission vision is the ultimate vision that drives SKC forward: 20,000 members in 2020! When asked about what SKC’s vision is one interviewee answered, “20,000 in 2020.” Another person said: “To reach Stockholm through cell groups.” Yet another said, “The vision is to reach out outside the church.” One who has taken that vision seriously is Patrik Olterman, leader of the newly formed street team. “The street team goes out at night, sometimes roller-blading, in order to talk

to people and make Jesus known. They also offer a bed for the night, a cup of coffee, stop a fight, or just listen and give comfort” (Rensa gatorna!).

The vision of SKC is to build a church of cell groups. Through these cell groups it will penetrate Stockholm with the gospel of Jesus Christ. The cells are the backbone of the church’s structure. Almkvist is trying to say that the church needs two equally important wings to fly. The cell and the celebration are these two wings. SKC wants to make the structure as simple as possible. They do not want to clone someone else’s model. “We must give birth to it ourselves and find our own solution,” says Almkvist. The cell contains a maximum of ten people. One elder together with his/her spouse oversees five cells. A cell pastor oversees five elders.

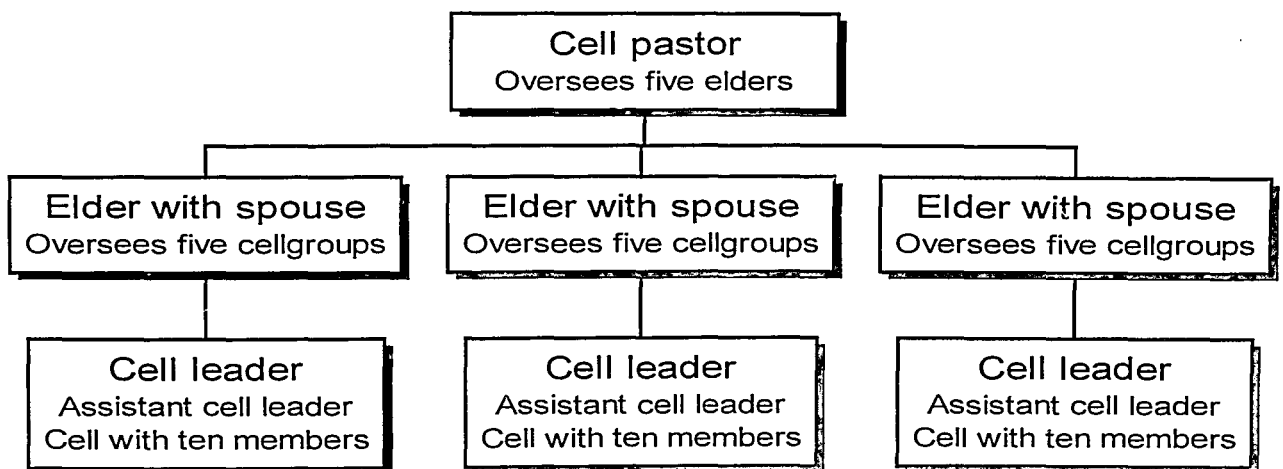


Chart 3

Stockholm Karisma Center’s Cell Group System, October, 1998.

For SKC the cell is the church. Everything that constitutes the church should also be present in the cells. The purpose of the cell is to give people the opportunity to practice their faith in everyday life within a community. In the cell they can feel secure, dare to pray, and develop their spiritual gifts. The cell focuses on developing people's faith; it is a place where they can grow and develop. The cell also provides pastoral care and a deep community. Many interviewees say that one of the reasons they kept going to SKC was the community in the cells and SKC's cell church vision. There are many different types of cells; affinity groups, groups for people with special needs, groups for different age groups, and groups where different ages come together. The main source for new cell group members so far has been people who come to the celebrations and want to become a part of SKC, but a substantial number of people have also been added to the cells through invitation by cell members.

When a cell grows up to a permanent number of twelve members it is time for multiplication. Most often it is natural to split the cell in half and the assistant cell leader becomes the leader of the new group. The cell group leader spots a potential leader in the cell. He or she talks with the pastor about the prospective leader for an approval. After that the cell leader can start developing the new assistant leader and prepare that person for the leadership of a cell group. On the third Saturday of every month there is a special gathering for cell leaders, assistant leaders, and their spouses. The four parts of the gathering are sharing, training, prayer, and a small gathering together with the cell elder. Twice a year there is a two-day training event for the cell leaders.

SKC develops leaders not only through the cell group system but also through a Bible school where people from all over Sweden come for one or two years of training. Many of the students stay in Stockholm after the year at the Bible school. It is natural for them to continue within the fellowship of SKC. The Bible school also trains team members through New Generation for team evangelism in different parts of the greater Stockholm area.

Strong Visionary Leadership. One of the secrets behind the success of SKC is the good mix of many strong leaders with strong visions that complement each other. The two pastors, together with the leaders for NG and Levande Familjer, are some of the most dynamic persons within Swedish Pentecostalism. The flip side of this is that much is focused on these strong leaders. One thing that makes this mix of strong leaders and visions work is that SKC has a well-functioning staff of employed and volunteer workers. SKC is aiming at a big goal and also organizing toward that goal.

When I raised the issue of cultural relevance, some of the leaders at SKC did not want to think in such terms. "The encounter with God is the most important thing. If that does not happen nothing else will help." SKC is, however, conscious of their image. One of the pastors participated in a TV show in the largest commercial TV channel in December 1998 where he and a team from SKC face a special challenge. The name of the show was "Nothing is Impossible." The music style in the celebration has a young edge. The way the audience is fired up during the celebration, the leaders' special way of talking and the language they use point at a deliberate strategy of being culturally relevant to the main target audience of young people in their upper teens and early twenties.

SKC has a well-developed strategy to break through growth restrictive barriers.

The whole system is designed for growth. The vision is to establish satellite churches in every part of the greater Stockholm area, each with its own weekly celebration. In addition to that will be a big monthly or bi-monthly celebration for the whole church. The vision of establishing new satellite churches and of planting new Karisma Center type churches in other populous parts of Sweden is a strong part of the back bone of SKC.

Right now SKC rents one of Stockholm's Pentecostal churches for its Sunday celebration, a magnificent old building in down town Stockholm. They also have their office in that building. SKC does not want to own any building. They want to spend money on people, not buildings.

Analysis

In this section I will try to identify specific principles and issues which are at work in making SKC a growing new church. I also want to consider to what extent these principles are indigenous to Swedish conditions in general and especially to SKC's target groups. I will look for cause-effect relationships that build the case for a certain finding or principle.

Vision Oriented. One of the most striking things about SKC is how vision oriented the church is. Every person I have talked to or met at SKC talks about the vision. Why is it this way? The answer that is closest to the heart of that question has to do with the way SKC came into being and the strong spiritual experiences that preceded the birth of this church. The leaders all are driven by a clear-cut vision of what the church is going to do and where it is heading. It is amazing, though, that so many

interviewees answered with a number rather than with a description of what SKC will look like in the future when they were asked about the vision of the church. Now, a number is of course easier to remember and to write into people's hearts than a broader picture. On the other hand, the picture of the preferred future is closely connected with the cell concept and the establishing of satellite churches.

Another answer to the question about the vision is that the leaders have been extremely good at getting people to buy into the vision, both the cell church concept and the growth target. In different publications these two parts of the vision are presented and reinforced in various ways. It is attractive for people to be part of something new and to do something that is a little controversial in the sight of established Pentecostal churches. Here SKC's vision differs from other Pentecostal churches' visions. It carries the same aggressive and challenging flavor as was known from the pioneering years of Swedish Pentecostalism, while many of the older Pentecostal churches have lost their fire. There is a significant relationship between the birth and growth of SKC and its vision. In that relationship the way that vision is conveyed to and received by the people of SKC plays an important role.

Bill Beckham's Cell Church Seminar. The cell concept is another important reason why SKC is a growing church. As already mentioned, many interviewees and also members featured in Christian magazines say that the cell church vision is one of the most important reasons why they chose SKC as their church home. So what dynamics are present in the cell church concept that attracts people of different classes and ages?

Let us consider some excerpts from Bill Beckham's teaching at the Cell Church Seminar, Spring, 1996.

"God is community. How do we show that?" asks Beckham. "It is in the small group that we come close to God in community with others." Here the relational nature of the church becomes evident and is experienced through the cell. Only through the cell people's true need for community can be met in a sufficient way. The cell church also reflects the true image of the body of Christ. Every member is important and there is interdependence among them. The leadership style is servant leadership. Beckham talks about "the faceless movement" where the spotlight is on the One on the throne. "There will be many strong leaders but no one above the other. Only God will have the glory for what happens," says Beckham (*Församlingen kan flyga*). The cell is the basic structure for evangelism, fellowship, pastoral care, and spiritual growth. In a profound way the needs of every individual are taken care of. The cell is also flexible in terms of location, mobility, and in receiving new people into the fellowship.

There is a more than 150 year old tradition of small group gatherings in the Swedish society. The small group was in many parts of Sweden the backbone of the nineteenth century revival. During this century something called "studie cirklar"¹² have become popular and all sorts of people participate in that kind of educational small group. Traditional church work has in recent years been focused on worship services and program based activities. I regard the cell concept as something that could be indigenous to Swedish people, especially to those with an unchurched background.

Strong Emphasis on Evangelism. As in numerous cases all over the world there is close connection between SKC's growth and its strong emphasis on evangelism. Evangelistic outreach is a core value for SKC. It is a church where they expect every member to be a soul winner. The cells play an important role in this, but so far the teams and the Sunday afternoon celebration are the most important evangelistic instruments. The aggressive style that characterizes SKC creates a pattern for how a person becomes a Christian, and in that pattern the atmosphere and heat at the celebrations fit better than the informal style in the cell groups. Here we may spot a future problem. There is a risk that two congregations will emerge: the cell church and the celebration church. It is possible, though, that I am biased toward a different style of worship or at least another way of acting in a worship service. But if I have understood Becham right, it is important that a cell church carries the same marks of community, "facelessness," and serenity that mark the cell when people gather for worship. Those marks are, as far as I can see, lacking today.

The fervent spirituality is not a problem. I consider it an important ingredient in the mix that makes SKC a successful and thriving church plant. I agree with Mats Gustavsson, SKC's controller, that "the encounter with God is the most important thing. If that does not happen nothing else will help." SKC lives by this motto. No church will thrive without a profound spirituality. SKC connects a strong prayer life with strong and successful evangelism. The outreach gets its power from prayer and worship.

¹² study circles

Conclusion

All eighteen standard principles were found in this case study (see Table 6). Some were more evident than others, but they all play a vital role in making SKC a growing and thriving church plant. No additional principles were identified.

All eighteen standard principles are to some extent culturally biased. Theologically there is a bias of revivalistic American Pentecostalism. The influence from evangelists like Rodney Howard-Browne is evident. SKC underlines that the cell church concept must be born into the conditions that SKC lives under, and I think they have managed to do that. There is also within the Swedish culture a resonance for the cell group concept.

SKC operates primarily within the realm of the youth culture. In a city such as Stockholm, that culture is more extreme than outside that area and it is also more influenced by American trends and fads. This is the reason for the hyped tempo that characterizes SKC's worship services and the way the pastors talk. This can be seen as a way to manipulate the people, but the easiest way to explain this custom is that it is culturally relevant to SKC's specific audience.

Apart from the slightly American biased theology, the only way any of the principles manifested in SKC could be accused of being biased by American culture would be the Americanization of the culture to which they are being indigenized. This is the price that must be paid for being culturally relevant in that special environment.

The utilization of the eighteen church planting principles in a culturally relevant way in a special environment that makes SKC a growing church. It is organized to reach

the goal that is set in the vision to become 20,000 members in the year 2020. If they reach that goal it will mean a substantial break through for the cell church concept and the start of a new way of being the church of God in Sweden.

Tomaskyrkan

Tomaskyrkan¹³ started during the second half of 1996 as a Vineyard church plant in southern Stockholm. They had a core group of thirty-eight people who were willing to go into this new enterprise of being a church in a new and different way. Two years later the church has doubled and eighty to hundred people worship there every Sunday afternoon. What makes Tomaskyrkan a growing church in a very secularized environment? Why are secular, unchurched people attracted by this church? What principles fuel its growth? The study contained site visits, interviews, and a review of different documents.

Background

When Hans Johansson and his wife, Lisbet, moved from the position of pastor in one of the country's most influential Baptist churches to Stockholm in 1992. They were driven by a divine call to plant churches that grew because people were saved. That call built on a vision from 1984, where Hans saw the hard ground plowed up. He got the conviction that the new furrows he saw meant new ways of being a church and that God wanted him to be a part of that. In 1985, Johansson was introduced to John Wimber's teaching on evangelism in the power of the Holy Spirit. Wimber's teaching and teaching style made great impact on Johansson's further spiritual development. After 1990, the

vision came alive again and the circumstances came right for a new church plant in Stockholm. At the same time he came in contact with Brent Rue, a Vineyard pastor from Lancaster, California. Rue was coordinator for the Vineyard's work in Europe. In September, 1992, the first services were held, and the newly planted church later became the first Vineyard church in Sweden.

In recent years the Vineyard has gone through many changes. One issue was what is Vineyard and what is not. The separation of the churches in Toronto, 1995, and Kansas City, 1996, are evidence of that.

For a couple of years, Stockholm Vineyard became the Swedish center for the renewal movement known by the name "the Toronto Blessing." At the same time that the Stockholm Vineyard leadership were heavily involved in the renewal business and Stockholm Vineyard grew because many Christians were attracted by the Toronto blessing, the vision of reaching secular people through the planting of new churches burned in Johansson's heart.

In a letter to all members of Stockholm Vineyard dated May, 1996, Hans Johansson and Hans Sundberg, the senior pastor, cast the vision for the new church plant in southern Stockholm. They explained that this was not a split but a natural part of the church's ministry. They asked for people who wanted to be a part of the new church plant to volunteer. A core group of thirty-eight people was formed. On September 1, 1996, Hans Johansson was appointed the pastor of this new South Stockholm Vineyard.

¹³ The Thomas Church

But here the problems started. The vision was to reach unchurched secular people, seekers, so the new church plant wanted to underline that in its name. St. Thomas Vineyard was the suggestion. But they were denied this name by the Vineyard in the U.S. and had to reconsider their status within the Vineyard movement. In the beginning of 1998, Hans and Lisbet Johansson decided to leave the Vineyard. Their flock followed. Tomaskyrkan now is working on establishing a connection with InterAct, the denomination from where Johansson was sent as a church planter to Stockholm.

Description

Tomaskyrkan is basically evangelical in its theology, but that evangelicalism is blended with a big chunk of Vineyard and some sprinkles of Pentecostalism and Reformed theology. When I mentioned the book title Empowered Evangelicals, the comment was: “That’s definitely what we are.” Tomaskyrkan holds a high church theology of worship. Communion plays an important role in their worship services. They celebrate communion every second or third week. On the other hand, they are pragmatic and low church in their view of leadership.

This is a church with many Baptist roots. It is no surprise that it teaches and practices believer’s baptism, but it also accepts infant baptism as valid if that person can relate to that baptism and live in it.

There is a strong, deep, and natural spirituality in Tomaskyrkan. The worship service focuses on encountering God. The intimate worship which gives time to enter into the presence of the Holy One also gives space for prayer and stillness. The service builds up to a crescendo in the communion. The relaxed atmosphere in the worship

setting helps people feel God's presence. At the end of the service sometimes comes a prophetic ministry with words of comfort, encouragement, or warning given to individuals. In the small groups is always time for prayer and intercession. A group of about ten people meet to seek God for prophetic wisdom. This is a very important group. Tomaskyrkan believes that a true New Testament church is led by prophets. They are serious about this matter.

A Church for the Unchurched. As already mentioned, the vision of reaching secular, unchurched people eventually drove Tomaskyrkan to where it is today. The goal for its ministry is to help people get to know and to love God and to spread the good news of his salvation. "We are driven by the conviction that ours and every person's happiness is in Jesus Christ. And when we have our joy and satisfaction in him, he will be glorified. That is the ultimate good for which we live" (Vision statement). Here we see some of Tomaskyrkan's Reformed roots echoing the Westminster Confession's words that the ultimate goal for every human being is "to glorify God and enjoy him for ever."

The three purposes that Tomaskyrkan's ministry focuses on are:

1. To gather seeking people to Christ where they can be enveloped by God's loving arms.
2. To grow as individuals in the truth and power which the Gospel conveys.
3. To give themselves to God and each other and to other people in their community.

(Purpose statement).

In the interviews the vision of planting new churches also surfaced. They have no plans to daughter a new church, but the perspective is a great benefit for Tomaskyrkan. It

is a church born out of another church and that chain of multiplication of units they intend to maintain unbroken.

The whole idea of Tomaskyrkan is to be a seeker church. In the development process to where it is today, a special type of seeker service was used, the Thomas Mass. This is a communion service for people on a spiritual journey developed within the Finnish Lutheran Church. The name “Thomas” associates with the process of seeking truth and in that process being honest about one’s difficulties and doubts.

Relational evangelism is the core of the ministry toward secular people. In fact, the relational approach is what Tomaskyrkan is all about. Here Tomaskyrkan is both conventional and inventive. Regarding the new ways of reaching people and making new contacts, wine and beer tasting in someone’s home could be mentioned. But the main point is that every member should live a contagious Christian life. Tomaskyrkan also helps people in the process by putting on big events or parties at Christmas or Easter to which members can invite their friends into a non-threatening environment.

Tomaskyrkan’s people seek to make good friends outside the church. They know the risk of becoming isolated from the real world and becoming a religious ghetto.

The Alpha concept is crucial in reaching unchurched people. The Alpha group is a ten-week introduction to the Christian faith. The concept builds on creating a relaxed atmosphere. The evening starts with a light meal, then fifteen minutes of singing and worship precedes the speech of the evening. After a cup of coffee, a group discussion starts and the evening ends with prayer. Before Tomaskyrkan launched, the whole core group went through the Alpha course.

How important Alpha is in Tomaskyrkan's ministry could be illustrated by Katarina's journey from seeker to Christian. She works for computer company and works together with a Christian person. That person invited her to a Thomas Mass. She got interested and signed up for the next Alpha course. At the closing party she gave her testimony; she had become a Christian. That decision made such an impact on her boyfriend that he signed up for the next Alpha course. During the fall of 1998, fourteen people were in the Alpha program.

Relational Focus. Tomaskyrkan holds a pragmatic attitude toward the leadership issue. Leadership has to be proven. A person is not appointed to be a leader unless he or she has proved capable and worthy of the position. Theologically, this view is built upon the doctrine of the priesthood of every believer. When Hans Johansson wrote the letter and cast the vision for the new church plant, he asked for workers, not for passengers. Tomaskyrkan defines membership as being a minister engaged in the process of helping others into fellowship with Jesus Christ. Again, the relational approach to evangelism and the Christian life is stressed.

Being relational in everything is a core value for Tomaskyrkan. This is also expressed in its vision statement.

We see that God's goodness is conveyed through our way of relating to each other. That is why we seek to develop an open, welcoming and relaxed environment where we can come the way we are. We want to be close and intimate in our relations toward God and one another. When a person becomes a member of the church that individual also becomes a member of a small group, the purpose of which is to function as a social and spiritual greenhouse, where we can encourage one another in following Christ and develop in trust, care, and responsibility.

Tomaskyrkan is a cell/celebration church. The church life is located in the life of the house groups. The house group is the church in miniature. The church should function equally well without worship services. House groups are important because the Christian life is an everyday walk with Christ. It is about the whole life. A person can only have everyday kinds of relations with ten to twenty people. That is why house groups are so important. The house groups are an affinity type where people who match are put together. Tomaskyrkan wants every Christian to be part of a house group. It is top priority. Right now four house groups are running. Knowing that the house groups cannot meet all needs and the needs of all, there are other groups as well; a marriage group, a men's group, a mother's and toddler's group, and the Alpha group. Tomaskyrkan also runs several task groups as worship preparation groups, a worship team, etc.

Tomaskyrkan is blessed with many good and capable leaders. A couple people with theological training serve on the leadership team. The house group leaders meet every two weeks for a session of sharing and prayer. There is a dual movement in the church: one is to make the threshold so low that everyone could consider entering into leadership; the other is to set the level high for those who already are leaders. The small groups are the main source for new leaders to emerge and develop. Tomaskyrkan is a new church and is also an experimental church. The structures must be such that they fit their situation. This approach is also a part of not being satisfied with just being the church, but focusing on living the church.

Living the Church. This focus on living the church makes the worship services special. The ethos of a church can be felt when people gather in worship. The worship is free, charismatic, and high church all at the same time. The purpose of the worship service is to help people understand God. He is the God who is close and familiar, but he is also the Holy One in the highest. Tomaskyrkan talks about two kinds of worship formats; the first one is the living room format. It is a relaxed worship service designed for believers where God can be addressed as “Dad.” The other format is the dining room format. “When you invite people into your living room, you offer them a cup of coffee and then you talk, a casual thing. But when you invite them into your dining room everything is prepared in detail. You give them your very best,” says Johansson. He continues, “We need to meet people in a way that makes them feel special and important and that makes them understand that God is important.” In this worship format God is addressed as “Father” and the “Holy, holy, holy” is appropriate.

In the Thomas Mass all the arts are used, drama, poetry, and dance. The place where they meet is artistically decorated. The music style varies but maintains a high quality level. It could be soft pop, jazz, pop, or classical music. The aim is that people should be able to listen to the music with satisfaction. The “dining room service” is held about every third week.

Other events targets unchurched people. For example, a popular Christian singer, who is a member of the church, gave a free concert where people could bring their non-Christian friends.

When I asked about what they do to be culturally relevant to their target group the answer was be ourselves. We can only attract people who like us and can identify with us. This is a part of being genuine and true. So the question asked is not what other people like but, "What do we like? We do not need to pretend anything, we just do what we like." There are many artistic workers in the church: dancers, musicians, artists, designers, and communicators. Tomaskyrkan is a church which attracts people in their upper twenties and older.

Generosity. Generosity flourishes among the people in Tomaskyrkan. The way I was received when I visited them was overwhelming, evidence of the love and grace that drives this church. Generosity is not a core value just because it is a point in the vision statement. It is a way of living the Christian life which is attractive and convicting. I quote:

We work against our own selfishness and self-centeredness by intentionally caring for one another and sharing what we have. We also want to reach out to others and help to relieve and to promote righteousness where people are in need. We try to have a generous attitude toward differences in personal lifestyle. The goal is that the community life in the congregation should be marked by generosity and be free from force and law observance.

The members of Tomaskyrkan come from many different backgrounds, but have this one thing in common; they live out their generosity toward others and one another.

The preaching in Tomaskyrkan is oriented toward the issues and questions that are important to people and for their spiritual edification. Their honesty, authenticity, and transparency are stunning. Hans Johansson, the senior pastor, is one of Sweden's leading New Testament scholars and author of an extraordinary commentary on 2 Corinthians.

The preaching is marked by a theological depth while at the same time is easy to understand.

Tomaskyrkan has used a number of different locations and facilities during its relatively short period of existence. Today it rents the church hall in a Baptist church, a suitable, beautiful room. A poster standing out on the sidewalk shows the way to the entrance. Entering the room, one is met by a warm and welcoming atmosphere. In a corner of the room is a table with coffee and cookies. At the end of the service people drink coffee or tea and mingle around making contact with new people. Some people are praying while kids run around and play.

Analysis

In this section I will try to identify specific principles and issues which are at work in making Tomaskyrkan a growing church. I also will consider to what extent these principles are indigenous to Swedish conditions in general and especially to Tomaskyrkan's special location. I will look for cause-effect relationships that build the case for a certain finding or principle.

Authenticity. One of the most important reasons why Tomaskyrkan succeeds in reaching unchurched people is its high level of authenticity, honesty, and transparency. This is crucial for every church that aims to be a seeker church. These values are seen in every part of Tomaskyrkan's ministry. The preacher in a service I visited was cruelly honest in the sermon about his own shortcomings. An invitation to a Thomas Mass in October, 1998, says, "The night is not limited to the dark part of the day's 24 hours. There are also night seasons in life where the light of the sun has very little to help

against the darkness we experience within or around us. The service on Sunday is about such days--and about God.” The theme for the service was “Dark as the Night.” Music, dance, poetry, songs, and prayers mirrored the experience of breakdown, and also the experience of going forth and of hope. It was a service to help struggling modern urban people get a language for the night in order to be able to see the dawn.

One reason for this honesty could be found in the background of Tomaskyrkan’s leadership. Johansson has his roots in the Swedish Free Church movement, is a heritage I think he is proud of. But there is a flip side to that heritage, the exclusiveness and narrow-mindedness of that quite small sub-culture and the high barriers that it has built. These barriers are often equally difficult to break through from the inside as from the outside. The marks of this phenomenon are “Pharisees” and hypocrisy. In order to avoid these barriers and the “we-they” mentality, they intentionally pursue truth and authenticity. The result is that what you see is what you get when you come to the fellowship of Tomaskyrkan.

Another reason for the pursuit of truth is that most secular people are prejudiced against Christians as hypocrites. It is mandatory to maintain a high level of authenticity for any church, new or old, to be able to reach the unchurched millions among the Swedish people. Truth and authenticity is one of Tomaskyrkan’s core values. This value is lived out within the life of the church. In the vision statement it says, “We do not want to cover our own shortcomings behind masks or facades. The truth about God’s grace makes us secure and free to be authentic. Our communication of the truth shall be

marked by humility, honesty, respect, and friendliness, even against those whose conviction we do not share.”

What You See is What You Get. This what you-see-is-what-you-get principle is evident also in another important cause-effect relationship, the relational approach which leavens everything in Tomaskyrkan. In urban and suburban settings where the greatest problem is the loneliness and isolation of people, warm, open, and generous fellowship is a strong force. Tomaskyrkan is a cell/celebration church. At the bottom line that means to live a relational life with other Christians and with people in everyday life. The new furrow that Johansson saw in his vision in 1984 may well have been just this new way of living as a church, the New Testament way. People who live in that kind of accountable relationship to each other cannot be one way during the week and another way on Sundays. When secular people see this, it is a strong witness.

Tomaskyrkan acts relational in its evangelism. It is through people's everyday life that the gospel will penetrate the lives of seekers and unchurched Christians. The small groups are the place where this Christian witness is formed. Wesley once said that “there is no holiness, but social holiness.” This is lived out in Tomaskyrkan. Within the small group life people can grow and mature unto the likeness of Christ.

The Process of Grace in Life and Theology. Closely connected with this relational focus is the process thinking in Tomaskyrkan. Seekers are in a process, on a journey. The way toward faith in Christ is a process. Often the Alpha group is an important step in this process. Every believer is also in a process. This is the growth process and the community process within the congregation. Becoming a member is

defined as entering into this community process. The prospective member becomes a part of a small group. His or her name is written into the address list and finally, after an interview with the pastor, the person is welcomed into the church. Tomaskyrkan is a little ambivalent in its view of membership. On one hand, it wants to be open and make it easy for people to become a part of the church, and on the other hand, it wants its members to be committed workers in God's kingdom.

The process orientation of Tomaskyrkan's life and theology reveals many similarities with the classic Wesleyan doctrine of grace, the prevenient grace which seeks people and draws them into fellowship with Christ and the sanctifying grace which helps people grow and mature unto holiness and Christian perfection.

It is important for Tomaskyrkan to figure out its own way. Here is a great secret behind the attraction of this church: it is not a clone of something else, not just another Christian charismatic fellowship meeting in an old car dealership. It is a authentic Christian church, relevant to its time, location, and people. During the process when the Vineyard developed into a new denomination in Sweden, Johansson stood against that. He thought there were enough denominations already. At the same time he saw how difficult it was for even the Vineyard to flex enough to fit into the Swedish culture. Thus, cultural relevance is one of the marks of Tomaskyrkan. But sometimes this quest for cultural relevance and removal of the barriers of prejudice against the Free Church goes too far, at least in my opinion. Wine-tasting will definitely tear down old prejudice, but being cultural relevant does not always mean to adopt the culture of the target group. The gospel gives us responsibility to judge the culture and unveil its shortcomings.

Conclusion

Sixteen of the eighteen standard principles were identified in this case study (see Table 7). All of them were not equally present, however. Tomaskyrkan is weak on structures for an expanding network of cell groups and for developing new lay leaders. It has little organization to break through growth-restricting barriers, nor does it have any vision at the moment to plant new churches. Tomaskyrkan is pragmatic in its nature as well as in its theology. Along the road some of the structures lacking today will eventually come into place. Three additional principles are identified in this case study: the relational approach to church life and evangelism, a process-oriented view on conversion and membership, and commitment to authentic Christian living. They are all connected to each other and at the core of what Tomaskyrkan is all about.

Tomaskyrkan is careful not to adopt something foreign or something which is not indigenous to themselves and their target group. Its pragmatic nature helps it to create theology for the special setting and people where it ministers. It has indigenized the standard principles extremely well. Cultural relevance is lived out as a core value in Tomaskyrkan. If any of the principles manifested in Tomaskyrkan could be accused of being biased by American culture, this is due primarily to the Americanization of our Swedish culture, in contemporary music for example.

The utilization of sixteen of the eighteen standard principles and the three additional principles found in Tomaskyrkan makes it a growing church. This is not a church that focuses on rapid growth. This church focuses on spiritual formation and

relational evangelism, which helps build a solid foundation and is its great gift to the Church in our country today.

The Research Questions Answered

The following will answer the research questions emerging from the purpose statement and stated in Chapter 1 and restated and operationalized in Chapter 3.

Research Question #1

During the summer and the beginning of the Fall, 1996, contact was made with the denominational offices of the United Methodist Church in Sweden, InterAct, the Pentecostal movement, the Swedish Alliance Mission, the Swedish Baptist Convention, the Swedish Covenant Church, and the Vineyard for information about churches planted during 1992 to 1996. I secured forty addresses. In October, 1996, a letter was sent out to the pastors of these forty churches. The feed-back was depressing. Only a handful answered within the time limit of four weeks I had given in the letter. In December and January, I started to call those not answering my letter. I also tried other ways to get information about the churches. Some statistical information I found in Roger Korsgren's dissertation, Hur dom gör det.

Out of the forty, it turned out that five churches were planted before 1992, one in 1997, and that eight had not yet launched. One church did not want to participate. Seven churches did not answer or were impossible contact. The remaining nineteen churches are viewed in Table 5.

Table 5

The Nineteen Churches Composing the Population for the Field Research.

Church	Seeker approach	Members	Conversions	Unchurched Christians	Transfers	Conversion growth
Älta SAM ¹⁴	No	24	4	8	12	20
Laholm SAM	No	36	12	12	12	33
Bellevue SMF	No	55	10			18
Hemavan SMF ¹⁵	No	16		8	8	0
Stockholm Karisma Center PR ¹⁶	Yes	188 (core 6)	~50			27
Skogås NB ¹⁷	No	17	1	3	13	6
Livsglädje NB	No	20	2		18	10
Mötesplatsen NB	Yes + Gen. X	130 (core 12)	30	30	70	23
Nytt Liv NB	Yes + Gen. X	80	10	35	35	13
Norsborg UMC	No	40		10	30	0
Stockholm Vineyard	No	400	40	?	?	10
Göteborg Vineyard	No	110				
Malmö Vineyard	No	73	7	36	30	10
Örebro Vineyard	No	65	2			3
Borås Vineyard	Yes	45 (core 12)	10	25	10	23
Tomas-kyrkan/ (Vineyard)	Yes	55 (core 39)	10	2	5	27
Norrköping	No	50	5	13	35	10

¹⁴ Swedish Alliance Mission¹⁵ Swedish Covenant Church¹⁶ The Pentecostal movement¹⁷ Nybygget - kristen samverkan, their international name is InterAct

Vineyard						
Grantorp SB ¹⁸	No	10				
Danderyd SB	No	20				

All these nineteen churches match the first and the fourth criteria for the selection of the churches for the multiple case study . Five churches expressed a specific focus on reaching secular, unchurched people: Tomaskyrkan, Borås Vineyard, Stockholm Karisma Center, Mötesplatsen,¹⁹ and Nytt Liv.²⁰ No church had a conversion growth of 50 percent or more.

On the basis of matching three of four criteria and having the highest conversion growth Tomaskyrkan (27 percent), Stockholm Karisma Center (27 percent), and Mötesplatsen (23 percent) were selected for the multiple case study. Mötesplatsen and Borås Vineyard both had about the same percentage of conversion growth. I chose to select Mötesplatsen for several reasons. Borås Vineyard is in many ways influenced by Tomaskyrkan's approach to the seekers. Mötesplatsen is a larger church, which makes it easier to get a more differentiated picture of the dynamics going on in that church.

Research Question #2

All the eighteen standard church planting principles which were identified through the checklist summarizing the findings in the review of literature are identified in the field

¹⁸ Swedish Baptist Convention

¹⁹ The Meeting place, Örebro

²⁰ New Life, Linköping

research. They are not equally present in number or strength in the different churches studied. In order to differentiate the extent of the presence of these church planting principles in each church an assessment tool were used. The findings in each church and how they match the standard principles are reported in Tables 6-8.

Table 6

Församlingen Mötesplatsen

Church planting principle	Not present	Somewhat present	Definitely present	Very much present
1. Holds a biblically-based evangelical theology	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
2. Promotes spiritual vitality and dynamic work of the Holy Spirit	0	1	<u>2</u>	3
3. Clarifies and keeps central its purpose, priorities, and vision	0	1	<u>2</u>	3
4. Targets and designs ministry to reach the unchurched	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
5. Mobilizes and empowers every Christian to ministry	0	1	<u>2</u>	3
6. Instills a "Great Commission vision" in its members	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
7. Penetrates the community through a proliferation of cell groups	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
8. Makes cell groups the primary provider of pastoral care	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
9. Structures for an expanding network of cell groups	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
10. Multiplies lay leaders	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
11. Holds seeker-sensitive services and events	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
12. Offers positive, practical, inspiring preaching	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
13. Emphasizes God's grace and mercy	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
14. Creates an environment of love, acceptance and forgiveness	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
15. Utilizes a creative, contemporary, culturally relevant worship style	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
16. Visionary leadership equips others to ministry	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
17. Organizes to break through growth-restrictive barriers	<u>0</u>	1	2	3
18. Reproduces other high-impact churches	0	<u>1</u>	2	3

Table 7

Stockholm Karisma Center

Church planting principle	Not present	Somewhat present	Definitely present	Very much present
1. Holds a biblically-based evangelical theology	0	1	<u>2</u>	3
2. Promotes spiritual vitality and dynamic work of the Holy Spirit	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
3. Clarifies and keeps central its purpose, priorities, and vision	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
4. Targets and designs ministry to reach the unchurched	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
5. Mobilizes and empowers every Christian to ministry	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
6. Instills a "Great Commission vision" in its members	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
7. Penetrates the community through a proliferation of cell groups	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
8. Makes cell groups the primary provider of pastoral care	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
9. Structures for an expanding network of cell groups	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
10. Multiplies lay leaders	0	1	<u>2</u>	3
11. Holds seeker-sensitive services and events	0	<u>1</u>	2	3
12. Offers positive, practical, inspiring preaching	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
13. Emphasizes God's grace and mercy	0	1	<u>2</u>	3
14. Creates an environment of love, acceptance and forgiveness	0	1	<u>2</u>	3
15. Utilizes a creative, contemporary, culturally relevant worship style	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
16. Visionary leadership equips others to ministry	0	1	<u>2</u>	3
17. Organizes to break through growth-restrictive barriers	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
18. Reproduces other high-impact churches	0	1	2	<u>3</u>

Table 8

Tomaskyrkan

Church planting principle	Not present	Somewhat present	Definitely present	Very much present
1. Holds a biblically-based evangelical theology	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
2. Promotes spiritual vitality and dynamic work of the Holy Spirit	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
3. Clarifies and keeps central its purpose, priorities, and vision	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
4. Targets and designs ministry to reach the unchurched	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
5. Mobilizes and empowers every Christian to ministry	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
6. Instills a "Great Commission vision" in its members	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
7. Penetrates the community through a proliferation of cell groups	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
8. Makes cell groups the primary provider of pastoral care	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
9. Structures for an expanding network of cell groups	0	<u>1</u>	2	3
10. Multiplies lay leaders	0	<u>1</u>	2	3
11. Holds seeker-sensitive services and events	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
12. Offers positive, practical, inspiring preaching	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
13. Emphasizes God's grace and mercy	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
14. Creates an environment of love, acceptance and forgiveness	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
15. Utilizes a creative, contemporary, culturally relevant worship style	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
16. Visionary leadership equips others to ministry	0	1	2	<u>3</u>
17. Organizes to break through growth-restrictive barriers	<u>0</u>	1	2	3
18. Reproduces other high-impact churches	<u>0</u>	1	2	3

Research Question #3

Three additional church planting principles with great importance for the growth and success of the churches in which they have been found were identified.

From Mötesplatsen two new standard principles emerged: Standard Principle #19: A relational approach to evangelism and ministry. Standard principle #20: A process oriented view of conversion and membership. These two principles were also present in the life of Tomaskyrkan, but only principle #19 and to a minor degree was present in Stockholm Karisma Center.

The third new principle, especially expressed in Tomaskyrkan, was: Standard Principle #21: Authentic Christian living.

Research Question #4

Operational Question #1. Standard Principle #1, as manifested in Mötesplatsen, was the only principle found that could be considered manifested in a culturally unbiased way. Mötesplatsen's theological foundation is the Lausanne Covenant and the Manila Manifesto. It may be disputed, however, how universal or culturally unbiased the Lausanne Covenant is. But this is as close as one can come to a culturally unbiased church planting principle.

Operational Question #2. We have also seen how Standard Principle #1, as manifested in Stockholm Karisma Center, was considered biased by American Pentecostal theology and praxis. For Stockholm Karisma Center the slightly Americanized theology and style is an advantage in the cultural environment in which

they work. The conclusion is that this slightly Americanized theology and style is indigenous to SKC's target audience.

Operational Question #3. All churches have been very careful to emphasize the importance of adapting what they do to their special conditions. This is evident in how they work with small groups. Therefore, the small group ministry in all three churches (sometimes very structured, in other cases quite unstructured,) is manifested in a way that is culturally relevant to Swedish conditions and to their specific cultural environments.

The three new standard principles, #19-21, must be mentioned as examples where the demands from the milieu in which Mötesplatsen and Tomaskyrkan ministers have formed a culturally relevant manifestation of these principles.

Generally speaking, all three churches are good at being sensitive to the cultural demands of their respective settings. The conclusion is that all principles present in each church--with two exceptions stated above--are manifested in a way that is indigenous to Swedish conditions and culture.

Research Question #5

OP #1 and OP #3 have been answered in the case study reports from each church in the field research. OP #4 and OP #5 will be answered in Chapter 5.

Operational Question #2. It is impossible to exclude other factors leading to secular unchurched people's conversions besides the twenty-one principles found in this study. Conversion is always a work of God's grace and a number of occasions, circumstances, and evidences of God's prevenient grace frame a person's way to faith in Christ. One thing must be mentioned, however, the importance of timing. Behind many

testimonies in the interviews from new converts one can feel that the specific church was there in due time for this person. I do not regard this as any church planting principle. It is just the natural way God works. So even if timing is not everything, timing is important.

CHAPTER 5

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter will summarize the major findings of this study. Things reported on in Chapter 4 will not be repeated, instead the spotlight will be on some important trends emerging from the study.

The Standard Church Planting Principles

It is satisfying to report that, with only one exception, the eighteen standard church planting principles stated at the end of Chapter 3 have been confirmed by the multiple case study.

Paradigm Shift

Talking to church planting pastors during the process of selecting the three churches most suitable for the case study, and after that, meeting with pastors, leaders, and grass roots people in those churches, has convinced me that a major paradigm shift is taking place among young pioneering pastors and congregations in Sweden. It is a shift away from the old free church way of thinking about what a congregation is and how it is organized and functions. That way of thinking is extremely flavored by the historic roots of that movement. During the later half of the 19th century three major popular movements emerged: the labor movement, the sobriety movement, and the free church movement. Often the same people were active and leading in all three movements. Thus they all were organized about the same way. The congregation was organized as a society or a club. The congregation was governed the same way as a labor club. There was a great strength in this way of doing things especially in a society where people voted

according to their financial strength; the more money, the more votes you had in public elections. As long as you as a member paid your fees, came to the weekly meetings, and did not break the rules of the congregation, everything was fine. As time went on this organizational model made the free churches more and more isolated from people. "It's only for the members," we often hear unchurched people say about things going on in the church.

Times have changed but the free churches still function according to this old paradigm. Sunday morning worship is the back bone of this way of thinking, but that back bone is, in many places, just a fossil.

The new paradigm that is so exciting to see emerge, and will become the paradigm of the 21st century church, is the cell/celebration model. All three churches in the multiple case study stress that the small group, the cell, is the church in essence. It is like the New Testament comes alive again, people meet in homes, they pray, they share the Word of God, they apply it and they grow, they love each other and their neighbors, and God is mightily present among them. In December, 1998 the Swedish public television broadcast a series of documentary programs about the Catholic Church. In one program they mirrored the Catholic Church in Latin America. After the second Vatican council the intention was to indigenize the Christian faith to the life of the people in Latin America. It was in this process the liberation theology came into being and together with that the basic groups. Through these small groups thousands of ordinary people discovered for the first time that the gospel and the Christian faith had something to do with their every day life. I think the same thing will be true in the secularized Swedish

society. Through the relational life of small groups and Alpha courses many unchurched secular Swedes will discover the relevance of the Christian faith.

In this new cell/celebration paradigm, there is no more room for Sunday morning Christians. Every member is a minister, involved in Christ's mission.

Relational Emphasis

When I first heard the expression “based on relations” in connection with evangelism and the whole ministry of a church, it sounded a little fuzzy. The more I talked to people, listened to their stories, and experienced their friendship, the more I realized that what they talked about and lived out was not at all fuzzy. It was something that went down to the core of what it is to be a biblically functioning church at the end of the 20th century. In a secular society people have little pre-knowledge about Christian faith or the Bible. The only relevant way they can perceive and understand what Christian faith is about is through faithful, authentic Christians they happen to know or befriend.

The churches in the case study, and especially Mötesplatsen and Tomaskyrkan, are very serious about building authentic community within the congregation. It was with great joy I read the front page article in the summer 1998 issue of NEXT. It states that one important hallmark of 21st century churches is authentic community. The author writes that this relational based authentic community in these churches is “visible throughout the life of the church and reflected in the congregation's approach for helping people mature in faith. It is not built through programs, but focuses on people's needs

and opportunities” (Authentic Community). This describes what is going on in the three churches in the case study.

Process Thinking

Mötesplatsen and Tomaskyrkan emphasize both the journey of seekers and the Christian life as a process. This is an important ingredient of the new paradigm. In the old free church paradigm a very clear line marked who was inside and who was outside. This border does not exist in that way any more. We are all in a process toward God. Somewhere along that process we make a commitment to Christ and turn our lives over to his leadership. Our awareness of what it means to be a Christian grows as we grow.

Likewise, membership is a process. A person grows into the fellowship of the church, gets involved, and becomes a part of that particular church. Somewhere along that process there is an official welcome into membership.

Thinking about conversion and membership as a process is a biblical way of making the way into fellowship with the church easier. It underlines that the focus is not on who is what, but on Christ. When people gather to love, serve and worship him, they form the church.

Thinking theologically about this one can say that many people are very Wesleyan these days without knowing it. The Wesleyan doctrine of grace is evident in many places where people never ever have read a single page of Wesley. It only shows that what Wesley discovered two hundred and fifty years ago was one of those eternal divine truths that I am afraid many of the people who call themselves Methodists today have

neglected. It is in this process thinking we also find a strong emphasis on God's grace, love and forgiveness.

Cultural Relevance

It is quite clear that all the three churches in the case study want to be relevant to the people they want to reach. In Mötesplatsen they have a strong awareness of the importance of this issue. They work intentionally to crack the cultural codes of their target group. Stockholm Karisma Center does not want to talk about this at all, but they are the most culturally sensitive of the three churches. They use innovative, extremely culturally relevant means to reach out to the youth culture. Tomaskyrkan's way of being culturally relevant is to be themselves and live and worship the way they like. Hopefully, through the authenticity in their Christian community and their intentional building of relations to unchurched people, they will hit the bulls eye on the mentality and culture of these people.

The interesting thing here is not the way cultural relevance is shown in these churches, it is the fact that they all, intentionally or accidentally, show a high degree of cultural relevance.

This issue is interesting because it is linked to other important issues which distinguishes churches under the old paradigm from those under the new one. Cultural relevance is not only expressed in worship style, music, language, or location, it is also expressed in the way people form community and live out their Christian faith. Thus, a authentic relationally based community and a process oriented theology are expressions

of a cultural sensitivity toward the modern society and the challenges from and needs of seekers and secular people.

An Evangelical Theology

When investigating the nineteen churches that form the population for this study, I found that the top fifteen in size and growth all profess some kind of evangelical theology. Whether they are Baptist, Pentecostal, Vineyard, Reformed, Methodist, or Lutheran in their interpretation does not matter, they hold a biblically based evangelical theology. This is an important observation. It can not be said, however, that all churches with an evangelical theology are growing churches. However, most growing churches in Sweden and all over the world have this one thing in common, they are evangelicals when it comes to how to approach the Scriptures.

Church Planting as Evangelistic Tool

Peter Wagner states that church planting is the most effective evangelistic tool. In many locations all over the world that is true. Unfortunately, Sweden seems not to be one of them, at least not yet. Only a few church plants grow beyond one hundred members. Three churches, within the denominations studied, have at this point broken through the three hundred barrier: Stockholm Vineyard, Stockholm Karisma Center, and New Life, Stockholm.

It is discouraging that no church plant had a conversion growth of 50 percent or higher. Most of the members in new churches are already Christians. Certainly, some were unchurched believers, but the main part of the growth comes from transfers. It is

even possible to plant a church in Sweden and reach an attendance of 70 to 100 people without one single convert.

These observations are confirmed by a study made by Roger Korsgren in 1996. He interviewed twelve church planting pastors in Stockholm and Örebro. The statistic material reported in his study tells the same story I have told. The twelve churches had in 1995 1070 members together and 258 conversions. Twenty-two percent were new Christians. Two hundred and forty of these new Christians came to Christ in the four largest churches. Five of the churches had not seen anyone come to Christ in three to six years of existence (Korsgren 12).

It is important to try to understand the reasons for this. There is in Sweden a different spiritual climate than in the United States. Even the least churchd state, Washington, with an attendance of about twenty-nine percent weekly (Religion Today), is like heaven in comparison to Sweden. People in Sweden seem to have a longer and more difficult path to go before committing to Christ.

Church planting is quite a new thing in Sweden. There are few, if any, churches that have succeeded to a larger extent in reaching out to unchurched secular people. Many efforts are made, both within the traditional churches and through church planting, but there is no critical mass of success stories that creates a momentum among the seekers. Still most seekers view the church, new or old, as a spent force. This is not an excuse, I only want to express that it will take time before new churches build up that kind of credibility that attracts ordinary people go to there in larger numbers.

Previously Published Studies

Two recent studies in Scandinavia partly cover the same area of research as this study.

The first one is Roger Korsgren's dissertation Hur dom gör det.²¹ Korsgren has interviewed twelve church planting pastors in Stockholm and Örebro region. His focus is on how churches are planted in Sweden. Despite the difference of focus, there are some similarities in the results of this and Korsgren's study. Korsgren emphasizes:

1. Reaching large numbers of secular people in Sweden is difficult. This issue is already discussed above.
2. Visionary leadership is important. Korsgren found two different leadership styles among the church planting pastors. The first stresses stability and perseverance. The second underscores a visionary, creative, motivating, entrepreneurial leadership. Then he asks if there is any difference in leadership style between small and larger congregations. The leaders in the larger congregations tend to describe leadership in terms of vision, initiative, etc. This is the same conclusion that can be made from this study. In all three of the case study churches there is a strong visionary leadership, executed by either some very visible vision casters or a leadership team. Korsgren also found that those who emphasized the visionary leadership were the ones who best motivated their churches to growth and develop (60).
3. The American church planting literature is quite relevant to the Swedish conditions if one is aware of the cultural differences.

The second study is Ommund Rolfsen's and Sten Sørensen's Menighetsplanting på norsk.²² In this book the authors mirror the congregational life of five newly planted congregations in Norway. They use the same format of user friendly narrative cases as in this study and many of their observations are similar to mine. Their aim is not to discover principles or explain behavior, it is simply to tell the story about some church plants in Norway and see what could be learned from their experiences.

All the churches in the book use the cell/celebration model. Many use the Alpha groups as a tool for reaching seekers and introducing them to the Christian faith. They all focus on reaching out to secular unchurched people as their first priority.

Rolfsen and Sørensen give a more positive picture of the possibilities of reaching unchurched people through church planting. They ask themselves if church planting is the most effective evangelistic tool. Even though there are no national surveys on this issue, and conversion growth is quite low, their hunch is that new churches have a higher conversion growth than old churches and that they are better evangelistic tools than old churches (129). Church planting has for quite a long time been accepted as something natural in Norway. One hundred twenty-eight new free church congregations were planted in Norway during a ten year period from 1983-1993 (12). During the same period a very small number of churches were planted in Sweden and mainly within the controversial faith movement.

²¹ How They Do It.

²² Church Planting in Norwegian.

Menighetsplantning på Norsk is a campaign book for the DAWN vision. The authors' conclude that, if the vision of one congregation per every 1000 people is going to be fulfilled many new churches are needed in Norway (137). The same conclusion could be drawn for Sweden as well.

Thoughts on the Research Method

The multiple case study method is an excellent tool for this type of study. Through interviews, site visits, and a lot of printed material one gets a good insight into the heart of the subject matter. The flip side is that it is easy to be biased in the observations and considerations which are the base for the case study. In some places I have discussed my personal feelings toward some phenomenon, but I have tried hard to treat the three churches in the same way and give the most objective account I can. In order to avoid unnecessary biases I also have discussed my findings with the churches and with people outside the churches who know the situation well.

One major limitation of this study is the low number of churches that were interested in taking part in the study. It was only after much work, many telephone calls, and some detective work I was able to come up with the list of nineteen churches for the population of the study. But this mirrors, unfortunately, the situation in Sweden. Church planting is not a high priority for most denominations. I think we have done the best that was possible under the circumstances, and many people I have talked to have confirmed my selection of Mötesplatsen, Stockholm Karisma Center, and Tomaskyrkan as the best possible churches for the sample.

With a larger population and with more churches matching the criteria for the sample a control group could have been formed. It had been interesting to test some questions and findings on a larger group of churches to confirm their universality. That was unfortunately impossible due to the limited number of churches with a seeker oriented focus. It is always hazardous to generalize findings from two or three churches to be universal truths. The fact that the cases confirm seventeen out of eighteen of the standard church planting principles helps me out here.

I have failed to reach one goal with this study. I had hoped for a closer contact with and more feed-back from the Bishop and the Cabinet in order to anchor my work in the Methodist Church in Sweden. I have had the opportunity, however, to present and discuss my thesis, and church planting in general, during a one day seminar at the annual pastor's gathering in May, 1998. I also was invited to give a brief information about my study and about church planting at a meeting with the Board of Discipleship in September, 1997.

People within the program for church planting in InterAct have shown great interest in my work and I have got great encouragement from them.

Suggestions for Further Study

I have already written about the difficulty of getting in contact with church planting pastors and convince them to participate in the study. There may be many reasons for this. One is that Asbury is not a well known institution in Sweden. A recommendation from a well known and respected person within church planting circles may have been a good help. Another reason is that many church planting pastors are

suspicious about academic work. The Swedish government sponsored universities are not directly known as defenders of evangelical theology. A recommendation letter may have solved that problem also, but the issue is much wider than that. A third reason is that pastors in general are loaded with work and responsibilities and that they did not prioritize to answer my letter. The telephone was a good tool here to get in touch with those who did not answer. But some pastors did not call back despite three or four messages given on their answering machines.

During my work with the cases I found that some sort of assessment tool was needed in order to differentiate the findings. It was not satisfying just to say if a church planting principle was present or not. I needed a tool that helped me to tell to what extent this church planting principle was present.

I had hoped for many more answers to my letter to the church planting pastors. I also had hoped that many more churches actually were reaching unchurched secular people and growing. The conclusion is that what can be a great tool for advancing God's kingdom is not sharp enough or not used in a proper way to be effective. That is my greatest disappointment in this study.

This study is basically about how new churches grow and reach unchurched secular people. I had wished that the study clearly had verified that church planting is the best way of reaching unchurched secular people in Sweden. But what are the alternatives? With the ambiguity about whether new churches are the best tool for reaching the seekers in Sweden, one suggestion for further studies would be to investigate turnaround churches who have broken the declining trend and now grow mostly by the

conversion of unchurched secular people. I earnestly hope there are enough turn around churches to get at representative population for such a study.

Another interesting study would be to investigate the importance of the three new standard principles--a relational approach to evangelism and ministry, a process oriented view of conversion and membership, and an authentic Christian Living--in reaching the Generation X.

The ultimate project, however, is to use the model which I am now going to present, plant a church and come back five years later and report on how it worked. I hope someone will do that in the near future.

A Model for New Methodist Churches in Sweden

The purpose of this dissertation is to develop an indigenous model for new Methodist Churches in Sweden based on the principles discovered in the review of literature, the employment of these principles revealed in the case study, and the historic and contemporary challenge of Methodism in Sweden. Through the review of literature eighteen standard principles were identified. All but one were verified through the multiple case study. In the case study three additional principles were found. In order to make the model manageable and not just a redundant repetition of things already said the now 21 principles have been arranged thematically. This also gives room to apply the principles to the contemporary Swedish context. The model features ten highly important characteristics that mark growing new churches reaching unchurched secular people.

A Growth-oriented WesleyanTheology

Most growing churches in Sweden and elsewhere in the world hold some sort of evangelical theology. We have also seen in the cases that some kind of charismatic experience marks these churches. I believe that a “middle of the road” theology blending the best of the evangelical world with the best of the charismatic world and the best of the Wesleyan world would be the ultimate foundation for not only new Methodist church plants, but also for all Methodist churches that seek to reach unchurched secular people today.

The Best of the Evangelical World. When I refer to the evangelical world, I mean that kind of evangelicalism expressed in the Lausanne declaration and the Manila manifesto. The view those documents give on the authority of Scripture, evangelism, and world mission is imperative for an evangelical based theology.

Classic evangelical theology stresses the importance and urgency of evangelism. In this sense John Wesley was an evangelical par excellence. “You have nothing to do but to save souls,” he said. The purpose of new Methodist churches must be to extend the good news of Christ to the world and God’s love to the lost. An evangelical view of evangelism causes us to realize that lost people matter to God and thus they also matter to us.

Throughout this dissertation the primacy of evangelism has been stressed many times. We have seen it in the theological foundation. It is underscored in the life and ministry of early Methodism as well as by the Methodist pioneers in Sweden. The cases

talk with the same voice. A burning heart for the lost and prioritizing evangelism has been, is, and will always be an important sign of a growing church.

The Best of the Charismatic World. The charismatic world includes everything from extreme Pentecostals to Spirit- filled Catholics. I want to highlight the work of the Holy Spirit in people's lives and in the lives of the churches which call themselves charismatic.

For these people the openness for the work of the Holy Spirit is a natural thing. Through the Holy Spirit, God's prevenient, saving, and sanctifying grace is at work in people's lives. This was fundamental for the early Methodists. The Holy Spirit was at work in the Methodist revival. The Holy Spirit was at work in nineteenth century Methodist camp meetings. The Holy Spirit presided during the pioneer times of Methodism in Sweden. The kind of Methodist churches, new or old, that will make a difference for the kingdom of God in the twenty-first century must carry the same marks of openness for God's Spirit as was the hallmark of our fathers. Once again revival, radical conversions, and manifestations of the presence of the Holy Spirit must characterize the Methodist movement.

Together with the openness for the work of the Holy Spirit goes an openness for the gifts of the Spirit. God has given every believer wonderful gifts through his Spirit. He did that when we were born again, thus we do not need a special initiation in order for them to be available to us. When people discover their spiritual gifts and start to minister according to them, something great is released.

Openness for the Holy Spirit leads to a ministry led and marked by the Spirit.

This is especially manifested in a ministry of intercession and healing. A church trying to reach secular unchurched people will find that those people are hurt, wounded, sick, and astray. An unmistakable mark of the churches in this case study is how much time and effort they spend on ministering to those who want healing and intercession. Once this was a mark of old time Methodist altar meetings. It certainly needs to be that again.

The Best of the Wesleyan World. For me the most precious gift of the Wesleyan world is the theology of grace. Without referring to it as Wesleyan, many new churches today practice this theology. They talk about the process that leads a person through a period of earnest seeking to faith in Christ. They talk about the Christian life as a growth process. The need for a theology of grace which underlines the fact that becoming a Christian is a process is even more striking considering the challenge of our contemporary society.

In Methodist theology grace and the Holy Spirit are nearly synonymous. “A theology of grace, in fact, describes the work of the Holy Spirit from conception until death” (Tuttle 15). This must be the cornerstone of the theological foundation on which new Methodist congregations are built.

This means that we need to meet people in a humble way. We are all on the same journey toward a deeper experience of God through Jesus Christ and the same Spirit is at work in our lives whether manifested as prevenient, justifying, or sanctifying grace. The implications of this for ministry and evangelism are thrilling. “Prevenient grace is at work even at this moment preparing people for our ministry” (Tuttle 49). The task is to

watch for these prepared people and walk together with them the remaining stretch of the road until we all reach the heavenly goal.

The Wesleyan theology of grace offers a specific goal for people. It is to prepare them to see God, because “without holiness no-one will see the Lord” (Hebr. 12:14).

Sanctification is that process of growth in love and faith that eventually will shape us to the likeness of Christ.

Most new-planted churches have a specific agenda for the people they reach.

Their goal is not just to get them saved or to make them members. Within the ministry of the church and the community of the small groups they offer the possibility of growth and development as individuals and as Christians. The Methodist agenda is clear: it is “entire sanctification” or “Christian perfection.”

Conclusion. An empowered evangelical Wesleyan theology combines the best of three worlds: From the evangelical world the high view of scriptural authority and a burning heart for evangelism and reaching the lost. From the charismatic world comes the openness for the work of the Holy Spirit, the discovery of spiritual gifts, and the ministry of healing and intercession to people in the power of the Holy Spirit. From the Wesleyan world emerges the theology of grace.

Inspiring Worship

In all three churches in the case study, much effort went into making worship an inspiring moment. No new church can succeed without a living worship life and good preaching.

Worship. Worship is an expression of our love for God. The commitment to a lifestyle of a relationship with God flows from our worship. When God's people experience God's presence and are transformed by his love, it builds a contagious atmosphere that draws non-Christians to Jesus. That is the reason worship needs to be seeker-sensitive and not seeker-driven. The worship celebration needs to be a family event, both as a gathering for God's family and a place where children and young people as well as elderly people have a place. The worship celebration is an event where people of all ages must be able to participate and experience God's presence.

Both seekers and believers live in the same world and grapple with many of the same questions, experiences, and needs. When these things are addressed in the worship celebration, believers will be built up at the same time as the seekers are reached.

The use of a contemporary, attractive, seeker-friendly programming appeals to unchurched people. The new Methodist church plant must create a worship celebration that energizes, empowers, and attracts people.

The worship celebration must be planned to provide meaningful worship with a smooth flow and where the different parts in the service are done with excellence. Careful planning keeps services moving along, interesting, and on schedule.

The environment in the facilities and in the sanctuary must convey an atmosphere that is warm, friendly, and welcoming. An informal style is the best way to connect with unchurched people. In order not to single out people who are not accustomed to church, casual style of dress is important.

Begin worship celebrations in a positive way, stay positive, and end positive. A joyful, lively service is more likely to appeal to newcomers than a service that lack those elements.

Song-texts and announcements can be displayed in the bulletin as well as on screens at the sides of the chancel area. Only a minimum of carefully chosen announcements need to be made from the pulpit during the worship celebration.

Music. The music will not only build the stage for the message but in itself is a form of communication that penetrates the heart. It is both a form of evangelism and worship, communicating God's care and truth. The music should be warm, engaging and upbeat, and the song selection should be done with newcomers in mind. Choose a music style that appeals to the specific culture of our target group in the region we want to reach. To ensure variety, a praise band, acoustic accompaniments, vocalists, small ensembles, and choirs can be used. Praise songs, new arrangements of older hymns, songs written with personal statements, songs for children, and short participatory songs all add to the variety to an inspiring worship.

Preaching. An inspiring worship must be accompanied by inspiring and life-changing preaching motivated by the love of Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit. It must be based on God's Word, but needs to move beyond being just informative. Transforming preaching involves biblical information, contemporary illustrations, and personal application. Seeker-oriented preaching is relevant to the audience and communicates the good news by applying it to life. It speaks to the needs, hurts, and interests of the target audience.

Every sermon ought to give the listener three things: something to get involved in or do, something to love, and something to hope for. A sermon, providing these three things, lifts people up and refreshes them and gives them relief and power to encounter the realities of life.

The message must be practical. Such a message applies biblical truths to real life. The sermon needs to be so simple that people can remember it and use a language that is easy to understand for unchurched people.

A sermon, well illustrated, using visual and personal illustrations, and exemplifying every point will connect with unchurched people. The message needs to be positive and inspirational, as well as able to motivate people to grow and to make decisions. Preaching is also one of the most important tools for vision casting and for motivating people to deeper commitment in their Christian lives.

Fervent Spirituality

A fervent spirituality goes hand in hand with openness for the work and the presence of the Holy Spirit and is manifested in a variety of ways. When worship and adoration are in focus in the worship life of a church, the church's spiritual vitality is also enhanced. Worship is an outpouring of our love for Jesus. A church with a fervent spirituality is one that exists to glorify and exalt God.

A worshipping church focuses on the God of heaven and becomes a channel for the release of heaven's power--a channel of revival, of spiritual impact, and a people that carry the supernatural power of God wherever they go. In his song, "Church On Fire,"

Russell Fragar sings:

This is a church on fire.
 This is the Holy Spirit flame.
 We have a burning desire
 to lift up Jesus' name.
 Let fire burn in every heart
 to light the way, defeat the dark.
 Let the flame of love burn higher.
 This is a church.
 This is a church on fire.

Fervent spirituality is enhanced by teaching about, modeling, and practicing prayer. Through a living prayer life the spiritual temperature climbs in the church. This was natural for early Methodists as well as for Methodist pioneers in Sweden. The first Methodist congregation in Sweden was born through a prayer vigil on New Year's night, 1867, where the Holy Spirit fell upon the people gathered. Methodist churches wanting to have a fervent spiritual life need to be praying churches where every aspect of the church will be carried by prayer. This can happen through congregational prayer, private prayer, prayer groups, prophetic ministry groups, and/or prayer ministry with intercessory prayer.

The new Methodist church needs to be involved in positive, goal-oriented prayer in order to change the spiritual climate in its region and to open people's hearts for the gospel. The best way of conducting spiritual warfare is to proclaim God's greatness, power, and sovereignty through praise, prayer and asking God to lay a burden for the lost on believers' hearts so that the prayer for and the seeking of the lost never will cease.

A church with a fervent spirituality is marked by a strong prayer ministry. Prayer teams minister to people in the services. They go out and visit people and pray for their needs. Other prayer teams can gather to pray for the needs of the church and its people.

Hand in hand with a strong prayer ministry goes a compassionate healing ministry. Healing hurts and building hope is one of the most important ministries of a new church reaching out to the unchurched in the twenty-first century. Extending the ministry of Jesus with signs and wonders and the preaching of the gospel brings healing to the sick, lame, and hurting. Much of the healing ministry takes place in small groups and even out in the community when people minister to the needs and hurts of their friends.

Healing ministry must also offer recovery groups that incorporate Christ-centered healing for issues related to addiction, compulsion, loss, relationship problems, and trauma survivors. In these programs people are liberated through the power of God mediated through social accountability and mutual support.

Visionary Leadership

A distinctive featured in growing churches in Sweden as well as in America is a visionary leadership. This kind of leadership dares to lead and desires to equip the church because they are driven by a clear-cut, God-given vision. Without that vision not only the people will perish, the leaders will be afraid of losing control. Only when leaders are driven by a great vision from God can they help people and the church to reach their full potential in ministry.

We have seen throughout this study how one or a couple of leaders have caught a vision and how they have carried that vision within them until, at God's perfect time, they have started to cast their vision to people around them and the new church has become a reality. The vision casting has continued and more people have bought into the vision

and made it their own. Great power lies in God-given vision. As with God's own word, God will watch over it to make it come true.

When a new church is about to be born, leaders need to examine themselves to make sure what their motives are and if their desire and vision are born of God. A new church, in order to prevail, must be born, not by human desire, but by the power of God. Robert Schuller's test questions for dreams and visions help to determine whether a vision is from God:

1. Will this be something great for God? Will it fulfill his purpose?
2. Will this help other people, set them free, bring them into the Kingdom, and draw them closer to God?
3. Will this bring the best out of me?
4. Is this something God has given *me* to do? Does the Spirit bear witness with my spirit? Will it match up my giftedness?

In order for the vision, which God has put into the leader's heart, to become a reality, it also needs to become part of the hearts of the people. As a leader, the pastor needs to cast and re-cast the vision as often and as creatively as possible. People need to be soaked by the vision until it is a part of them. In his book, The Purpose Driven Church, Rick Warren gives some ways of communicating the vision to people:

- Scriptures: Teach the vision from its scripture foundations.

- Symbols: People often need visual representations of concepts in order to grasp them. It is necessary to find symbols which can create an image of what the vision is all about.
- Slogans: Slogans, mottoes, maxims and pithy phrases are remembered long after sermons are forgotten.
- Stories: The vision needs to be dramatized. Use testimonies that bare witness to the vision. Tell stories about people who do the vision.
- Specifics: Get the vision down to a level where people can buy into it and get ownership to it. Present practical steps that tell how they are going to implement the vision. There must be a plan. (112-14)

It is often helpful to break down the vision into core values that people understand, e. g. "Lost people matter to God, thus they ought to matter to the church." That helps the church to be intentional with the vision.

A visionary leadership must also be an equipping leadership. That emphasizes the importance of developing leaders at every level of the church. The main forum for this in the case study churches is within the small group system. Two of the churches use an apprentice system where on-job training is an important way of equipping people for their ministry.

The establishing of a leadership community is important. It unifies the church and prevents departmentalization. The leadership community includes everyone who stands in a leadership position in the church. The objective of this training time is vision

casting, team building, encouragement, problem solving, and skill training. The leadership community meeting has three parts. It starts with the pastor's vision for the church. It is essential for every person in leadership to work toward the same vision. The goal is to unify and empower the leaders and get them excited about what God is doing.

The next step will be to huddle in, whereby all leaders gather together in small groups, divided into areas or ministries. This group gathering focuses on the specific needs of the leaders. Sharing, prayer, problem solving, and encouragement take place. Last is skill training. Here new skills are passed on and skills previously taught reinforced. This skill training increases the performance of the leaders in the church.

Gift Based Ministry

The way new and old churches view ministry is quite different. Old, established churches often concentrate ministry on the minister, e.g. pastor or paid staff. The laity can sometimes help the pastor but he/she is the one hired to do the ministry of the church. This approach to ministry can be illustrated with a triangle where the leader is at the top and the laity are at the base. Leaders carry out ministry and people receive ministry. The new model of ministry, used in the three case study churches, is to turn the triangle upside-down. The people carry out the ministry of the church and receive ministry from each other. The leadership supports and coaches the people in their ministry.

One of the new Methodist church's core beliefs must be that every member is a minister and that ministry happens best when people minister according to their spiritual gifts, passion, and personal style. This way ministry is a joy and not a burden. When people minister in an area they are passionate about, they minister with greater

enthusiasm. When they use their spiritual gifts they minister with greater power. When they minister according to their personal style it makes them even more bold in their work for God.

A theological remark is appropriate here. It is important that people understand that the New Testament teaches that every believer has the Holy Spirit and that the Holy Spirit has given gifts to each one according to his will. There is, therefore, no need for initiation rituals in order to use the spiritual gifts in God's ministry. Any other teaching binds people in co-dependency to specially gifted persons or leaders. Contrarily, where the Spirit is there is freedom and people are set free to minister unto God, to one another, and to the world.

In order to help people get involved in ministry many churches use some kind of "spiritual gift discovery class" or "getting involved class." It can be done in various ways; for example, in a welcome class or through the regular small group program. The importance is not where this happens, but the fact that it happens. The effect of the spiritual gift inventory on people is amazing. Through the inventory they find out things about themselves they may have only dreamt of. The inventory confirms that God put these dreams in their hearts and that he has equipped them with extraordinary gifts to make these dreams come true.

In addition to the spiritual gift discovery class, participants need to be encouraged to get involved in a ministry where their ministry profile will be utilized in the best way. It is also important to give people the opportunity to develop their own ministries as long as they help to advance the vision of the church. When people have discovered their

spiritual gifts they need teaching and training about how to use and develop their gifts and unique endowment. Small groups are an excellent forum for this training. They provide a safe and positive environment for the first steps in an exciting and new way of doing ministry.

An important mark of new churches is that they do not involve themselves in any kind of ministry without people with suitable gifts and passion. It can, however, be difficult to get people involved in long-time ministry commitments. One way to solve this problem is to set a time limit on every commitment. Another way is to underscore the relational benefits of involvement through team building.

Relational Life and Witness

One of the exciting standard principles found through this case study is the relational focus of life and witness. The meaning of this is that these churches primarily utilize the relational network of their members in reaching unchurched secular people.

Ralph Neighbour uses to classify secular unchurched people in two categories--those who are “near” (Type A) and those who are “far” (Type B) away from salvation. The Type A unbelievers are not resistant or opposed to the gospel. They are easier to reach through church events. The Type B unbelievers are much more difficult to reach. They have little awareness of the gospel and are steeped in secular or non-Christian beliefs.

The key to reaching both Type A and Type B unbelievers is by building relationships and meeting their needs. Relational evangelism is a good way of reaching both types of unbelievers and maybe the best way of reaching Type B unbelievers.

Relational evangelism breaks through the resistance secular people have toward the gospel. The key concepts of this approach are identifying networks, building friendship, responding to felt needs, sharing sensitively, inviting to seeker-friendly events, allowing time for the process, and depending upon God's power.

The relational approach to church life is manifested in small groups. Small groups are also the base for relational evangelism. Here people can help each other in counseling and through prayer to reach a friend or a family member for Christ. Through network mapping, several group members may discover common relational links to a certain individual. Then they can cooperate in enveloping that person in prayer and in witnessing or showing God's love in a practical way.

Authentic Christian Living

The majority of the Swedish people view the church as a marginalized, spent force in society. They do not count on the church for any kind of guidance in moral or ethical issues. Moreover, they view especially Free Church people as hypocrites. Therefore, in order to reach secular, unchurched people, a high level of authenticity, honesty, and transparency is an important key. This is mandatory for every church with an ambition to be a church for the unchurched and is the only way of breaking down the walls of suspicion among secular people. Authenticity must be modeled by church leadership and evident in the way they lead and live as well as in their teaching and preaching.

In a church that emphasizes authentic Christian living, people do not need to hide their shortcomings or failures behind masks or facades. In small groups there is always

room for sharing the dark sides of life. This was one of the upholding principles in the early Methodist class meetings. People gathered to confess their sins to each other and to be healed. Today we can see the same thing happening in the numerous AA groups or other recovery groups based on the twelve-step program. In small groups within the Christian community and also among recovery people, the truth about God's grace makes people secure and free to be real and authentic. Thus, authentic Christian living must be supported by a teaching about love, acceptance, and the grace of God. Otherwise authenticity could develop into law observance and to empty religious patterns.

Secular people often feel that Christians carry a secret agenda when they meet them. In the beginning Christians are friendly, nice, and caring; but the only thing they want is to make more members. Secular, unchurched people want to know that what they see is what they get. When people are generous or caring or want to help, the reason is not a hidden agenda but a genuine love pouring out from a changed heart.

The way Christians share their lives with each other in every day living is a strong witness about an authentic life. People who live in that kind of accountable relationship to each other cannot act one way during the week and another way on Sundays.

Authentic Christian living results from an intentional choice not to hide anything. It is also a result of a relational way of being a church where the conditions for community and accountability are facilitated through weekly small group meetings.

Cell/Celebration Church

The twenty-first century local Methodist church must organize itself in a way that prepares it to meet the needs and the challenges of contemporary society. When society

changes, the way churches work and operate must also change. In Chapter 5 the paradigm shift from the old people's movement model to the cell/celebration model is described. Carl George underlines the importance and inevitability of this change by saying, "If Christian churches are to receive the harvest of souls that we believe God is calling to enter His kingdom, it will happen only because churches have reorganized their structures. They must be large enough to make a difference and yet small enough to care" (23). The meta model or cell/celebration model is the best organizational structure to meet those two criteria.

The three case study churches all adapted to the cell/celebration model in similar ways. Fundamental to their understanding of what a church is, is that the small groups or cells function as the basic structure of the church. In some way it can be said that the church is the small group. This means that the basic organizational principle of the church is for people to be in small groups. The large group ministry then complements the small groups.

The objective for the small groups in a cell/celebration church is:

1. To serve as the church in essence.
2. To edify believers with the goal to build them up and to see their lives transformed.
3. To evangelize.
4. To help members to grow and become devoted followers of Christ.
5. To give pastoral care on a regular basis.
6. To develop and multiply leaders and small groups.

In the cell/celebration structure the small group leader is the key person. He or she functions as the pastor of the small group. The role of leaders of small groups is to facilitate small group meetings, shepherd members between meetings, develop new leaders, and multiply the ministry. The group leader, supported by the group members and other leaders in the church, is also God's front line care-giver during a crisis in a group member's life.

The small groups in a cell/celebration church can be structured under the leadership of a Small Group Leader (leader of ten), a Coach (leader of fifty) and a Small Group Pastor (leader of 500). Each category of leader also has an apprentice leader. All these leaders are involved in the leadership community meeting monthly.

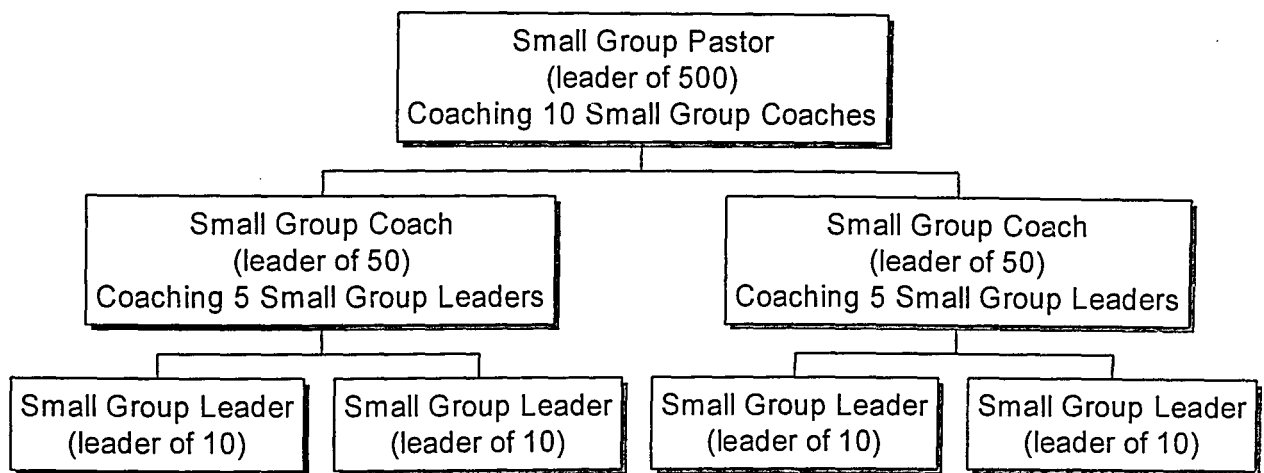


Chart 4

The Small Group System of a Cell/Celebration Church.

The optimal group size is ten members. The groups have between eight and fifteen members. When a group reaches fifteen members the time has come to multiply the group. How this multiplication happens must be decided from time to time. The case study gives different patterns to consider.

The following summary lists the common characteristics of healthy small groups:

- A Christ-centered focus.
- Caring relationships of members.
- Encouraging, loving, and edifying environment.
- Ministry of members to each other.
- Application of the Bible to everyday life.
- Accountability and discipling.
- Opportunities for meaningful tasks and roles.
- Provision of one-to-one pastoral care.
- Development and multiplication of leadership.
- Non-threatening relational evangelism.

Multiplying small groups is essential for a new Methodist church plant. It is the key to discipling and providing pastoral care for the members and penetrating the surrounding community.

Cultural Relevance

New churches need a high cultural sensitivity. In order to be a culturally relevant church, a church needs to know what context it should relate to. Cultural relevance can

not be adapted from one place to another or from one setting to another. Bengt Johansson, worship pastor in Mötesplatsen, Örebro, underlines this: “Being culturally relevant is extremely important. The consciousness is high. At the same time it is very hard to find the instruments to really find the right way.”

Cultural relevance has in many circles become a vogue word and by that it risks losing its urgency. It is hard to be culturally relevant in a world in rapid change. A church that wants to be culturally relevant must make the effort to listen to people, to reflect culturally and biblically about the way they express the gospel and live out their faith, and willing to adapt to the target population’s heart cultural expressions. The driving assumption in all this needs to be that lost people matter to God, and thus they should also matter to us. When this work is appropriately done, one can concur with Marcus Andersson’s words: “We have succeeded to crack the code to a group of people who sees us as genuine and true.” Again we need to underline the importance of true incarnate contextualization as the highway to becoming a culturally relevant church. As Newbigin underscores:

True contextualization happens when there is a community which lives faithfully by the gospel and that same costly identification with people in their real situations as we see in the earthly ministry of Jesus. When these conditions are met, the sovereign Spirit of God does his own surprising work. (154)

A Seeker-targeting Approach

It can sound like blowing open doors to talk about the importance for a new church to target seekers and unchurched people. Experience tells us, unfortunately, that there is a great need for emphasizing this. A majority of new churches in Sweden do not

intentionally aim at this target. Many churches say that they prioritize evangelism but when it comes down to the nuts and bolts of how they work and from where their new members come, the picture is different. The depressing reality is that 75 to 80 percent of the new members in churches planted so far during the nineties are already Christians.

Throughout the whole study the aim has been to find principles and models to help new churches live and organize in a way so that they can possess all the qualifications needed in order to break into hitherto unreached areas on the spiritual map of Sweden. This task demands devotion to a mission where unchurched, seeking, secular Swedes are the VIPs. At the same time, a church for the unchurched must renounce the ambition to be attractive to or even accepted by Christians with a traditional church background. In this context it is interesting to remember how devoted John Wesley and the early Methodists were, by not going only to those that wanted them, but to those that wanted them the most (Works VIII 310). They were devoted to reach the unchurched, secular people of their time; to seek and to save the lost.

Conclusion

Churches devoted to reaching seekers and secular unchurched people are some of the most needed instruments of God in Sweden today--churches functioning as models for others but also changing the climate among the seekers and showing that only the Christian faith can quench their spiritual thirst. We need churches big enough to make a difference, small enough to care and to build community. It is my firm conviction that any church, old or new, Methodist or non-Methodist, using the twenty-one standard principles found in this study and utilizing the model featuring the ten characteristics for

new churches reaching secular, unchurched people, will become a church that will make a difference for the Kingdom of God in Sweden in the twenty-first century.

APPENDIX A**Interview Questions**

Category #1: Senior pastor, other pastors, elders/board members

Name:

Date:

PERSONAL BACKGROUND	1. Tell me about your background, your spiritual journey, and how came to be where you are today.
CHURCH PLANTING EXPERIENCE	2. Tell me the story of this church. (How did it come into being? Why here? Why this kind of people?)

THEOLOGY, PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY	<ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Share with me what you understand to be the theological foundations of this church.4. How would you describe the vision and mission of this congregation?5. How do you determine what is most important in designing ministry in this church?
EVANGELISM, CULTURALLY RELEVANCE	<ol style="list-style-type: none">6. How does this church do evangelism?7. What methods or programs are you using to reach unchurched non-Christians?

	<p>8. What guidelines help you to connect with the culture or sub-culture of non-Christians?</p> <p>9. What is your target group for your services? (Christians? Seekers? Both? Why?)</p> <p>10. Tell me how you arrived at this decision.</p>
ASSIMILATION, DISCIPLESHIP	<p>11. What method or methods do you use to encourage non-Christian visitors to return?</p> <p>12. What efforts do you make to move people from one level of commitment to a deeper level of commitment?</p>

	<p>13. How do you assimilate people into the life of the church?</p>
SMALL GROUPS, LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT	<p>14. Describe your small group ministry and its purpose.</p> <p>15. How do you recruit and develop leaders?</p>
GROWTH	<p>16. Why in your opinion, is this church successful at reaching unchurched non-Christians? (Why does it grow?)</p> <p>17. If I were a seeker why should I come to this church?</p>

Interview Questions

Category #2: Small Group Leaders

Name:

Date:

PERSONAL BACKGROUND	1. Tell me about your background, your spiritual journey, and how you came to be where you are today.
THEOLOGY, PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY	2. How would you describe the vision and mission of this congregation? 3. What are the most important ministries of this church?

	4. Why do you say that these ministries are most important?
EVANGELISM	5. How does this church do evangelism?
SMALL GROUPS	<p>6. Why does this church emphasize small groups? (Purpose? Goal?)</p> <p>7. How do you recruit new members for small groups?</p> <p>8. What dream or vision do you have for your small group?</p>

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT	<p>9. How does a person become a small group leader?</p> <p>10. How does this church develop leaders?</p>
GROWTH	<p>11. Why in your opinion, is this church successful at reaching unchurched non-Christians? (Why does it grow?)</p>

Interview Questions

Category #3: New members/new converts

Name:

Date:

**PERSONAL
BACKGROUND**

1. Tell me about your background, your spiritual journey, and how you came to be where you are today. (How did you become a Christian?)
2. How did you first come in contact with this church?
3. What made you stay?

THEOLOGY, PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY	<p>4. As you understand it, what is the vision of this church?</p> <p>5. What are the most important ministries of this church?</p>
EVANGELISM	<p>7. What is in your opinion the most important task for a Christian church?</p> <p>6. What does this church do to connect to unchurched non-Christian people?</p>
GROWTH	<p>8. Why in your opinion, is this church successful at reaching unchurched non-Christian people? (Why does it grow?)</p>

Interview Questions

Category #4: Denominational Official

Name:

Date

BACKGROUND, CHURCH PLANTING	1. Can you give me some background on how your denomination used to plant new churches? (Historically?)
CHURCH PLANTING STRATEGY	2. Does your denomination have a specific strategy for starting new churches today? 3. How do you select new church planters?

	<p>4. What principles, in your opinion, are most important when it comes to reaching unchurched non-Christians in Sweden today?</p>
GROWTH	<p>5. Why in your opinion, does this church reach unchurched non-Christians and why does it grow?</p> <p>6. Why does this church reach more unchurched non-Christians and grow faster than other new church plants or other churches in your denomination?</p>

APPENDIX B

Observation Guide**Church:****Date:**

THEOLOGY	
SPIRITUAL VITALITY	
VISION AND PURPOSE DRIVEN	
MINISTRY: TARGETED AND DESIGNED TO REACH THE UNCHURCHED	

EVERY MEMBER IN MINISTRY	
GREAT COMMISSION VISION	
MULTIPLICATION OF CELL GROUPS	
CELL GROUPS: PRIMARY PROVIDER OF PASTORAL CARE	
STRUCTURES FOR CELL MULTIPLICATION	

MULTIPLICATION OF LAY LEADERS	
CHARACTER OF WORSHIP SERVICES AND OTHER EVENTS	
PREACHING	
EMPHASIS ON GOD’S GRACE AND MERCY	
ATMOSPHERE OF LOVE, ACCEPTANCE, AND FORGIVENESS	

CULTURALLY RELEVANT WORSHIP, CREATIVITY	
LEADERSHIP GIVE AWAY MINISTRY, EQUIPPER, COACH	
STRATEGY TO BREAK THROUGH GROWTH- RESTRICTIVE BARRIERS	
CHURCH PLANTING STRATEGY	
FACILITIES: OWNED, RENTED CONDITION APPEARANCE	

SOCIO- ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE CONGREGATION	
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