

ABSTRACT

**ASSESSING MISSIONAL ORIENTATION:
OBSERVING BIBLICAL COMMUNITY, INCARNATIONAL SERVICE, BOLD
AND HUMBLE WITNESS, AND REPRODUCTION OF DISCIPLES IN LIGHT
OF AN AWARENESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

by

Tim Volkman

Christendom has ended somewhere in the past few decades. The church in North America is at a new crossroads and can either take advantage of the opportunity and rise up to embrace and be renewed by the grand mission of God or can fade away while stubbornly clutching old forms and patterns.

The specific purpose of this project was to create, design, and test a Missional Church Orientation Tool by which specific ministries at Centre Street Church could evaluate their level of missional orientation. This Missional Church Orientation Tool helped assess the missional interest and involvement of these ministries by measuring biblical community, incarnational service, bold and humble witness and the reproduction of disciples. It also sought to discover the relationship between a present awareness of the Holy Spirit and each of these components. The intention of this project is to stimulate these ministries and the people in these ministries to align themselves more fully with God and his mission in our world.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled
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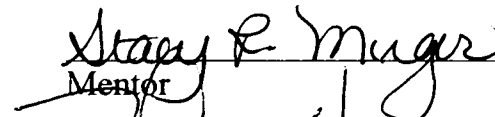
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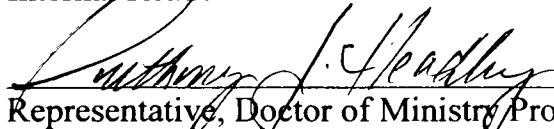
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Doctor of Ministry

by

Tim Volkman

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM

“Missions” was an integral part of my upbringing in what I understand to be a typical evangelical church in Canada. My home church was very missions minded supporting numerous overseas missionaries and often inviting them to preach to us when home on furlough. My parents prayed for and supported missionaries, and I recall having missionary families in our home on a regular basis. From my earliest memory, missions was what happened overseas when special people were *called* by God to go and proclaim the gospel in heathen cultures. Nevertheless, a disconnect between *missions* (a program) and the *mission* of the Church existed. The church would go to great lengths to support and take the gospel overseas, yet I do not remember seeing or hearing the church talk about missions as something that could happen right around us and through us as a local church and individual Christians. While we were challenged to do evangelism on occasion, I do not recall being taught to see ourselves as missionaries to the people around us in the same way as the people the church sent overseas were to be missionaries to the people who lived there. Upon reflection, I submit that my church did not have a clear understanding of the missional nature or role of the Church and how this understanding leads the Church into the surrounding culture. In other words, my church limited the word *mission* to what happened overseas and did not fully grasp the notion that *mission* is at the heart of what makes the Church. As a result, our church did not reach its full potential in moving into, influencing, and changing our community in the way God may have intended.

I would suggest that my childhood church was not unique in this regard and that

the dichotomy between missions as a program and the mission of the church is typical in most North American churches. Lesslie Newbigin affirms the existence of this dichotomy:

In the thinking of the vast majority of Christians, the words “church” and “mission” connote two different kinds of society. The one is conceived to be a society devoted to worship and the spiritual care and nurture of its members.... The other is conceived to be a society devoted to the propagation of the gospel, passing on its converts to the safe keeping of “the church....” It is taken for granted that the missionary obligation is one that has to be met AFTER [original emphasis] the needs of the home have been fully met; that existing gains have to be thoroughly consolidated before we go further afield. (*Household* 164-65)

Any church that turns inward to care for itself first, and which sees missions as an optional component of ministry to be pursued when the “home front” is in order, has missed the entire point of the Church. A clear understanding of and involvement in mission, will bring health and vitality to a church. Mission is what defines the very nature of the Church.

If *mission* is central to the nature, understanding, and health of the Church, then clarity around what *mission* means becomes critical. The mission of the Church is intrinsically linked to the mission of God; the one cannot be separated from the other. The Church is, in fact, the only organization whose mission comes from God, and in this sense, the mission should own the Church more than the Church owns the mission. R. Paul Stevens clarifies mission by observing that “there is a church because there is mission, not vice versa. The church is not the sending agency; it is the sent agency. The church is born of mission not the other way around” (197). Darrell L. Guder et al. describe the mission of the Church similarly saying, “mission is founded on the mission of God in the world, rather than the church’s effort to extend itself” (82). In the truest

sense, the Church does not *have* a mission as much as the Church *is* by nature, missional. Because God is a God of mission, the Church will become a Church of mission or a missional Church.

Chapter 2 looks at the theological basis for mission, providing a more complete picture of a missional church. By way of introduction, however, the following descriptors present a preview of the shifting paradigms from which a missional church operates. A missional church is a community of believers in Christ whose focus and priority is to follow Jesus into the mission field, which they recognize begins right around them where they live. A missional church is more concerned with getting the Church into the world than getting the world to come into their church. A missional church is a community of believers who understand they are both the *called* and the *sent* ones. As people are called to Christ and into the Church, they are then sent back into the world in order to work with God for his redemptive purposes. Milfred Minatrea captures these ideas when he defines a missional church as “a church that is a reproducing community of authentic disciples, being equipped as missionaries sent by God, to live and proclaim His kingdom in their world” (12). In the missional church, *mission* will be the central underpinning for all that the church is and does.

David J. Bosch translates the work of German theologian Martin Kähler, who, realizing the foundational nature of mission for the Church, refers to mission as “the mother of all theology” (*Transforming Mission* 16). All theology and, hence, activity that flows from the Church is influenced by the Church’s understanding of mission. Churches can be busy doing all kinds of things, but if they are not clear on God’s mission, activity can easily be done as an end unto itself or for a lesser mission than what Christ intends.

I am convinced that this lack of clarity of and involvement in the mission of the Church is quite common and has been a major contributor to the weakened condition and inward focus of the church in North America today. In the Western world, the church is in decline. The church has forgotten why it exists. The church in North America needs a fresh understanding of and orientation to the mission of God. Guder et al. stress this truth by saying, “This is a time for a dramatically new vision. The current predicament of churches in North America requires more than a mere tinkering with long-assumed notions about the identity and mission of the Church” (77). The real issues in the current crisis of the Western church are theological and spiritual, not methodological or programmatic. The church in North America must rediscover its existence and begin afresh with a clear theological understanding and commitment to the mission of the Church along with the awareness that this mission is really God’s mission.

As I have observed and reflected on the church, the apparent conclusion is whenever the church is alive, vibrant, healthy, and strong, the issue of mission *is* clear. A renewed understanding of mission will enable the church to become a mighty force on earth for the kingdom of God. Historical and current-day models provide a glimpse of the church when it understands and is committed to the mission of God.

Historians agree that in the eighteenth century, England was on the brink of disaster. Respect for human life and dignity was appalling. The slave trade was at its height. The prison system was despicable, punctuated with public hangings. Orphans wandered the streets in increasing numbers. Gambling and drunkenness filled the cities and were national vices. Luis Palau comments on the state of the church in this culture, stating, “Likewise, the national Church and its pulpit were in decay. The dying Church

lost its power as moral and spiritual lethargy enveloped Britain” (41). John Wesley, troubled by the state of the church and society in which he lived, began to pursue renewal for both. In his own words, Wesley stated that his mission, which later became the mission of Methodism was, “to reform the nation, particularly the Church, and to spread scriptural holiness over the land” (299). The idea of reforming the Church and spreading God’s holiness throughout the land was another way of stating *God’s* mission as found in Scripture. This mission not only renewed the church; it changed a nation. French historian Elie Halevy popularized the thesis that the Wesleyan movement spared England the kind of bloody revolution France had experienced (Henderson 29). The Wesley brothers were the spark that led the church in England to a clear understanding of God’s mission for the Church. God used the church to change the heart and face of England.

The nation of China has seen and is seeing similar impact. In his book, *Time* magazine correspondent David Aikman reveals the impact Christianity and the gospel is having in China. His firsthand reports of how the church is growing and influencing all aspects of China are indicative of a church that understands mission. While no one knows for sure how many Christians live in this communist country, China’s own Public Security Bureau, the official police force, has admitted to at least twenty-five million Christians in China. Aikman believes, however, that the number may be closer to eighty million. The Church committed to God’s mission encourages individual Christians to be involved at every level of Chinese society, including the arts, business, scholars and students, the People’s Liberation Army, the Communist Party, as well as the common worker. The sending and going of Christians into the corners of everyday life is evidence

that the Church understands the nature and mission of God. Aikman describes how the church in China, is changing the nation:

China is in the process of becoming Christianized.... At the present growth rate in the number of Christians in the countryside, in the cities, and especially within China's social and cultural establishment, it is possible that Christians will constitute 20 to 30 percent of China's population within three decades. (285)

The church in China is a compelling example of clarity around God's mission. As the Chinese Christians interact with their culture, they are involved in God's mission and represent God's kingdom wherever they go. A missional church will find itself in the culture, embracing God's mission.

The previous highlighted examples illustrate the power that clarity around God's mission brings to the Church. From my observation, a similar result occurs in the lives of individuals within the Church when they come to a fresh understanding of God's mission for their lives. The mission of God moves Christians into the world in the same way that Jesus entered the world, to seek and save the lost, to bring hope and justice, to love the disenfranchised all in response to God's initiative. Bill Hybels reflects that deep in the heart of every true disciple of Christ is an awareness that Christians are here on earth for a purpose larger than going to work, paying the bills, going on vacations, and fulfilling the role of being upstanding citizens. He continues by saying that even worshipping God and going to church can often leave the Christian feeling that something is missing. His point is that only when "we catch his [God's] love and then urgently and infectiously offer it to all who are willing to consider it that we have embraced God's mission for our life on earth" (23). I have discovered from personal experience and observation that when

a church or Christians become intentionally involved in God's mission and not their own, they become involved in their culture through ministry in fresh and sometimes bold ways.

During my seventeen years of ministry at Centre Street Church (CSC) in Calgary, Canada, I have had the privilege of observing and interacting with people who have made God's mission the priority of their lives. They find themselves engaged in the world and in the lives of people who are outside the church. In my discussion with them, they will inevitably steer the conversation to the mission of God and to the non-Christian people to whom they are reaching out. Their passion for God and his mission is contagious. In some cases God's mission has become so invasive in their lives that they initiated ministry outside the church walls and into the mission fields where they live and work. In speaking with them, and as reflected in the following sketches, one senses that God's mission has indeed become their mission.

The first sketch centers on the lives of Lance and Mel who have been active participants at CSC for ten years. They have three small children. Lance is a lawyer, and Mel, who used to work in a dental office, is currently a full-time homemaker and mother. This couple has been involved in various ministries over the years. Mel has led worship, and they have led a small group together for years. God began to place a burden on their hearts for their friends who did not have a relationship with Jesus Christ. As this burden grew, Lance and Mel began to think seriously about how they could more intentionally influence the lives of their friends with the gospel. Lance and Mel sensed these friends were not ready to come to church or join their small group. After much prayer and discussion, Lance and Mel decided to give up the leadership of their small group and begin a new group with some of their *seeker* friends. They called it a "Bible for

Dummies” discussion group. With some fear and a lot of doubt, they proceeded to invite their friends. To their surprise, the friends came. Some even invited other friends. Over the next eighteen months, and after a lot of discussion, prayer, and love, every person in the group had made a profession of faith to Jesus Christ. After helping their new brothers and sisters in the Lord get connected in the church, Lance and Mel started another group and have seen God do the same amazing work. They are now on their third such group as God’s mission compels them.

Lawrence, a young businessperson, is another example of a Christian who lives his life out of the mission of God. Four years ago, although he knew Christ, his first love was sports. Church and ministry came second. As Lawrence grew in his faith and in the community of CSC, his desire to be involved in God’s mission began to express itself. Lawrence and a few other young men ventured out into the university campus, malls, and street corners in an attempt to hand out Bibles and share their faith with anyone who would listen. While some might argue with the method, no one could argue with the passion that Lawrence had for God’s mission as he communicated God’s love to those who had not yet heard or accepted the gospel. Over time, as Lawrence and others stepped out of their comfort zone in response to God’s mission, a dynamic ministry has evolved. Every Monday evening Lawrence and a team of more than twenty people from CSC take food, clothes, Bibles, and the gospel message to dozens and dozens of people. This weekly commitment is simply an example of a group of Christians joining God on the mission field in downtown Calgary. Many disenfranchised and hurting people have experienced the love of God through the loving acts and prayers of this ministry, and dozens have entered into a faith relationship with Jesus Christ. While obvious that these

conversions are worthy of celebration, an equally noteworthy result of this ministry has been to see the missional passion of so many other Christians grow significantly as they have become involved. One man, who joins the team on occasion, e-mailed Lawrence the day after having volunteered one evening with the following message:

I just wanted to say what a blessing you and the Monday Night Evangelism team are to me. Everytime... EVERYTIME [original emphasis] I'm able to make it out God meets with me and shows Himself to me. If there's anyone with a doubt about the existence of Jesus they should come Mondays and see Him as real as any person standing out there in the cold. What an inspiration it is to be in a group of dedicated TRUE FOLLOWERS [original emphasis] of Jesus who aren't just paying lip service to the Lord. I'm sad that it's so rare to find Christians like the Monday Night Evangelism Team. God bless.

There is an irreconcilable connection between God's mission in the life of a Christian or a church and their involvement in the world.

A third example of a life lived with the mission of God as her priority is Deb, a middle-aged wife and mother. She has attended church all of her life, but in her words, "I was never introduced to Jesus." She met Jesus Christ shortly after coming to CSC. Not long after her conversion, Deb got involved in the one-to-one discipleship ministry of CSC. As her love for God grew, so did Deb's heart for lost people. This passion to join God in his mission led her to search for the part she could play. Her search led her to apply for and gain acceptance as a "volunteer" chaplain at SAIT, a technical college in the city. Late last year Deb ran an Alpha program out of her home. Not knowing if anyone would respond to the invitation, she moved forward, compelled by God's vision. The e-mail message below is how Deb describes the past few months:

When Alpha started, six of our thirteen were not Christians. Four grew up with faith and the remaining three were new to Christianity in the last couple of years. It was great to watch the non-Christians come to

“believe” within the first few videos. By about mid-way, we detected surrender in the way they spoke, and in meeting with them individually, that was confirmed. It wasn’t until near the end, though, when we had a “What did ALPHA do for you?” discussion that each one had the courage to share their testimonies with the group. What a joy it was for everyone to realize we were ALL [original emphasis] Christians now!

These sketches illustrate the impact that God’s mission will have on an individual, as well as on the lives of those who come in contact with these individuals. People who encounter them are often changed. As I ponder the lives and ministry of people who are compelled by God’s mission, I cannot escape the thought of how the Church would flourish if all Christians would have similar clarity and orientation towards this mission.

The historical as well as the personal sketches highlight the importance for the Church and Church leadership to pay attention to mission. A clear understanding of and orientation towards God’s mission will help the Church reach its full potential in this world.

Upon examining the importance of clarity around mission, a critical role for church leadership in the North American context will be to help the church examine its missional orientation and health. Teaching and preaching on the missional nature of the Church will play an important role in helping the Church come to terms with God’s mission as it relates to the mission and ministry of the Church. The specific purpose of this particular project was to provide a tool that will assist church leadership in evaluating the missional orientation of their congregation or ministry. If, as I believe, a correlation exists between missional orientation and church health and effectiveness, then it becomes imperative to examine and assist churches to grow in their own missional clarity, orientation, and effectiveness. At least two contextual factors exist for all Canadian

churches, as they investigate their missional clarity and orientation. A third factor is relevant to any growing church such as Centre Street Church.

Contextual Factors

Centre Street Church has had an amazing run by all outward signs. The weekend attendance has grown from under three hundred people in 1987 to nearly six thousand regular weekend attendees in 2007. Hundreds, if not thousands, of people have made professions of faith to Jesus Christ during that time. Social agencies in the city of Calgary and around the world have received hundreds of thousands of dollars through the ministry of CSC. The church is planting churches in Mexico, Ukraine, and Romania. In 2004, CSC completed a new worship center, which seats 2,300 people, a children's center, and office complex. By most observers, and from all outward appearances, CSC has been, and is, an effective missional church as it strives to foster authentic biblical community, extend incarnational service into the community and around the world, proclaim and witness to the gospel with boldness and humility, and equip and release disciples. As I was researching and reading for this project, I felt a deep sense of affirmation around the things that God has done and is doing in and through this community of believers. I also know that CSC is a church that desires to keep learning and growing. As I contemplated the task of helping CSC look at its missional orientation, three significant factors make such a study timely.

The Success Factor

The first factor is the success or perceived success of the church in participating in God's mission. The apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10:12, "So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!" (NIV). Success in any area of life can

produce fear that leads to a lack of risk taking due to apprehension of losing what one has already attained. Success can also lead to complacency and overconfidence, which also robs one of continued effectiveness or success. Either one of these extremes will hinder the missional orientation or effectiveness of CSC. My desire for this study and in raising the issue, was to stimulate CSC for on going and even greater missional effectiveness.

Fear. Having experienced a large following, effective outreach in the city, and thousands of changed lives, CSC may be tempted to cease being missional out of fear of losing what God has already accomplished in and through it. Erwin Raphael McManus, a well-known author, speaker, and pastor, leads a church recognized for being missional, having experienced success in reaching spiritually lost people. He expresses caution for the church he leads, largely because of the success this church has achieved:

I know it sounds counterintuitive, but churches begin to decline when things are going well. We are in grave danger when we have the most people and the most money in our history. Success often blinds us to the real forces of atrophy. The risk and innovation that brought us success are often abandoned to preserve success. Many times we lose our momentum because we are afraid to lose the success we've achieved, and before we know it, we discover that we are running on empty. (*Unstoppable Force* 24)

In another of his books, McManus expresses the potential danger that accompanies success in this way: "The greatest danger that success brings, aside from arrogance, is the fear of losing what has been gained. The courage and willingness to risk that bred success are endangered after success is obtained" (*Seizing Your Divine Moment* 39). The moment a church begins to hold on to, or preserve, their success they compromise their missional focus. This study sought to remind CSC that until Christ returns, God's mission is not yet accomplished. While CSC must praise God for any success and effectiveness towards

fulfilling God's mission, God's mission is in no way complete. The work must go on, and CSC must continue to step out in faith, take risks, and be bold in attempting to participate with God in his mission.

Overconfidence. Due to the missional effectiveness and growth thus far, CSC is also vulnerable to a temptation at the other extreme: to become overly confident in its missional effectiveness. One of the results of yielding to this temptation is to conclude that numerical growth is proof of missional orientation or effectiveness. While growing crowds *may* indicate a missional effectiveness, this connection is not absolute. Bill Easum comments that while climbing attendance does offer an accurate assessment of how well the church is functioning organizationally or as a social institution, the "health and growth of congregational life have little to do with faithfully carrying out the Great Commission" (22). Easum's statement does not preclude that health and growth of a congregation are unimportant. Nevertheless, church growth—and even church health—have more to say about the organizational and social strength of a church than its effectiveness in mission. At the same time, however, a missional church will always have a heart to reach people and, thus, a heart for growth. Charles Van Engen describes a missional church as "yearning for numerical growth" (81). This desire to grow arises out of several important biblical motifs, all of which point to the same essential truth: the universal intention of God to reconcile all people to himself. "Whether the Church is viewed as the people of God, the new Israel, the sheepfold, the planting, the building, or the body, there is always a driving energy within it" (81), which causes the Church to want to expand. A missional church will, by its very nature, desire to be a church that is

reaching more and more lost people. Newbigin affirms the natural desire of the Church to expand:

Anyone who knows Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior must *desire ardently* [original emphasis] that others should share that knowledge and must rejoice when the number of those who do is multiplied. Where this desire and this rejoicing are absent, we must ask whether something is not wrong at the very center of the church's life. (*Open Secret* 142)

CSC must be unrelenting in its hunger to reach more people and yet never assume that growing attendance is the primary marker for high missional orientation or effectiveness.

CSC could also be tempted to preclude missional effectiveness because of its growth and effectiveness as an organization. However, a missional mind-set will realize that God's mission is not about structures or the institutional form of the Church but that the Church is primarily organic and not organization. The religious movements of both Judaism and Christianity "clearly show a bias for 'salvation history' rather than institutional viability" (Easum 17). As such, these faiths were more concerned with the "movement of God through history, instead of the growth and health of organizations or institutions" (17). A missional church will gain perspective by recalling that they are only part of God's grand story and that they are both "the roots and shoots of an organic movement that goes far beyond mere organizational survival" (18). When a church functions out of its institutional side, the priority shifts from lost people to the perpetuation of the church as an organization. From a biblical perspective, "Christianity is concerned with the unfolding of the Kingdom of God in this world, not the longevity of organizations" (17). In light of the truth of God's larger kingdom, the success of any local church is only a microcosm of God's eternal movement. A missional mind-set will recognize that every local church and church structure will one day fade away, whereas

God's kingdom is eternal.

Having raised these two issues, CSC must continue to seek God, realizing that participating in God's mission will be an adventure and a journey. Van Engen describes the nature of the Church as one that will always be emerging and becoming (40), and for this reason, no church will never *have arrived*. Thus, a church must always be moving forward into the world with ever-changing forms and strategies.

The success or effectiveness of CSC is something to be both celebrated and held loosely before God. A case might be made that the success of the early Church led them to lose their missional edge. As a result, the Church entered 1,700 years of what is known as Christendom, a paradigm that still holds sway on the church today.

The Christendom Factor

The second factor that highlights the importance of the current study for CSC (and all churches) is the historical paradigm called Christendom. Christendom affects all churches in Western civilization. While theologians such as Loren B. Mead argue that the age of Christendom has recently ended, this paradigm still holds tremendous influence on the way the church views and implements the mission of God. All churches, including CSC, need to be aware of the historical climate and influence of Christendom, which has engulfed the church for centuries.

Christendom embodies a mind-set that hinders the missional vibrancy of the church. Mead explains this phenomenon in his examination of the history of the Church, in which he describes two broad era's of church history. The first era he refers to as the Apostolic paradigm. The mission of Christ consumed the Church during these first three

hundred years, and Mead observes how this passion for God's mission compelled it to take the gospel into the whole world:

They were driven to ask "Who are we in relationship to those around us? To whom are we sent?..." [T]he early church was conscious of itself as a faithful people surrounded by a hostile environment to which each member was called to witness to God's love in Christ. They were called to be evangelists, in the biblical sense of the word—those who bear good news. (10)

This missional mind-set encouraged Christians to see themselves as missionaries. The Church had an acute realization that they were God's ambassadors in a hostile and foreign land. The Church was a dynamic force that changed its culture.

Beginning in the fourth century, under the conversion of Constantine, a new paradigm began to emerge. Slowly, as the empire and the church became one, the Church lost its sense of mission, which began the long journey into what is now referred to as Christendom. Philip D. Kenneson and James L. Street observe the changes Christendom brought:

In contrast to the early years of the church, when it took great courage to be a Christian, Christendom created a situation in which it required great courage to not be a Christian. Hence, in an era when most people were regarded as Christians, the language of the "church" came to refer less and less to a distinctive and visible assembly of believers and more and more to structures, hierarchies, and buildings.... Indeed, in many cases these institutions were regarded as more "church" than the people of God were. (21)

While the effectiveness of the Church essentially won over its culture, this accomplishment had a negative effect on the Church over time. The Church lost its clarity and commitment to God's mission as it became one with society. This loss of mission led to a gradual and steady decline within the church. Today, in Western civilization, the surrounding culture is no longer "Christian," but the Church has yet to

recover its missional zeal. Of the Christendom paradigm, Mead says, “Mission was no longer the direct responsibility of the ordinary person. The world hostile to the Gospel was the pagan world way over there, beyond the boundary of the Empire” (15). As a result, Mead concludes, “for the Christian, it cut the nerve of personal involvement and responsibility for witness and mission” (17). CSC must be aware of the subtle influence Christendom has on the church and on Christians today and urge attendees to see themselves as missionaries in an un-Christian land.

Theologians and Christian historians theorize that Christendom affects the western church in one of two ways today. First, the Church still assumes that the culture is open and responsive to Christianity or that the culture *should* be open to the Church because of the Christian roots of the nation (real or supposed). As a result of this way of thinking, the church will focus on bringing people into the church building. Church ministry eclipses kingdom ministry. “Ministry is viewed as advancing the church rather than the Kingdom” (Stevens 47). Excellence in programming and marketing, as well as a focus on relevance and being able to meet a wide variety of needs, becomes a central focus. A primary goal is often merely to attract people into the building and the ministry of the church. While not wrong, the effect of this approach is immediately realized when compared to missionaries who go overseas into a cross-cultural setting. For example, the *build it, and they will come* mentality is not considered as the first order of business in a cross-cultural ministry context. The cross-cultural missionary knows the importance of living incarnationally among the people, earning their trust, and showing them the love of Christ. The truly effective missionary (at home or abroad) knows the importance of going *into* and learning the culture of the people. The Christendom paradigm leads the Church

to believe that the culture is like them, thus assuming they already know and understand their culture:

[T]he gospel has already been (has always been?) properly indigenized and contextualized here. This faulty assumption can cause the Church to overlook the important work of entering into the culture in order to learn the culture. Instead it is assumed the culture is much like the Church. People only need to hear and believe. Nevertheless, as we now know, the West has largely turned its back on the gospel. (Bosch, *Believing in the Future* 58)

Realizing the effects of Christendom, and that the current culture is post-Christian, CSC will not want to assume it knows how to relate and communicate to its culture. It must be intentional to exegete the culture and encourage its attendees to enter incarnationally into the lives of their unchurched friends, neighbors, and work associates. In order to continue its missional growth curve, CSC will want to focus primarily on how to take (be) the church into the world and only secondarily on how to get people into the church building.

A second effect Christendom has had on the Western church culture is for the church to become withdrawn and to avoid culture. The motivation is to grow and live safely within the Christian subculture, to become a significantly large enough *minority* group so that government policy, social mores, and culture can hold on to some vestige of Christianity. In North America in particular, the church at large is creating a significant Christian subculture. The Tothesource Web site reflects on the drastically falling ratings for the Grammy Awards in recent years and concludes secular record companies and producers have taken notice “that Christian music is one of the fastest growing segments of contemporary music. Christian concerts are packed” (“Grammys”). The same Web site reports that Kanye West won the Grammy for Best Rap Song, “Jesus Walks” (“Grammys”). I make no judgment on West’s faith or motives, but only on the reality of a

secular producer's zeal to take advantage of a Christian subculture. Erik, a twenty-five year old Christian recognizes and resists this Christian subculture, which is an after effect of Christendom:

Most Christians have immersed themselves in a culture that has been labeled Christian and are so immersed in their own bubble of faith that they don't even know many pagan people. While they are good people in general, whom non-Christians would be attracted to, their lifestyles are alien in a way that is not so much Christian but, rather, "churched." We are not "all things to all people...." [W]e are the church culture. (qtd. In Fischer 20)

A church that falls into the Christian subculture trap often finds itself threatened and fighting against the culture rather than loving it. The heart of missional theology is that God wants to *bless* the world through the church. The missional church understands that it can only *bless* the world by loving the world and can only love the world by being *in* it. Love is the foundation of God's mission. CSC will want to continue to resist the Christian subculture and enter boldly into the culture with love and grace.

Having looked briefly at the present day influence of Christendom on the Western church, a third factor that makes this study timely for CSC to evaluate their missional orientation and effectiveness is evident.

The Current Spiritual Climate Factor

Current study on the spiritual climate in Canada makes this exercise timely for CSC. Research shows a slight increase in church attendance and interest. Findings indicate the current generation in Canada may now be cautiously optimistic towards the church and its message in ways they have previously not been. A church that can think and act missionally in this culture will have great impact.

The task will not be easy however. One of the fruits from the seeds of rationalism

is the conclusion, trumpeted by the media in North America, that religion and church are dead or irrelevant institutions. Bosch proposes that one of the assumed consequences of the Enlightenment was the death of religion and of God. By the middle of the nineteenth century the “inappropriateness of religion appeared evident to many people” (*Believing in the Future* 40). Nietzsche announced the death of religion as imminent. Marx longed expectantly for religion to fade away. According to Freud, religion was surviving only until science and rationalism had completed their takeover. He believed that the illusion of religion would soon end. Thirty years ago, theologian Harvey Cox from the Harvard Divinity School predicted that the demise of God would inevitably put religion onto the dust heap of history. Cox has since done a complete about face. He now argues that religion is and will continue to be a significant force in Western civilization (Doyle). Bosch correctly observes that “the so-called religion-less world is profoundly religious” (*Believing in the Future* 42). Rationalism, followed by the media has tried to convince modern culture that God and religion are a myth, but the Western world is slowly discovering the lie. North American culture is realizing that religion and God are not the illusion; rather, the modern-day nonbeliever or atheist is the myth. In spite of what the media would want the current culture to believe, much of modern society views spirituality, and even religion, favorably.

In light of the fact that people’s attitudes towards religion and spirituality are becoming more positive in the West, these findings do not conclude that secular culture will come flocking to the church building. While there are indications of renewed interest for spiritual meaning, the inescapable fact throughout the Western world finds the church in decline. A 2001 census on religious affiliation found the second largest group of

people surveyed in Canada claim to have “no religion” at all. This group accounts for 4.8 million people, or 16 percent of the population. More revealing, this figure reflects a staggering increase from 12 percent only one decade earlier (Doyle). Common knowledge also reveals that a substantial number of people who do claim to belong to a church (in a survey) are fringe attendees. The church appears to be having increased irrelevance in the opinion of a growing number of Canadians in recent generations.

Nevertheless, further research in Canada supports the conclusions of Bosch, Cox, and Doyle, offering a surprising ray of hope for the church. The decline of church attendance has stopped and actually recorded a slight increase in the past few years. Reg Bibby, Canada’s best-known sociologist of religion makes a convincing case that organized religion (the church) is starting to make a comeback. Bibby reports that church attendance has bottomed out at 15 to 20 percent of the population. A decade ago, his projections were that Canada could get as low as 5 percent of the population attending church on a weekly basis (“Future of Faith”). Other observers of Canada’s religious and spiritual trends agree:

Three polls conducted since 2000—by Focus on the Family Canada, Time Canada, and the Vanier Institute of the Family—show weekly church attendance going up in Canada for the first time in a generation. Research shows weekly attendance at a religious service, which was down to 20 percent a few years ago, is up to 25 percent. Monthly attendance is as high as 37 percent (Fieguth).

Even more significant than these numbers are the attitudes that Bibby appears to have uncovered. Large numbers of people, Bibby found, continue to think some of the answers they seek lie in the religious traditions of their parents and grandparents. A startling 55 percent said they would go back to church if it were more worthwhile for them and their

families. A recent Angus Reid poll found that 68 percent said that religious belief and practice is important to them (“Future of Faith”).

These realities mean the church can be bolder and more confident than it has tended to be. The church has believed the myth of an “omnipresent irreligiosity” and has too often cowered under it. Like the apostle Paul, the task of the church is to introduce the “unnamed” God to a culture that is admitting they do believe in gods after all:

Emerging into view on the far side of the church’s long experience of Christendom is a wide vista of potential for the people of God.... The present is a wildly opportune moment for churches to find themselves and to put on the garments of their calling, their vocation (*Missional Church* 78).

Western culture may be casting one last cautious glance toward the church.

Recognizing the present opportunity, CSC will be compelled to go boldly into its culture, which is once again admitting their hunger for a god. The task of the church is to introduce to them, the one and only, true God. The time is now for the church to enter into God’s mission with renewed zeal and passion. Having highlighted three reasons for the timeliness of this project as it relates specifically to CSC and God’s mission, every church in North America must discover why God’s mission is important to them. The Church of Jesus Christ must return to its ancient mission, which is discussed at length in Chapter 2.

Theological Foundation

The Church must always return to God’s Word for its identity and mission. While social and organizational sciences may be helpful to the Church, these must not replace or supplant the theological foundation upon which the Church is built. Martin Kähler affirms the importance of theology for the New Testament Church:

Theology was not a luxury of the world—conquering church but generated by the emergency of the situation in which the missionizing church found itself.... However, as Europe became Christianized and Christianity became the established religion in the Roman Empire and beyond, theology lost its missionary dimension. (qtd. in Stevens 197)

One could argue that the church in postmodern and post-Christian North America is in a similar emergency and therefore needs a renewal of missional theology. God's Word is the starting point for the church and its mission. My purpose in Chapter 2 is to deal with the doctrine of the *Trinity* and the *kingdom of God*, which serve as two critical doctrines in relation to the mission of the church. Research of the literature shows theologians and church leaders agree on the intrinsic link between the mission of the church and these two themes. Out of the biblical and theological work, there arose four key values or components that will be embraced by the Church as it participates in God's mission. These four values or components are biblical community, incarnational service, bold and humble witness and reproducing disciples. The last section of Chapter 2 examines each of these components in further detail, in light of an awareness of and reliance upon the Holy Spirit.

Context of the Study

The study was conducted within two large ministry groups at Centre Street Church. CSC is part of the Evangelical Missionary denomination, a small denomination in Canada that traces its roots back through the Evangelical United Brethren Church to the Methodist movement, which had reached the shores of the United States in the late 1700s. Calgary, in which CSC ministers, is a vibrant city of just over one million people, with a major university and several colleges, providing a large population of young adults. This youthfulness reflects itself in the demographics of CSC, where I would

estimate that 50 percent of the congregation is under the age of thirty-five. Two of the primary ministries that reach out to young adults in the city of Calgary are AXIS and the Young Marrieds core communities. AXIS is primarily, although not exclusively, made up of young adults who are single. The Young Marrieds core community is comprised of married couples, with or without children. Both ministries are targeted to young adults who are in their mid-twenties to mid-thirties. I initiated the Young Marrieds core congregation approximately four years ago and have been providing leadership for both ministries during that same period. AXIS and the Young Marrieds core communities are the ministries where the study has been conducted. The evaluative tool was administered to individuals who are in a small group (through the small group leader) in the AXIS and Young Marrieds core communities.

The Problem

A declining and inward-focused church in North America has come about, in part, due to a loss of clarity and priority of the church's mission. History reveals that all churches have a tendency to develop a life of their own and to cease living out of the missional calling from God. For much of the church in Western civilization, God's mission has been replaced with a pseudo-mission. This new mission has become the preservation of the church. Laity are viewed as customers, and the church has become a dispenser of religious services. With this subtle shift in mission, the church can easily measure and define success in ways that are contrary to the kingdom of God. Energies and resources are misdirected, as the church begins to pursue ends not entirely consistent with the kingdom of God. Control and management stifle the organic and often uncontrollable work of the Holy Spirit when the Church becomes an end unto itself rather

than a means of carrying out God's mission.

At the encouragement of Dr. Henry Schorr, the senior pastor, I have been commissioned to use this dissertation as a means to help CSC evaluate its missional orientation and direction.

The Purpose

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the missional orientation and awareness of the AXIS and Young Marrieds core communities within Centre Street Church, using the Missional Church Orientation Tool (MCOT). This tool was designed as a result of the biblical and theological study in Chapter 2.

Research Questions

In order to fulfill the purposes of this study, four research questions were identified.

Research Question 1

How do the small groups within AXIS and the Young Marrieds core communities at CSC rate on the component *biblical community* on the MCOT?

Research Question 2

How do the small groups within AXIS and the Young Marrieds core communities at CSC rate on the component *incarnational service* to those outside the church on the MCOT?

Research Question 3

How do the small groups within AXIS and the Young Marrieds core communities at CSC rate on the component *bold and humble witness* on the MCOT?

Research Question 4

How do the small groups within AXIS and the Young Marrieds core communities at CSC rate on the component of *reproducing disciples* on the MCOT?

Research Question 5

What is the relationship between an increased awareness of the reality and presence of the Holy Spirit in a small group and their scoring on each component of the MCOT?

Definition of Terms

Several terms are of particular importance for the purposes of this study. While each of these terms can have broad and varied meanings, the following definitions are foundational to this study.

Missional Orientation

For the purposes of this study, the term missional orientation describes the degree to which a group of Christians is moving with God on his mission based upon their involvement and experience in biblical community, incarnational service, bold and humble witness, and the reproduction of disciples.

Biblical Community

Biblical community is another word for *fellowship* or *koinonia*. Biblical community is a group of Christians who share common unity under the headship and leadership of Christ and who know, love, and serve one another in an ever-flowing stream of interdependence. This community is marked by joy and a desire to invite and include others into their Christian family.

Incarnational Service

Incarnational service flows from a heart of love. This love from God compels the Church to enter into the life of the community in order to know better how to communicate the gospel, and support and bless the community. Incarnational service is patterned after the life of Christ who, being in very nature God, humbled himself and came to earth as a man.

Bold and Humble Witness

Bold and humble witness describes a courageous church or Christian who speaks the truth of the gospel message with sureness and courage. At the same time, a humility will be reflected through an attitude that admits to not having answers to all of life's questions (including theological questions). A bold and humble witness is secure in Christ's love and is not threatened by the mysteries and unanswered questions of life. Most importantly, a bold and humble witness realizes that only the Holy Spirit can change a heart. As a witness, these individuals are only the messengers of love.

Reproduction of Disciples

Jesus' Great Commission to the Church was to go and make disciples. Making a disciple is helping a Christian become more like Jesus Christ in thought, word, and deed. Disciples of Christ display the fruit of the Spirit as they come under the control of the Holy Spirit and become immersed and involved in the life of the Church. The reproduction of disciples occurs when a church sees every Christian, young or old, as a disciple of Jesus Christ and has an intentional plan to help them realize their potential in Christ. As new Christians learn that Jesus not only calls them to himself, but he also sends them to go and make more disciples who will, in turn, make *more* disciples

reproduction multiples. Exponential growth will occur in God's kingdom as every disciple of Jesus catches hold of this vision.

One other term that needs defining comes out of the specific context of Centre Street Church and should be noted.

Core Community (at CSC)

A core community at CSC is a group of people, fifty or more in number, who are gathered around a common affinity or life season. Core communities provide easy entry points for people to get into small groups. Here are some unique traits of a core community:

- Size ranges from 50-150 people;
- Easy entry point for people who are not connected;
- All activities can be planned with a relational feel;
- Great place to meet new people, to choose new potential friends, and then to get into a small group; and,
- Learning experiences can target a group of people who have the same interest or needs.

Description of the Research Project

Centre Street Church has many core communities and ministries that make up the entire church family. My direct leadership for the past number of years has been with two of these core communities: AXIS and Young Marrieds. Using the biblical and theological insights discovered, I have created an evaluation instrument in the form of a questionnaire that aids small groups, ministries, or churches in evaluating their missional

orientation or awareness. This tool also measures the awareness and expectation of the Holy Spirit within the ministry or small group setting, giving the ability to test the correlation between the awareness of the Holy Spirit and missional orientation.

My research project was to administer the Missional Church Orientation Tool within the AXIS and Young Marrieds core communities. My hope was that this process would inspire the participants to be proactive in looking at how they can increase their missional health, both as individuals and as entire ministries.

Methodology

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the missional orientation and awareness of the AXIS and Young Marrieds core communities at Centre Street Church using the MCOT that was designed based on the biblical and theological findings in Chapter 2. The tool was administered through the small groups to the small group members. These individual responses provided a measurement of missional orientation within each of the small groups, as well as an overall picture of AXIS and the Young Marrieds core communities.

Population and Subjects

The core communities of AXIS and Young Marrieds served as the population from which the subjects came. The only stipulation for all subjects was that they be participants in a small group. The small group leaders distributed and collected the completed questionnaires during a small group meeting time of their choice within a given period.

Instrumentation

A researcher-designed questionnaire called the Missional Church Orientation Tool was the instrument used to discover or measure the missional orientation of the AXIS and Young Marrieds core communities. The instrument was distributed and conducted through the small groups within the selected core communities. As a result, small group leaders were able to measure the missional orientation of their groups, and I was able to observe the overall missional orientation of these ministries by examining the compiled results of the participating small groups.

The MCOT was created on the basis of a four-factor scale: biblical community, incarnational service to the unchurched, bold and humble witness to the unchurched, and reproduction of discipleship. In addition to these four factors, the MCOT also included a section that serves as a foundation for the four factors, measuring the awareness and expectation of the Holy Spirit in and through each of them. Prior to using the MCOT, the instrument was validated and tested for reliability and underwent a factor analysis.

Data Collection

I directed the small group leaders on how to conduct the questionnaire within their small groups. A window of time was given for them and their small groups to participate in this study. All groups were encouraged to participate.

Data Analysis

The collected data underwent a factor analysis using Cronbach's coefficient alpha to test for internal reliability of the items on the MCOT. This process assured that the questions on the MCOT were internally consistent with one another, making the tool as a whole statistically reliable. Beyond the immediate measurement of missional

orientation, I also conducted a correlation study to determine a relationship between awareness of the Holy Spirit component and the other four components. An ANOVA study compared the missional orientation between the AXIS and Young Marrieds core communities.

Delimitations and Generalizability

The MCOT has been validated, and while not the only means, this tool provided a way for a small group, ministry, or church to examine its missional orientation. I would expect that the MCOT could be used in any small group, ministry, or church in North America. This tool can be used in a variety of settings. It could be given to leaders to evaluate the missional health of the leadership community of a particular ministry or church. It could be also be distributed randomly to church attendees or small group members for the purpose of gaining insight into the missional orientation of the grass roots of the church.

There are no assurances that the MCOT could be used outside of the North American context with any degree of effectiveness. Also, due to the nature and level of the questions, this tool is designed and best suited for high-school aged youths and adults.

Overview of the Study

Chapter 2 of this work establishes the biblical and theological foundation for the proposed evaluation tool, referred to as the Missional Church Orientation Tool. The research design and tool is presented in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 reports the research findings from the survey participants at CSC. Chapter 5 provides a discussion and interpretation of the research findings, along with a number of recommendations to help CSC become an

even more missional church. These recommendations will be presented to the Senior Leadership Team of CSC for their discussion, review, and possible implementation.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE

The Church can only reach its full potential as it understands and embraces the mission of God. To come to a deeper and clearer understanding of this mission, to become missional, the Church must look to its founder. The mission of the Church will, or at least should, reflect the mission of the one who initiated it. The Scriptures thus become a necessary foundation to examine the life, ministry, and teaching of Christ in order to discern *his mission* and then to learn how his mission informs the mission of the Church today. The first section in Chapter 2 examines the biblical precedents that explore the mission of Christ.

The second section looks at theological precedents that build upon the biblical insights in order to give fuller expression into the nature of Christ's mission. These learnings can then be applied to the Church. Two doctrines, which are of particular importance and relevance to the missional Church, are explored: the doctrines of *the Trinity* and *the kingdom of God*. The current literature on the missional Church discusses these doctrines thoroughly.

The third section describes four practical values or components for ministry in the life of a church that is oriented to God's mission. These components arose out of the biblical and theological study done in the beginning of Chapter 2 and are also consistent with current popular literature's characterization of the missional Church. They are biblical community, incarnational service, bold and humble witness, and reproduction of disciples. The chapter ends with a critical discussion and reminder on the role of the Holy Spirit within the Church and each of these components. These four foundations of

mission are lifeless and void without the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. The purpose was to evaluate the missional orientation of the AXIS and Young Marrieds core communities at CSC based on the four components, which were used to design the Missional Church Orientation Tool as well as to study the relationship between an awareness of the Holy Spirit and missional orientation. The MCOT was designed in such a way that any church, small group, or ministry within a church could evaluate its missional orientation. The desired outcome would be that the use of this tool would inspire as well as give the participant(s) objective information needed to make adjustments and changes to become more missional.

Biblical Insights

A clear understanding of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, the founder of the Church, will lead the Church to be oriented to his mission. Of specific interest will be the intention of Jesus concerning the *continuity of his mission*. A direct relationship exists between the mission of Christ and the mission of the Church. As has been noted in Chapter 1 in regards to the mission of the Church coming out of God's mission, the mission of the Church today must be consistent with the mission of Jesus.

Continuity of the Mission

Jesus came to earth with a mission. The Gospels provide a natural starting point in investigating Jesus' mission as well as observing what Jesus modeled and said to his disciples and the early Church about his mission.

A quick review of the Gospel accounts reveal that the mission of Jesus did not originate with him. Jesus did come to earth with a mission, but this mission came from the heart of the Father. The Father sent him. Jesus' mission can only be understood in

terms of his being “sent” by God the Father. Over twenty specific references in the Gospels refer to Jesus as *sent* by God. In several of these references, Jesus is quite explicit that his mission or responsibility is to do only what God, the one who sent him, wants him to do (John 6:38-39, 9:4). In John 4:34, Jesus indicated that his submission to the will of God was his very sustenance for life. Jesus made his sentness so abundantly clear, that the early apostles could not miss it. Both Paul and John understood and clearly taught that God had *sent* [emphasis mine] Jesus into the world (Gal. 4:4, 1 John 4:10). Therefore, even though Jesus is the founder of the Church, his mission was actually a continuation of God’s mission. Jesus submitted to and carried forth the Father’s mission, and, in so doing, he laid down or modeled a pattern for the Church today. As revealed later in Chapter 2, the sentness of Jesus has implications for the Church today. In the same way that Jesus was sent to carry on the mission of God, the Church’s mission must also be understood in terms of it being “sent” by God. Thus, before looking at what Jesus said to the early Church about his mission, one must first consider this mission in light of the Father’s sending of the Son.

Mission from God

In the creation account, God creates persons after his own image and declares that the creation is “very good.” God is pleased with all that he created and especially pleased with the creation of man. The failure of Adam and Eve revealed God’s holy justice, but it also emphasized God’s love for his highest creation. God would not give up on humankind. In his endless love, he did not destroy Adam and Eve; rather, in love he disciplined them. The sinfulness of humankind increased rapidly in those early days. The wickedness became so rampant that God destroyed his creation with a flood.

Nevertheless, in his love God finds and protects Noah, a righteous man, along with his family. After the flood, God instructed Noah and his family to be procreate and to fill the earth again (Gen. 9:7). God is determined to have a people who know and love him.

The narrative continues with Abraham, and God's promise to bless him and his family. "I will bless you and make your descendants into a great nation. You will become famous and be a blessing to others. I will bless anyone who blesses you" (Gen.12:2-3, CEV). God's promise included his presence and that a great nation would come from the seed of Abraham. God's promise also included one more element, which is significant in terms of God's mission. His promise of blessing was not limited to Abraham. In fact, the entire point of drawing near to and blessing Abraham was so that every nation on earth could be drawn to God through Abraham. Therefore, the promise to Abraham is a promise for all nations—that they would be blessed through Abraham and, in response, come to know the God of Abraham. God was reconciling people, as a community, to himself, and he began with Abraham. God's mission continued with Abraham's descendants as he interacted with them and made his presence known. Stevens notes how God was particularly clear with Jacob: "To Jacob especially the promise 'I am with you' was repeatedly given. They were called to *be God's people in community building* [original emphasis]" (198). God was on a mission. The presence of God upon this family was to restore what had been lost in the Garden: a oneness of communion and relationship between God and the human race.

The main theme of the first five books in the Old Testament is really the advancement of God's dream to be reconciled with his people, and it is set in motion

through a covenant or promise. God's promise to Abraham is pregnant with God's mission to be in relationship with all nations and peoples of the earth.

This missionary theme arises in subtle and not so subtle ways throughout the remainder of the Old Testament. Ruth, a non-Israelite, is included in the lineage of David and eventually of Jesus Christ. One of the Major Prophets, Isaiah, continues the missions thrust, conveying God's message to Israel, saying, "I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth" (Isa. 49:6, NIV). The prophet Jonah is rebuked for not wanting to preach to Nineveh because he knew that God would show mercy to the Gentiles. He says, "You are a kind and merciful God, and you are very patient. You always show love, and you don't like to punish anyone, not even foreigners" (John 4:2, CEV). Nineveh turned to God, and in his mercy God spared them from destruction. God's activity has been missional ever since the Fall, always wanting to move outward in ever-widening circles for the purpose of bringing more and more people back into a place of shalom with one another and with himself. God's grand dream and purpose is to reconcile people to Himself. He was so committed to his mission that he sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, to earth. With this mission in mind, Jesus sought out those who would follow him, so that one day, the Church would carry out God's mission.

Mission to the Disciples and Early Church

Jesus came with God's mission directing all that he said and did. From the very beginning of his public ministry, Jesus committed himself to live out his Father's mission and to pass this mission on to the Church. Jesus resolved to plant the seed of God's mission into the hearts and minds of his disciples from the moment of their initial calling.

Mark 1:14-20 describes the calling of Jesus' first disciples. The text just prior to verses 14-20 contains the narrative of Jesus' baptism and the descending of the Holy Spirit upon him. With the Spirit's commission freshly upon him, Jesus began to teach, heal, and cast out demons (Luke 4:14-42). A short time into his public ministry, however, Jesus began to invite men to follow him to become his disciples. In this strategy of gathering followers around himself, Jesus began to model the importance of community and interdependence in relation to God's mission.

Mark 1:15 records the preaching of Jesus as he calls people to turn back to God and to believe the good news. The following verses reveal that these first disciples believed. Consequently, they were ready to follow Jesus, and, in so doing, they were returning to God. However, Jesus was clear that *coming back to God* is not an end unto itself. In God's mission, the call to *come* is always joined with the call to *go*. Bosch translates the work of Pesch, writing, "The calling of the disciples is a call to follow Jesus and a being set aside for missionary activities. Calling, discipleship and mission belong together" (*Transforming Mission* 36).

Mark 1:16-19 recalls the invitation and immediate response of Simon, Andrew, James, and John. These Galilean fishermen were most likely aware of Jesus' presence in the area. Furthermore, these men had undoubtedly heard the message or *good news* that Jesus had been proclaiming, that God's kingdom was at hand. The text in Mark 1:17 is clear about at least two things. One, Jesus' invitation was personal and direct. Jesus spoke to the men, inviting them to follow him. Two, his invitation to follow already contained seeds of mission. "I will *make* [emphasis mine] you become fishers of men" (NAS). Edward W. Goodrick and John R. Kohlenberger III write that the word *make* implies to

make ready, to cause, to do, to prepare or practice, to commit, to appoint or ordain, to declare. Jesus was clear that to follow him would also mean to go out from him as his representative and to become fishers of men and women.

The invitation of Christ contained a word of promise and prophetic hope towards an end or purpose. Jesus pronounced to these men that as they follow him they will become fishers of all people. Bosch supports this observation, saying, “The peculiar expression ‘fishers’ of human beings is in this respect of particular importance. The phrase ... undoubtedly points to the disciples’ future involvement in mission” (*Transforming Mission* 38). Inherent with following Jesus is the calling to enter into mission.

The incarnational nature of Jesus’ invitation is also important to note. Jesus used the metaphor “fishers of men” in the calling of these fishermen. Jesus did not use this metaphor in his invitation to Matthew, a tax collector. God’s message and the nature of his mission are to come to people where they are. This metaphor intended to communicate clearly to them that their focus in following Christ would be people. The very trajectory of their lives would be drastically changed upon following Jesus. From this point forward, the priority of their lives would be God’s mission as it related to other people. Verse 18 declares that they left their nets and immediately followed Jesus. These men were the first fruits of Jesus’ earthly ministry and mission.

These fishermen now began to follow Jesus as a small community. Together, they observed Jesus as he taught in the synagogue, as he proclaimed the coming of the kingdom of God, healed people of sicknesses, and cast out evil spirits. Later in the first chapter of Mark, the text follows Jesus as he rose early in the morning to go to a solitary

place to pray to his Father. Peter and the others finding Jesus said, “Everyone is looking for you!” (Mark 1:37b, CEV). The response of Jesus reflects his missional heart and thinking: “We must go to the nearby towns, so that I can tell the good news to those people. This is why I have come” (Mark 1:38, CEV). Jesus’ agenda was dictated by the overarching mission to follow his Father in the proclamation of the good news of the kingdom of God. Early on and throughout his relationship with his disciples, Jesus modeled this compelling sense of mission, as displayed by his constant obedience to the will of the Father. Jesus’ constant awareness and obedience to his Father was a foreshadowing of the relationship that the Church would later have with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus began to send his disciples out early in his relationship with them, even as he had gone out from his Father. The first hint of the disciples being sent is found in Mark 3:13-14 where Jesus appointed twelve of his disciples to be apostles. The very word *apostle* means “sent one.” Jesus called and appointed these twelve so that they might be with him and that he could *send* them out to proclaim the good news. The word *send* (*apostello*) means “a delegate, a representative or commissioner of, ambassador, messenger” (Strong 15). In relation to this passage, Bosch says, “Following Jesus or being with him, and sharing in his mission thus belong together. The call to discipleship is not for its own sake; it enlists the disciples in the service of God’s reign” (*Transforming Mission* 38). To be an apostle was to be enlisted and sent on a mission. Apostleship was not to be understood in any other way. Jesus’ plan to pass on his Father’s mission was now formalized. These twelve men would be trained and sent specifically to do what Jesus was doing.

The training or “discipleship” of these men involved on-the-job training. Before long, Jesus sent them out to do what he had been doing. According to Christ’s example, the mission is learned best through involvement, and accomplished most effectively through community. In Mark 6:7 and following, Jesus sends the twelve out in pairs. Their mission was to proclaim God and his kingdom boldly, and to minister to the practical needs of people through healing, and they were given authority and power to do so (Mark 6:7, Luke 9:2).

After the apostles’ mission experience, as recorded in Luke, Jesus chose seventy-two other followers and *sent* them out on a similar mission to proclaim that God’s kingdom was near. The Contemporary English Version of the Bible contains the following footnote about the number of followers chosen:

According to the book of Genesis, there were seventy nations on earth. But the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament has “seventy two” in place of “seventy.” Jesus probably chose this number of followers to show that his message was for everyone in the world. (1246)

Similarly, a widely held opinion suggests that Jesus chose twelve apostles to represent the twelve tribes of Israel. In Genesis 12, God’s promise was to bless Abraham so that *all nations* could be blessed through him. The symbolism suggested in these numbers does have merit and is consistent with God’s mission and heart for the entire world. Jesus, being sent from God, would have the entire world in his sights, just as his Father did. His mission went far beyond local Galilean application. The larger point in this passage, however, is that Jesus appears to be expanding his mission strategy systematically. The mission is not just for him, or even for the twelve apostles. The circle grows wider, a foreshadowing of the strategic call of Christ for all disciples to make more disciples.

Upon the joyful return of the seventy-two disciples, Jesus experienced a deep sense of joy and exaltation that can only come from the Holy Spirit (Luke 10:21). A person experiencing deep joy reveals something about his or her priorities. The profound gladness that Jesus felt was a result of the successful “mission” of the seventy-two disciples. Jesus could see the mission of the Father being transferred to his followers, and he was exceedingly glad. His reaction reveals much about his intention to pass on God’s mission to his followers.

Jesus’ concern to pass God’s mission on to his disciples is evidenced not only in his interaction with them but also in his communication with his heavenly Father. Near the end of his public ministry and just before his arrest, John recorded a prayer that Jesus prayed to his Father. Jesus reflected on the fact that his mission was nearly complete and that he would be returning to heaven. His thoughts turned to his disciples, and as he prayed for them, he said, “I am sending them into the world, just as you sent me” (John 17:18). The “sentness” of Jesus will become the “sentness” of the disciples. Clearly, Jesus’ intention all along was to give his Father’s mission to his disciples.

All doubt about Jesus’ intention to pass along his mission, ends when examining several passages after his death and resurrection, which describe personal and direct teaching moments. Jesus said plainly to a group of disciples huddled in locked room, fearful of the Jewish leaders, “I am sending you, just as the Father has sent me” (John 20:21-22). Then Jesus told them to receive the Holy Spirit, which is reminiscent of Jesus’ own commissioning by the Spirit at his baptism. The relationship of the Holy Spirit to these and all future disciples would be necessary to the accomplishment of the mission in the same way that Jesus related to God the Father. Each of the Synoptic Gospels also

records a form of what has become known in the Church as the Great Commission. While each account has strong similarities, unique highlights are contained in each Gospel. In the Matthew 28:18-19 account of the Great Commission, Jesus reminded his disciples of the authority that he has given them, as they are to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing and teaching the new converts all that Jesus had taught them. The disciples, and hence the Church today, are to be reminded that the carrying out of God's mission is not to be done in human strength or with human authority. The passing on and accomplishment of God's mission can and should be done with the same authority as shown by Jesus.

In Mark 16:14-18, the word "preach" is used instead of "teach." Throughout the New Testament, *preaching* means the proclamation of the good news of the kingdom, as seen in this particular reference. In Scripture, preaching implies communicating the gospel message to people who do not yet believe or who have not yet heard (Rom. 10:14-15). In light of the inherent meaning of preaching, Mark's account reinforces the scope of the mission—to preach to all nations of the world. The Mark account also hints at the future extension of his mission, "Everyone who believes me will be able to do wonderful things" (Mark 16:17). The mission would not stop with this first generation of disciples but would be carried on and on through everyone who believes in Jesus. Luke's account of the Great Commission makes reference to the Old Testament Scriptures, and Jesus helped the disciples link Old Testament prophecies concerning his death and resurrection with God's mission to tell every nation about forgiveness and reconciliation to God through faith in Jesus (Luke 24:47). Jesus then instructed them to begin this mission in Jerusalem but to wait for him to *send* the Holy Spirit. Luke repeats this important caveat

to the mission in Acts 1:8. Jesus did not expect them to *go* on their own. The third person of the Trinity was about to be *sent* in the same way that Jesus was sent. In the book of Acts, Luke also expands on the *how to* of the mission by recording Jesus' instruction to begin in Jerusalem and then to move outwards into Judea, Samaria, and, finally, to the ends of the earth. After this final reminder of his commission, Jesus returned to heaven, leaving the mission of God fully in the hands of the Church through the power of the Holy Spirit. This overview of the Gospels clearly reveals that Jesus' intention from the beginning was to pass on the mission of God to the Church. The Church has received the same mission that was given to Jesus Christ, the mission that originated in the heart of God.

Jesus had every intention for the Church to continue his mission, which is actually God's mission from the beginning of time. Pauline writings also make this truth clear from another vantage point. Jesus is not only the founder of the Church, but the Church is also the body of Christ. The Church is not a human invention or organization. In some mysterious yet real way, the Church is Christ's body here on earth. Saul (later named Paul) confronted the mystery of Church and the body of Christ on his way to Damascus to arrest and persecute Christians. During the journey Christ confronted Saul. A light from heaven flashed, and the voice of Christ spoke, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" (Acts 9:4, NIV). Jesus did not accuse Saul of persecuting Christians or his Church. Saul, unsure of who was speaking, called out, asking the voice to identify itself. Jesus affirmed that he indeed was speaking to Saul—the same Christ Saul was persecuting. One could make a case that Saul should have responded that he was not persecuting Jesus, but rather, the disciples of Jesus. Through this direct confrontation with Christ,

Saul learned that to persecute the followers of Jesus was to persecute Jesus himself. Later in his life, Saul (now Paul) would understand and teach that the Church *is* the body of Christ (1 Cor.12; Eph.1:22-23; Col.1:24). Albeit a mystery, the Church is not just a symbol of Christ's body or a typology; the Church is indeed the body of Christ. This *oneness* between Jesus and the Church leads to the natural conclusion that the body of Christ (the Church) will have a mission that is completely consistent with the head of the Church (Jesus Christ). The mission of the Church and the mission of Christ are one in the same.

The mission of Jesus came from God and was passed on to the Church to be carried out through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. As Jürgen Moltmann articulates, "It is not the Church that has a mission of salvation to fulfill in the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the Church, creating a Church as it goes on its way" (*Church* 64). The primary task of the Church today is to align itself with the mission of God through the work of the Holy Spirit. The Church is not responsible to create or to have its own mission. The mission of the Church today is the same mission that God has pursued since the beginning of time.

Nature of the Mission

The mission of Christ was to continue the mission of the Father. The nature of God's mission is relational and the cross became the *means* through which Jesus made the restoration of relationship between God and people possible. (To state that Jesus' mission was to die on the cross is not entirely accurate. The death of Christ was the *means* towards a larger and more glorious *end*). Jesus himself prayed to the Father, asking for any other way to accomplish the mission (Matt. 26:39-42). The apostle Paul

realized the relational nature of God's mission as being exemplified and fulfilled in the coming of Jesus, saying, "But when the time was right, God sent his Son, and a woman gave birth to him. His Son obeyed the Law, so he could set us free from the Law, and we could become *God's children* [emphasis mine]" (Gal. 4:4-5). Christ came to set people free from sin *so that* they could become God's children. The nature of God's mission is expressed through his deep longing to be a Father, through his eternal desire for reconciliation and a recapturing of a loving relationship between himself and the sons of Adam and daughters of Eve. Howard A. Snyder emphasizes reconciliation as the key idea in God's master plan: "God's design for the reconciliation of all things in Christ reaffirms his original intention at creation now adjusted to the realities of the presence of sin in the world" (*Community* 47). God's desire to be reunited in a loving relationship is central to the nature of God's mission and has had an eternal precedence in the triune nature of God. The Church must ultimately look to the Trinity in order to understand the full nature of God's mission and its implication for the Church today.

Biblical Insights: Conclusion

God has been on a mission since the beginning of time. "God is in his very essence a missionary God" (Seamands 88). Jesus was sent to earth as a personal extension of this great mission. In his 3½ years of public ministry and teaching, Jesus was clear that the mission of God was now the responsibility of the Church. The same Holy Spirit who filled and empowered Jesus at the inauguration of his public ministry was sent to fill and empower Christians. The Church is now sent into the world to continue God's mission in the same way that Jesus and the Holy Spirit were sent. Moltmann expresses this truth about the Church, saying, "It is not the Church that has a mission of salvation to

fulfill in the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the Church” (*Church* 64).

The focal point of God’s mission is not the Church but God and his activity in the world. The Church is not required to invent or lead the mission but to respond and follow the Holy Spirit as he moves out in mission. “Mission is, primarily and ultimately the work of the Triune God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, for the sake of the world, a ministry in which the Church is privileged to participate” (Bosch, *Transforming Mission* 392). The realization that the Church is participating with the triune God, in his mission, is necessary for the Church to remain true to its calling and to reach its potential in the world.

Theological Insights

In the preceding sections, two theological terms were introduced that require further study. One term mentioned was the kingdom of God, the good news that Jesus came to announce. A second term is the triune God or the Trinity. Each member of the Trinity is involved in God’s mission. A survey of the literature on missional Church quickly reveals the importance of these two core doctrines. While both theological terms are challenging, a richer understanding of these theological insights will aid the Church as it seeks to pursue God’s mission.

Theology is important for the Church. How a church functions and how it pursues its values ultimately come back to how that church understands its theology. Guder et al. begin their book with the premise that the crisis of the church in North America cannot be solved through new methods and programs, because it is much more deeply rooted. They state that “the real issues in the current crisis of the Christian church are spiritual and

theological” (3). No theological concepts are *more* important for the church in North America today than the kingdom of God and the Trinity. A clear and biblical understanding of the Trinity and the kingdom of God, are necessary for the church to have a good handle on God’s mission. Conversely, a lack of understanding of the Trinity and the kingdom of God can lead the church to misunderstand the mission of God and to become myopic and self absorbed. Brian D. McLaren concludes that the way a church *does* ministry is a reflection of their theology. He states, “Our inward-focused churches are, ultimately, an accurate reflection of our deepest theology. In short, we have inward-focused churches because we have inward-focused theology” (53). As stated earlier in this project, my speculation is a biblical understanding of the mission of the Church (God’s mission) is necessary for the church to reach its full potential. The Trinity and the kingdom of God are central to this biblical understanding.

Trinity and the Mission

The doctrine of the Trinity was a key issue in the early Church. Trinity was a theological issue the early Church fathers struggled through and settled as they were taking the gospel for the first time into a Graeco-Roman culture around them. Since these early centuries, the doctrine of the Trinity has often fallen on hard times and particularly so in the face of the Enlightenment. The doctrine of the Trinity had been so ignored by theologians that Moltmann included a section in his book on the Trinity entitled “*Return [emphasis mine] to Trinitarian Thinking.*” He admits one of the major objections towards the Trinity in his day was because the Trinity could not be perceived or rationally proven (*Trinity* 2). Stephen Seamands, in studying the historical importance of the doctrine of the Trinity in the Church, observed that philosopher Emmanuel Kant concluded that the

doctrine of the Trinity contained no practical value for the Church (3). As Seamands tracks this doctrine, he discovers that eighteenth-century rationalism was especially hard on it and the negative effects spread into the nineteenth century when theologians such as Friedrich Schleiermacher significantly downplayed the Trinity. In his influential systematic theology work, originally published in 1830, he relegated his discussion of the Trinity to the last chapter. In this chapter, one of his conclusions is that the Trinity is not to be “regarded as an immediate or even a necessary combination of utterances concerning the Christian self-consciousness” (740). A doctrine of secondary importance, Schleiermacher believed the Trinity was not central to the life and work of the Church. Rationalism undermined this important doctrine.

Nevertheless, as Christendom passes, the Church has begun to realize again the value of the doctrine of the Trinity. Karl Barth was a key figure in the turnaround as he placed the Trinity at the very beginning of his *Church Dogmatics*. In this work, he argues that seeing God as Father, Son, and Spirit does not split and diminish God but that God becomes triply active and rich in his unity and in his work as creator, redeemer, and reconciler (7-8). Seamands comments on Barth’s contribution: “By convincingly demonstrating the centrality of the Trinity in Christian theology, Barth paved the way for the resurgence of interest in the doctrine during the rest of the twentieth century, which continues today” (4). So convinced is Seamands on the current resurgence of the doctrine of the Trinity in the life of the Church that he refers to it as a revival of Trinitarian theology.

Today, as the Church leaves Christendom and seeks its place in a post-Christian culture, a renewed interest in the doctrine of the Trinity will be necessary in guiding the

Church to recapture God's mission. Newbigin, a missionary to India, observes that when one goes outside of Christendom to bring the gospel to non-Christians, one soon discovers that the doctrine of the Trinity cannot be kept silent or out of sight. On the contrary, he states that the Trinity must be the necessary starting point of preaching (*Relevance* 33). All cultures have a vague idea of God. General statistics state more than 80 percent of the people in Canada believe in some sort of God. Talk of "god" is safe, and even in vogue. Nevertheless, a general declaration of *a* god is not the gospel, nor will generic preaching on *god* change lives. The power to change lives is only in the message and gospel of Jesus Christ, as brought forth in the power of the Holy Spirit. Even in its most elementary form, the preaching of the gospel must presuppose an understanding of the triune nature of God. Trinity is central to a healthy understanding of God and his mission and must not be relegated to some kind of add-on theological accessory.

A missional church understands, appreciates, and embraces the triune nature of God. The mission of the Church can be fully appreciated and sustained only in light of a correct understanding of the Trinity and the kingdom of God. Newbigin, in writing a series of essays for the World Council of Churches' Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, affirms the connection between the mission of the Church and a clearly defined Trinitarian doctrine: "What God is doing in the mission of the Church and what he is doing in the secular events of history cannot be rightly answered, except within the framework of a fully and explicitly Trinitarian doctrine of God" (*Relevance* 31). Seeing the need for a Trinitarian gospel while on mission in India, Newbigin affirms the critical nature of this theological truth wherever the church embraces God's mission.

The preceding paragraphs have established the theological awareness and value of

the Trinity in the literature and for the Church today. The focus now is to examine how the Trinity impacts the Church today in the carrying out of God's mission.

The effective church will engage in God's mission, fueled by God's love as found in the Trinity. A central affirmation of the Church is the love of God. God's love is a theme that runs through all of Scripture. God loves because he *is* love. His love is eternal, perfect, and extravagant. Denis F. Kinlaw captures the nature of God's love as found in the Trinity: "Love is not just something God does, but it is what He actually is. Love is his inner life, the divine life, which the three persons of the blessed Trinity co-inherently share" (29). Because God *is* love, the Trinity becomes a practical necessity. Love is not possible without more than one person or being; love is not possible in a vacuum. C. S. Lewis affirms the nature of love to involve more than one person:

All sorts of people are fond of saying "God is love". But they seem not to notice that the words "God is love" have no real meaning unless God contains at least two Persons. Love is something that one person has for another person. (135-36)

Love is an interpersonal reality. One needs an *other* in order to love. The three members of the Trinity reveal God as love, displaying perfect, unending love for one another. God sent the Son, yet the Son willingly gave his life. The Holy Spirit glorifies the Son, who in turn glorifies the Father. Jesus submitted to the Holy Spirit, and the Father gives life to the Son. The love within the Trinity is a self-giving and others-centered love. It calls and invites rather than demands.

The understanding of God as a Trinity of love is one of the most striking differences between Christianity and the other monotheistic religions. In Judaism and Islam, God is a single being. He reigns alone. The emphasis of these two religions is

primarily on God's sovereign will. He gives account to no one. God loves, if he does at all, out of his decision and not his nature. In Judaism and Islam, God's decision to love comes as a volitional act, not out of his nature. In other words, if God is to love, he must make a decision to love. These beliefs create an atmosphere of fear more than love, and they influence how the worshippers carry out the mission of God. In these monotheisms, the emphasis is primarily upon performance, obedience, and to spread the teachings of the religion. In Christianity, while the will of God is also supreme, his will is conditioned by the interrelatedness in the love of the three persons of the Trinity, which constitute the Godhead. This interpersonal context is crucial, providing an atmosphere of trust rather than mere external conformity and shaping how the Church understands and is motivated by God's mission (Kinlaw 29).

God's mission of love extends to humankind, not because of their worthiness, but because of his nature. God cannot help but love. The nature of the subject (God) initiates the love rather than the nature of the object (humankind) loved. As God's people, who have entered into his love, the Church is to carry out God's mission in the same way. At the heart of the mission of the Church to the world will be God's unconditional love that initiates, not because the object is worthy but because of the nature of the subject. A missional church will be one that freely extends and reflects the love of God, inviting people to experience the Trinitarian love of God.

A missional church invites all into God's love because God has extended and modeled this love first. Lewis describes the mutual, self-giving love between the three members of the Trinity as a kind of triune dance. Motivated by his nature of love, God invites every person to join this dance of love (137). Moltmann views the Trinity as an

open circle saying, “It [the Trinity] is open for its own sending. It is open for men and for all creation. The life of God within the Trinity cannot be conceived of as a closed circle” (*Trinity* 55). The triune God must only and always be conceived of as a sending and seeking God who is open to all. As persons are drawn into this dance and infused with the same love, their natural inclination will be to extend a hand to others, inviting all to join in. God’s mission, then, as revealed in the Trinity, is a self-giving, receiving, and sending love. Thus, whenever the mission of the Church is motivated by anything other than God’s love, the mission is misplaced. “Whenever mission flows out of something else—our ego needs, our attempts to earn God’s approval or the approval of others, or even our response to the desperate plight of humanity—it has lost its ultimate ground and cannot be sustained” (Seamands 90). The nature of God’s mission is love, and the mission of the Church is to participate in, flow out of, and pattern itself after this same love.

Jesus, a member of the Trinitarian reality came to earth pronouncing that the kingdom or reign of God was now at hand. The Holy Spirit now leads the Church in fulfilling God’s mission by reflecting God’s kingdom. Thus, the kingdom of God will also provide key insight into mission of the Church.

Kingdom of God and Mission

Just as the Trinity provides practical application and insight into the mission of God, so also does the theological concept of the kingdom of God. Snyder, author of numerous books on the kingdom of God, says, “It became clear to me in examining the Scriptures that one can’t speak of the mission of the Church without dealing with the kingdom” (*Models* 13). Snyder also states that models of the kingdom of God can have earth-shaking results and that what the Church believes about the kingdom often shapes

what the Church does (12). Craig Van Gelder says the way that the Church interprets the kingdom of God “will have profound implications for how the church and its members relate to the world” (74). He concludes by stating that “coming to clarity on the meaning of the kingdom of God is foundational to understanding the mission of God in the world” (74). Understanding the kingdom of God is a necessary part of understanding the mission of God.

Jesus came preaching, “The time has come! God’s kingdom will soon be here. Turn back to God and believe the good news” (Mark 1:15). The central theme and teaching in the ministry of Jesus Christ was the kingdom or reign of God. The kingdom of God was the key idea that unified Jesus’ message, permeating all of his preaching and ministry. The kingdom of God was the core and very essence of Jesus’ ministry (Kraybill 18-19). As Jesus went public with his mission on earth, his first call was for people to repent, for the kingdom of God was near. This kingdom that Jesus came preaching was not a new concept. It has a history that reaches back into the Old Testament because the kingdom of God is related to the mission of God.

History of the kingdom. The kingdom of God is deeply rooted in the Old Testament and is grounded upon the idea of one eternal God who has revealed himself to humankind and has a purpose for the human race, which he has chosen to reveal through Israel. Thus, the prophets announce a day when men and women will live together in peace (Ladd 14). The idea that God’s reign would rule the earth progressed and evolved through several stages in Judaism. At one point, Israel largely believed that God’s reign would come through the reign of King David (2 Sam. 7:12-16). Later on in Israel’s history, the Jews expected that God would reign over the world from the Temple through

the priesthood (Ezek. 40-43). In later stages of Judaism (particularly during times of foreign political suppression), they expected that God's reign would come literally through Israel as the nation would achieve political superiority. During the time of Christ, this view was the dominant understanding of God's kingdom and how it would come (Bosch, *Transforming Mission* 31), which explains why the disciples of Christ assumed his message was political and imminent for the nation of Israel. When Jesus came announcing the kingdom of God, however, he was not speaking of a political reign. His perspective went beyond Israel to God's eternal kingdom.

Timing of the kingdom. The timing of the kingdom of God has been debated down through the centuries. One view holds that Jesus taught and expected the final consummation of the kingdom (the full coming of the kingdom) to arrive in his lifetime (Matt. 10:23; Luke 9:27). A second argument taught that Jesus presented the kingdom as being fully present in his own ministry (Luke 10:9; 11:20). The dispensational view is a third position, which states that the kingdom is a future, literal reign of Christ on earth. This particular view says that because Israel rejected Christ, God was forced to delay the kingdom's actualization until the return of Christ. A fourth opinion believes that the kingdom of God in Jesus' teaching is a reflection of God's present *and* coming kingdom. In other words, the kingdom of God is both present (having arrived with the inauguration of Christ's public ministry at his baptism) and future (Kraybill 27). Bosch explains that God's reign must be understood as both future and already present. Jesus' preaching that the kingdom of God was "near" and was "in their very midst" was revolutionary (Luke 17:21). The Son of God literally introduced a new era, a new order of life. The future was

invading the present (Bosch, *Transforming Mission* 32), yet at the same time, as Jesus explained to Pilate, his kingdom was not of this world.

Scripture itself creates an unresolved tension between the present and the future dimension of God's kingdom. The kingdom of God has arrived but has yet to come; the reign of God is a present reality as well as a future promise. Down through history, the Church has tried to resolve this tension, which has led to either/or conclusions: The kingdom of God has been understood as being complete in Christ and in the Church, *or* the kingdom of God has been said not yet to have come and will only come during Christ's thousand-year reign. "Today, however, most scholars agree that the tension between the 'already' and 'not yet' of God's reign in Jesus' ministry belongs to the essence of his person and consciousness and should not be resolved" (Bosch, *Transforming Mission* 32).

The Church lives in the tension of the already but not-yet as it experiences the blessing of the kingdom here and now but coexists in the present age with the power of darkness. Energy is derived from this very tension towards the mission of the Church today. God's kingdom has come, but not fully. God sends his Church out as ambassadors of his kingdom into a world where God's kingdom has not yet fully arrived (McKee 18). The Church goes "not only to proclaim the kingdom, but to bear in its own life the presence of the kingdom" (Newbigin, *Open Secret* 49). The tension of the kingdom inherent in the mission of the Church is both to reflect and proclaim the coming kingdom of God.

The Church and the kingdom. The temptation for the Church has often been to equate its own existence and institutional life with the kingdom of God. The Christian

community is not the kingdom, but it does point toward the kingdom and, in some ways, anticipates the kingdom (Neuhaus 23). Whenever the Church does see itself as synonymous with the kingdom of God, the Church takes priority over the kingdom, becoming an end unto itself. While the creation of the Church was God's intent, and the Church is the primary means of God's kingdom reflected in the world, the Church and the kingdom of God are not identical. Snyder refers to the church as a "demonstration project of what the kingdom will look like when it is fully manifest" (*Models* 150). The Church does not build the kingdom or expand the kingdom rather, the Church lives in, reflects, and announces the good news that the kingdom of God has come (Guder et al. 101). Ray Anderson reflects this understanding in his writing:

The Church does not drive the kingdom into the world through its own institutional and pragmatic strategies. Rather, it is drawn into the world as it follows the mission of the Spirit. The Church is constantly being recreated as it follows the mission of the Spirit. (161)

The kingdom of God preceded the Church, and at the same time now, empowers the Church.

Because the kingdom of God has been inaugurated in and through Jesus Christ, the mission of the Church is inextricably linked to the presence of the kingdom. The mission of the Church should be an extension of the mission of Jesus—the manifestation of the kingdom of God through incarnational compassion (*social service*) and action, as well as proclamation through witness and speech, distributed through the reality of community (as revealed in the Trinity and the community of disciples Jesus gathered around himself while on earth). Missional churches live out the truth of "your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10, NIV).

Describing the kingdom. Jesus himself declared the kingdom of God to be a *secret* or *mystery* (Matt. 13:11; Mark 4:12). Describing or defining the kingdom of God is not an easy task. George Eldon Ladd, in summarizing the wide variety of interpretations throughout the history of Christian theology, concludes that even in the Scriptures “we find an almost equally bewildering diversity of statements about the kingdom of God” (16). Donald B. Kraybill thinks of the kingdom of God as a general symbol rather than a specific one. A specific symbol will refer to only one thing while a general symbol will refer to a multitude of similar things. For example, a road sign with a picture of a truck is a general symbol. It does not refer to one specific kind of truck but to all trucks on the road. Viewing the kingdom of God as a general symbol offers many referents with multiple meanings (27-28). As Kraybill asserts, “The kingdom of God defies exact definition. It is pregnant with many meanings. This is its genius, this power to stimulate our imagination again and again” (20). The kingdom of God will flow from a community of people whose hearts are captured by the love of God. The manifestations of this kingdom defy limiting and precise definition.

Although difficult to define precisely, the literature addresses many similar themes that describe the kingdom of God. Snyder identifies six points of tension within Scripture that help to describe the components and nature of God’s kingdom. The mystery of the kingdom is found in that each of these tensions must be understood as both/and and not either/or. While these six points of tension or paradoxes are not exhaustive in describing fully the kingdom of God, they present a good starting point.

First, God’s kingdom is both *present and future*. Jesus said that his kingdom had come. “God’s kingdom is here with you” (Luke 17:21, CEV). He also instructed his

disciples to pray that his kingdom would come (Matt. 6:10). God's kingdom is being known here and now, and its glorious completion belongs to the final coming of Christ.

Second, God's kingdom is both *individual and social*. Jesus said the kingdom is like a hidden treasure that an individual person might find (Matt. 13:44), but he also spoke in terms of family and community (Luke 12:32). The kingdom must be lived personally and socially.

Third, God's kingdom includes both a *spirit as well as matter*. Paul said, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 15:50 NIV), and Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). Nevertheless, Jesus ministered to the physical needs of people as much as to their spiritual, feeding the crowds, healing the sick, and raising the dead. Revelation talks of a kingdom in which God's people will "reign on earth" (Rev. 5:10).

Fourth, the kingdom of God is *gradual as well as climactic*. Jesus said the kingdom of God is like a crop that grows gradually in a field (Mark 4:26-28), yet he also said its coming would be like the cry of the bridegroom at midnight (Matt. 25:1-6).

Fifth, God's kingdom includes *divine action and human action*. God is the one who rules and reigns. In this sense, the kingdom is like a returning king who settles accounts (Luke 19:11-17), yet the kingdom is something that must be sought (Matt. 6:33). Christians can be fellow workers in the kingdom of God (Col. 4:11). The kingdom is God's action, but it involves human participation or response.

Sixth, the kingdom of God wrestles with the *Church's relation to the kingdom*. This tension involves seeing the Church and the kingdom as one and the same or being clearly distinct whereby the Church represents the kingdom (Snyder, *Models* 15-16).

Peter Storey adds two more tensions to the picture of the kingdom of God. First he says, the kingdom of God is *both within Christians as well as being beyond Christians*. Secondly he states that the kingdom of God *must be received into the hearts of Christians to make them new, and yet it is a new order of obedience into which the world is called to enter* (11).

Snyder affirms the importance for the Church to live within these tensions and goes so far as to say that “theologies of the kingdom that dissolve these tensions, opting wholly for one side or the other, are, to that degree, unbiblical” (*Models* 17). The church must learn to embrace and affirm both sides of these tensions. In so doing the kingdom of God will be most accurately reflected in the world.

In describing the kingdom of God, the basic assumption is that all that we know and experience *is God’s world*. God created this universe and all that is contained within it. He not only created, but he has a plan and a purpose for his creation. The Church then is to point to and reflect the rule and reign of the King over all the cosmos. The Bible refers to God as the “Alpha and Omega” or the beginning and the end, and, again, the Church points simultaneously to this beginning and to the end. God’s plan has always been to bring the world back to a place of *shalom* or complete peace and harmony as it was in the Garden of Eden. Jesus inaugurated this kingdom by his coming, as he announced it, described it, and made it available to all who would repent and believe. Storey affirms this truth, saying, “So this Jesus is more than a teacher, more than a prophet, more even than one who demonstrated the rule of God in his own life: *He bears the kingdom with him as his gift to those who believe* [original emphasis]. If they wish to

enter the kingdom, it must be with the trusting spirit of little children” (7). In seeking to describe and grasp the kingdom, the ultimate place to look is to the life of Jesus Christ.

Theological Insights: Conclusion

A review of theological literature led to the conclusion that the *Trinity* and the *kingdom of God* are foundational theological truths for the missional church. Both doctrines provide a depth of insight into the mission of God that cannot be gleaned elsewhere. A truly missional church will embrace each of these doctrines, its attitude and activities will bear the fruit of living with these truths.

A deep understanding of the Trinitarian nature of God will impact the nature of relationships within the Church, continually calling Christians back to true fellowship marked by a self-giving, others-centered lifestyle. Trinity will also sharpen the focus and reality of the “sentness” of the Church and deepen the conviction that in this sentness the church is carrying on the very mission of God. The degree to which the Church understands its mission as being derived from the very nature of God is the degree to which the Church will reach its fullest potential.

The kingdom of God reminds the Church that it stands for “something more fundamental, more perfect, and more pervasive” (Van Engen 113) than itself. In light of God’s reign, the Church must be understood as the servant of the kingdom. The Church is not an end unto itself, but a reflection and representative of God’s kingdom to the world. “The community of the King ... is to model before the world all for which the kingdom of God stands. In the mystery of this time between times, the Church is uniquely the instrument of the kingdom in the world” (113). The kingdom of God gives the Church perspective as it embraces its mission in the world.

Four Components for the Church Today

Clarity and renewed understanding of God's mission coming from a study of Jesus' life and teachings as found in the Gospels, as well as the *Trinity* and *kingdom of God* as theological constructs, should orient the Church to live differently. Theology is only as good as it is lived out.

Out of the biblical and theological study, four foundational values or components have become evident for a church to embrace God's mission. These four components were priorities in the life of Christ as he lived out the mission of his Father, and they are to be priorities for the Church today. First, Christ chose and called the disciples so that they might be *with* him. In so doing, Jesus modeled the importance of community or fellowship as a means of carrying out God's mission. Second, Jesus served and reached out to those in need. The entire thrust of Jesus' ministry was incarnational, meeting people at their level. His compassion to those in need was unmistakable. The third component Christ modeled was his humble and bold proclamation of the gospel. Jesus came preaching a message of truth, yet in coming to earth from heaven, the Son of God showed the humility that must accompany the proclamation of this truth. Fourth, the last command that Jesus Christ left his disciples was to make more disciples. Jesus had faith that God's kingdom would continue to unfold in and through the apostles and all future generations of Christians as they made more disciples. Making disciples who make more disciples is not only the strategy through which Christ reaches the world but it reveals a central mandate of God's mission as well. Jesus modeled all four of these foundational values as he participated in God's mission.

These four components mark the missional Church today: being

(community/fellowship or *koinonia*), doing (incarnational service or *diakonia*), speaking (witness and proclamation or *kerygma*), and making (reproducing disciples). The missional church will be moving forward on all four fronts at the same time. Service (doing) and proclamation (speaking) are like two blades of a pair of scissors that operate in unison, held together by community (being), which is the axle on which the two blades operate. Reproduction of disciples (making) is the forward movement of the scissors as it accomplishes the task. These four components are so intricately related that to separate them is to be somewhat artificial, although I am attempting to do so. Each of these components can only be fully understood in light of their relationship to one another.

Biblical Community (Being)

The first foundational component that marks a church that is oriented to God's mission is authentic biblical community. The early Church as described in Acts 2:42-47 creates a striking image of community among the followers of Jesus Christ, revealing that salvation is something to be experienced and borne corporately. Together they devoted themselves to the teachings of Jesus, to prayer, and fellowship. Their interdependence grew as they shared possessions and met one another's needs. Through this authentic community, God added new believers into the Church where values, words, and deeds were vastly different from the world in which they came. Conversion to Christ meant for the early Christians as it means for Christians today—to be changed into the likeness of Jesus Christ. The very *being* or core of an individual is made new in Christ (1 Cor. 5:7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Col. 3:10) and through life in the community of faith. The Christian life is not just a set of doctrinal beliefs. The Scripture is not as interested in advancing a belief system as to call into being a new people. God's people find their identity in Christ and *in*

his family. The individualism of North America often causes the church to miss this *community* component. The Christian life cannot be lived in isolation. The Christian faith is a relationship with God *and* with others. An integral part of *being* a Christian is to live in, and become a part of, the community of faith. Keith Taylor defines authentic community as “the expression of the Christian life in the context of relationships” (28). Biblical community provides the avenue for encouragement, support, instruction, accountability, service, and witness. Authentic biblical community or fellowship (*koinonia*) is a cornerstone of the Church as it embarks on the journey of participating with God in his mission.

The very term *kingdom* implies a community or group of people. The Church, then, is a family and a gathering of individuals who have yielded their hearts and relationships to the reign of God. “Kingdom living is fundamentally social. It involves membership, citizenship, loyalties and one’s identity.... These dimensions of kingdom life supersede the whims of individual experience” (Kraybill 21). Thus, while the kingdom of God *is* personal and internal, it must not thought to be primarily or exclusively so.

The Church must first reflect the nature of the Trinity in community before it will be effective in its mission. Stevens says that the duty and destiny of God’s people is to build community—to love one another even as God’s love is reflected in his triune nature (94). Jesus not only taught about loving relationships, he modeled them. He called his disciples first to “be with him” (Mark 3:14). Out of his friendship and the reality of his community among them, Jesus modeled life in the kingdom of God. The New Testament emphasizes the importance of loving relationships as one of the primary values of

Christian living. Christians are commanded to love, even as God loves (John 15:12; 1 John 4:7). Loving relationships are at the heart of community, and community is intrinsically related to the kingdom of God. Guder et al. remark, "Before the Church is called to do or say anything, the Church is called and sent to be the unique community of those who live under the reign of God" (103). Top priority for a missional church is not producing programs, however fine and necessary they appear, but being formed to be a distinctly Christian community. To cooperate with God in mission will mean, first, that the Christian is participating in and experiencing fellowship in the body of Christ. The witness of the Church will be credible only when it flows from a community. For this reason Jesus prayed to his Father that Christians would be one. He knew the Church would be effective in cooperating with God's mission only when the oneness of the church reflected the oneness of the Trinity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer observes that the "more genuine and the deeper our community becomes, the more will everything else between us recede, the more clearly and purely will Jesus Christ and his work become the one and only thing that is vital between us" (26). Newbigin also suggests that the only true hermeneutic of the gospel is a congregation of men and women who, in community, believe and live the kingdom of God (*Gospel* 22-23). Christian people are a watched people in the world:

The Church's love and unity holds ultimate significance for the world as the visible basis of the gospel's power and legitimacy.... The universal invitation to believe the gospel includes the invitation to enter the reign-of-God-produced community of the new humanity. (Guder et al. 104)

A missional church will value and foster authentic community knowing that when the world sees the fruit of this community, they have in a real sense caught a view of God.

Biblical community is a prerequisite for the church to be effective in God's mission.

True community, however, is not only the means of achieving God's mission but is also a result of God's people being focused on mission. When a church is rallied around God's mission, community and oneness will be a by-product. In their research on the seven greatest teams of modern history, Warren Bennis and Patricia Ward Biederman discover that "groups seem to be most successful when undertaking tangible projects.... When the thing is finished, the group often spins apart" (5-6). Churches without a clear sense of God's mission may not disband or spin apart, but they often do experience conflict and lack of authentic biblical community. Lack of mission and direction can easily lead to internal conflict and distraction.

A clear commitment to and involvement in the mission of God naturally stimulates an increase in the depth of biblical community. In his book that analyzes church renewal from a historical perspective, Snyder focuses especially on the Montanist, Pietist, Methodist, and Moravian movements. Through his study, Snyder finds that in each of these renewal movements, where the missional orientation and intensity of the church rose dramatically, a renewed interest, appreciation, and living out of community followed.

Authentic biblical community is both a means for the church as it participates in God's mission and a natural result of involvement in this mission. A missional church will attract people to God through its community, which will deepen as it joins in God's mission.

Incarnational Service (Doing)

A second component of missional orientation in a church is incarnational service

to those who are outside the church. A missional church does not live for itself but is deeply involved in its community. The goal is to be the church in the community, reflecting and announcing the kingdom of God. Members see themselves as missionaries personally engaged in and submerged in their communities. The church will avoid *we/them* language, as it indwells the gospel story in the context of the community around them. Incarnational service is loving people enough to meet and serve them where they are in life. Jesus displayed this kind of incarnational love by coming into the world as a human, even though he was God. Jesus is Immanuel, God with us, the Son of God (Matt. 1:23). Service done incarnationally will follow the example of Jesus, reflecting a going, and *being with* those whom the church is seeking to reach. As the church embraces the Trinity and the kingdom of God, a natural desire to move out into the world to serve, bless, and work for justice will result. Jesus proclaimed that he was the fulfillment of the promise in Isaiah in whom he would tell the good news to the poor, announce freedom for the oppressed, and give sight to the blind (Luke 4:18-19).

The Church is to represent the reign of God as his servants to the world. B. T. Roberts insists ministry to and among the poor and disadvantaged is the crowning proof of faithful witness. He declares, "In this respect the Church must follow in the footsteps of Jesus" (7). Not only did Jesus minister to the poor and downtrodden, but in Matthew 25:31-46 Jesus Christ is to be found *in* those who are poor and needy. A response to them is a response to Jesus. Emmanuel Manikun Jacob describes the mission of the Church as "engagement with this Jesus and a participation in his presence and activity in and through those in need" (106). The twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew reveals a mystery for the Church in that ministry to the poor both represents Christ as well as ministers to

Christ at the same time. In his Incarnation, Jesus is with even the lowliest of society. As the Church serves incarnationally, it both takes and meets Jesus there. Concern for the poor and downtrodden is at the center of the nature of the kingdom. “The Church’s visible concern for the poor is both an indicator of faithfulness and a sign of the kingdom” (Snyder, *Kingdom* 115). As the Church reaches out to serve the marginalized and broken, it reveals God’s kingdom and the special place God has always had in his heart for those who cannot care for themselves.

The motive for incarnational service (to persons in any situation in life) is not to grow the Church but to reflect God’s love and announce his kingdom. As the Church understands the larger realm of God’s kingdom, it will see all people as created in the image of God and worthy to be loved and served as such. Authentic friendships will flow between individual Christians in the church and those in the culture who are outside the Church.

Harriet Hill, a missionary and anthropology consultant, developed a friendship model for effective incarnational ministry in cross-cultural contexts. Her model is instructive and equally relevant for the church in North America on its own soil. In order to identify successfully with people and serve incarnationally, Hill suggests several principles for a friendship model. First, friendship must be intentional (Hill 266). The church must intentionally move out into the world to befriend people in the culture. Second, friendship requires proximity (266). The apostle Paul expresses this principle when he directs the followers of Christ to be in the world but not of the world. A church with a truly incarnational ministry will engage with and live in close proximity to the culture. A third principle Hill highlights is a friendship that will appreciate differences as

well as similarities (266). The church and North American culture have many differences that can block friendship and hinder ministry. “If differences are our primary focus, we will not be able to have real relationships. We must balance the understanding in our differences with a realization of our common humanness” (267). A fourth principle that is instructive for the church regarding friendship as a model for incarnational service is vulnerability (268). A church that understands the power of authentic friendship in incarnational service will encourage its people to be vulnerable with people outside the church. As an example, Hill reports how when missionaries experience the death of a child and share their grief with those they are serving, they often report new levels of intimacy and friendship they never thought possible (268). Vulnerability is a sign of trust and trust is necessary in all authentic friendships. Involvement in the lives of unchurched people, the community, and service to them is not a program of the missional church. This involvement and incarnational service flows from a genuine friendship and love born in the Trinitarian heart of God. A church that lives out the kingdom and ministry of God in this way will be a blessing and a friend to its community.

Unfortunately, many churches do not yet grasp a true understanding of ministry through incarnational service. I would submit that Tom Pelton is a rather typical pastor. He confesses his blindness to cooperating with God’s mission in terms of the relationship between his church and his community:

You might find this hard to believe, but I wasn’t really there to serve the community. I came to the city because I considered it a great place to build the church of my dreams. I expected the city to serve me. So I built a big Church but not a great one. The problem is that my self-centeredness runs directly contrary to the kingdom Jesus offers. (70)

Pelton confesses his faulty motive that led to a misplaced mission and an absence of any

significant incarnational ministry. McLaren uses the metaphor of strip mining to describe a church whose motive is to use the community to build itself, rather than simply blessing and serving the community (54). Incarnational service, flowing from the mission of God, *gives* to the world while a misplaced church mission *takes*.

Newbigin pictures the church as God's embassy in a specific place: "It will be a community that does not live for itself but is deeply involved in the concerns of its neighborhood. It will be the church for the specific place where it lives, not the church for those who wish to be members of it" (*Gospel* 229). Each local congregation is an outpost of God's kingdom and is to be a place from which the good news overflows in good action. Guder et al. state, "[T]he Church represents the reign of God by its deeds as servants to God's passion for the world's life" (105). In the same vein, Storey comments that service is not merely a Christian duty but a part of worship. "The Church that fails to serve the needs of people on weekdays can bring no Sunday worship to its King.... The truly Christian Church preaches from a platform of sacrificial service to the needy of the earth" (26). A kingdom of God mentality and heart will cause the church to love its community, and all people within its community. This love will be expressed in practical service, concern, involvement, and care, with no strings attached, as the Church realizes that service is a reflection of the self-giving, others-centered triune God.

This kingdom mind-set and community involvement leads the Church to see *ministry* as much broader than church work. In practical terms, a missional church might seek to involve as many, or more, people to be serving out in the community as those serving inside the church walls. No distinction is made between kingdom business and Church business. *All* activity that flows from the Church and from individual Christians

has potential kingdom significance. As a missional church engages the world with compassion, justice, and service, these encounters with the world become signs that the kingdom of God is now present in the world and is on its way in the future. These acts bring wholeness and dignity to the world and thereby provide a taste of the kingdom, and these “signs” invite people to listen when the gospel is proclaimed.

Bold and Humble Witness (Speaking)

A third major component that will be descriptive of a missional church will be a bold and yet humble witness to Christ and to God’s kingdom. The church must learn how to *be* and *do* while at the same time, learning how to *speak* to a postmodern world as confident, yet humble, messengers of the kingdom of God. The evangelistic task of the Church is to proclaim the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ throughout the world while at the same time, reflecting the kingdom of God and inviting people into this radical new community where they are made into disciples. Snyder underscores the priority of evangelism for the Church by saying, “Evangelism is the first priority of the Church’s ministry in the world. The Church that fails to evangelize is both biblically unfaithful and strategically shortsighted” (*Community* 101). Jesus not only came preaching and announcing the kingdom of God, but he commissioned his followers to do the same.

While evangelism must not be limited exclusively to *speaking*, sustained evangelism will be lacking without it. The apostle Paul affirms the importance of speaking through his rhetorical question in Romans 10:14: “How can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?” (CEV). Speaking the gospel contains two aspects: to proclaim or preach

(kerygma) and to witness (marturia). Michael Green suggests the Church has overemphasized preaching to the detriment of witness, and witness should probably be the characteristic word of New Testament evangelism (76). Not every Christian is a preacher, but every Christian is a witness. A witness is someone who has seen or experienced something and they tell about it; their life stands behind what they say (Fischer 199). In a missional church, all believers are unleashed and encouraged to fulfill their role as witnesses.

The importance of speaking and being a witness does not, however, relegate the Christian to a promoter or salesperson of the gospel. The mission of the Church is not to be understood as a sales project managed by CEOs and managers. The gospel is not merely a set of propositions that is promoted by the Church to be accepted by unbelievers. The gospel is focused on Jesus Christ as Messiah and salvation through him *as well as* an understanding of the kingdom that he came to initiate. Salvation and discipleship have immediate and intrinsic influence upon social and cultural values. In other words, salvation is not limited to inner life and transformation alone. Salvation affects all of life. Thus, evangelism and witness is not limited to an invitation to simply believe something, but rather, to enter into a new kingdom and a new relationship where Jesus Christ is Lord. This broader understanding of salvation will help the Church resist the temptation to view the Great Commission as merely a matter of getting people to assent to a message or doctrine. When evangelism is understood as gaining converts through mental assent or by getting people to pray the sinner's prayer, the Church tends to recast the gospel in likeable, plausible terms, assuming that the primary task of the Church is to gain converts, thereby growing the Church and the kingdom of God. The

Bible does not use words such as *grow* or *expand* or *build* the kingdom of God. As already mentioned, human control (versus God control) and marketing-type language tends to promote the sales approach. Instead, Scripture uses words such as *receiving* or *entering* the kingdom of God. The Church is not a social project, which is an overemphasis on service without speaking or verbal witness, but neither is the gospel a sales project, which is an overemphasis on preaching the truth with the goal of *getting a convert*. The welcoming framework for evangelism then, moves from an act of recruiting or co-opting those outside the Church to an invitation of companionship. Guder et al. explain more fully this richer understanding of evangelism or witness:

The church would witness that its members, like others, hunger for the hope that there is a God who reigns in love and intends the good of the whole earth. The community of the church would testify that they have heard the announcement that such a reign is coming, and indeed is already breaking into the world. They would confirm that they have heard the open welcome and received it daily, and they would invite others to join them as those who also have been extended God's welcome. To those invited, the church would offer itself to assist their entrance into the reign of God and to travel with them as co-pilgrims. Here lies a path for the renewal of the heart of the church and its evangelism. (97)

Evangelism is an invitation to reorient one's entire life around God's kingdom and the person of Jesus Christ, not just consent to a sales pitch. Verbal witness is done boldly because the gospel is the truth and the only way to enter into God's kingdom.

The gospel is not only proclaimed boldly but Scripture also directs Christians to share the message out of a deep sense of humility, respect, and kindness (1 Pet. 3:15).

The kingdom of God is proclaimed and invitation given to experience the grace of God, and to embark on a journey alongside those already in the faith. This journey is a joyful pilgrimage to Christ, witnessing to others through verbal proclamation and through acts

of love and service. True witness does not separate words or proclamation from deeds. Evangelism is a full-orbed representation of all that Jesus Christ came to preach and live. Throughout Church history, and even among denominations today, an either/or approach to preaching and demonstration reflects the kingdom of God incompletely. Newbigin reacts to this approach, stating the absurdity of setting these two sides of evangelism—word and deed—against one another. He says, “[T]hey mutually reinforce and interpret one another. The word explains the deeds, and the deeds validate the words” (*Gospel* 137). Word and deed flowing out of community are three core components that will be valued by a church shaped by a biblical understanding of the Trinity and the kingdom of God.

One more facet regarding *bold and humble witness* is necessary to highlight. As noted at the beginning of this section, each of the four components is intricately related, and the reality of this truth is especially important here. First, witness is a function of the church-as-community. Snyder points out that “the New Testament evangelists were faithful verbal witnesses largely because the Christian community was a faithful witness through its common life and action in the world. Witness and community go together” (*Community* 103). The most credible form of witness for the Church is the actual living, breathing, visible community of faith. Individual evangelism that promotes solo witnessing, void of the life and power of the community of the Church, is ineffective and self-defeating.

Second, an effective witness will flow out of both word and deed, service and speech. Evangelism through speech is most effective and authentic when it flows out of and alongside true community and practical service and care of the Church:

Acts provides a detailed description of the earliest days of the Church. It is made clear that loving *koinonia* fellowship, a communal life, a kerygmatic proclamation that Jesus is Lord, a sharing with those in need through loving diaconal ministry all brought about *marturia*—a powerful witness to the Church’s missionary nature. (Van Engen 178-90)

Evangelism is both the preaching of the good news and the demonstration of the good news through the community of the called out and sent forth ones. The people who do not know Jesus are to come to know him and become a part of his kingdom through the *being*, the *doing*, and the *speaking* of the Church. “God’s missionary Church witnesses to the fact that Jesus is alive and that he is the Head of the body, the Church, through loving *koinonia* fellowship, through confession that Jesus is Lord and through actions of diaconal service” (Van Engen 97). Each of the three components is necessary for the church to be effective in cooperating with God in his mission on the earth. A fourth component is equally vital because it ensures the first three components will be carried on from generation to generation.

Reproduction of Disciples (Making)

In addition to participating in God’s mission through biblical community, incarnational service and bold yet humble witness, a fourth emphasis of a mission-oriented church will also include the reproducing of multiplying disciples. As described earlier, Jesus sent the twelve apostles, and later the seventy disciples, to model this priority. In his high priestly prayer, recorded in John 17, Jesus prayed for those who would believe in him through the witness of the apostles, including *all* future believers who would participate in God’s mission. Jesus Christ knew every Christian must internalize the sentness of God. In other words, every follower of Christ must own the responsibility to go and *make* more disciples who will also go and *make* more disciples.

The apostle Paul understood the strategic nature of multiplying disciples and instructed Timothy, his young apprentice, to instruct and teach others, who would also disciple others (1 Tim. 2:2).

Jesus not only modeled the value of making disciples, he also modeled an important strategy concerning disciple-making when he called the twelve that they might *be with* him. One of Jesus' primary means in the making of his initial disciples was to invite them to be with him in order to learn from the community and to learn through his personal mentorship. A climate of rich, biblical community in the church, where mentorship is encouraged and allowed to occur naturally, will be the context in which the making of disciples occurs most effectively. Even in the business world, this principle of mentorship bears positive outcomes in the lives of people. Gerard R. Roche describes a survey of 1,250 executives where two-thirds of the respondents had a mentor. Often these mentors develop into enduring friendships, and, generally, those who had mentors expressed greater satisfaction with their work than their peers. Deeper friendships and greater satisfaction in a church will encourage the growth of all Christians, especially those who are new believers coming from the world. A missional church will capitalize on the principle of mentorship within community and will grow more and better disciples as a result. As this process builds momentum, the community of the Church becomes a place where disciples make more disciples who, in turn, make more disciples whose goal is to join God on his mission.

Another strategy that affects a church's ability to make reproducing disciples is how it approaches the issue of laity and clergy. In a church where all Christians are released to minister and equip others, the potential to make disciples is dramatically

increased over a church where ministry and equipping is limited to the ordained clergy.

Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon support the view of raising up the standard of the laity, and seeing all laity as ministers:

There is no healing, counseling, witnessing, speaking, interpretation, living or dying the clergy can do that is not the responsibility of every other Christian. Whenever the clergy claim some “specialness” for their praying, witnessing, or caring, this serves to confirm the deadly, erroneous concept that the clergy are the only real ministers and that the laity exist to support and feed these *real* [original emphasis] ministers—the clergy.
(113)

Having a dichotomy between clergy and laity where the clergy *does* the ministry *for/to* the laity does not find support in the New Testament. In fact, a strong case could be made from the New Testament to eliminate any theological distinction between laity and clergy. Stevens reports, “The word ‘laypersons’ was first used by Clement of Rome at the end of the first century, but was never used by an inspired apostle in Scripture to describe second-class, untrained and unequipped Christians” (5). Laity, in its proper New Testament understanding refers to the *laos*, the people of God, and is a term of honor highlighting the enormous privilege and mission of the whole people of God. Biblical community, incarnational service, and bold yet humble witness cannot be accomplished through the professional clergy alone but through the entire community (all of the disciples together) that is oriented to God’s mission. A missional church measures health and effectiveness by its capacity to involve all of God’s people and then to release (not retain) these disciples into the world to participate in the mission of God. A church oriented to God’s mission will have a passion to send all Christians back into the world as missionaries who are fully devoted followers of Christ.

An implication of an elevated view of the laity and a strong value on reproducing

disciples is a high threshold for membership within the Church. Membership is not casual or meaningless in a church oriented to God's mission. Members are taught to count the cost, with a high level of accountability, community, and encouragement to participate fully in the mission of God. Lowering the threshold to grow the membership roll is counter to God's mission. The focus is not on growing the church but on making disciples. As more disciples are made, God's mission has the potential to be reflected further and more brightly. A natural by-product of discipling is new converts. As these new Christians enter the community, priority is given to equipping them for their part in the mission: to be missionaries where they are, and to go and make more disciples.

George Barna, in his book *Evangelism That Works*, lists three primary reasons why people are not receptive to Christianity. First, they do not see the relevance of the gospel. Second, they do not understand what the Christian faith or the Church is trying to say, and third, the solution provided by the death and resurrection of Christ is too unique from the types of solutions they are searching for on their own (40). I would suggest that these three problems could be generally overcome where the church values and lives out of the four components: biblical community, incarnational service and compassion to the city/neighborhood partnered with a bold, yet humble witness, and completed with a passion to keep God's mission alive through the reproduction of multiplying disciples.

Each of these components builds on and is interdependent on one another. Nevertheless, as much as these four components are interdependent on one another, all four are intrinsically dependent on the infilling and power of the Holy Spirit.

Holy Spirit

Biblical and theological study has uncovered four components that are vital for the Church desiring to participate in God's mission on earth. A truly missional church will hold these four values in constant tension, intentionally seeking to develop and strengthen them. These four components are not enough on their own, however. Laid over each of these components must be a daily awareness and dependence upon the Holy Spirit.

God states clearly that his Church and his kingdom are not built by human strength or power but through the work of the Holy Spirit (Zech. 4:6). Jesus began his public ministry when the Holy Spirit came upon him (Mark 1:9-11). He also instructed his early disciples to wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit came upon each of them (Acts 1:8). The success of the early Church in their culture began first of all with the good news of the risen Christ and the coming kingdom of God. This success however was not realized until they, like Jesus, experienced the coming of the Holy Spirit upon them. Gordon D. Fee points out that "it was their [the early Church] experienced life with the Spirit who made the work of Christ an effective reality in their lives, thus making them a radical alternative within their culture" (xiv). The reality is the same for Christians and the Church today regarding the critical role of the Holy Spirit. The church must not view the four components previously discussed as technology, tools, or gimmicks without need of the living Holy Spirit. In his writing, Fee outlines a biblical study on the writings of Paul to help the Church recover what is, in his view, a lost awareness and reality of the presence of the Holy Spirit:

If the church is going to be effective in our postmodern world, we need to stop paying mere lip service to the Spirit and to recapture Paul's perspective: the Spirit as the *experienced, empowering* [original emphasis] return of God's own *personal presence* [original emphasis] in and among us, who enables us to live as radically *eschatological* [original emphasis] people in the present world while we await the consummation. (xv)

Whether one believes the Church has been paying lip service to the Holy Spirit, as Fee describes, or not, the Scriptures are clear regarding the reality of the Holy Spirit and the need for his power working in and through God's people. This need for the Holy Spirit has been evidenced throughout church history.

In his study of church renewal throughout history, Snyder proposes several lessons for Church renewal today. A primary lesson or application is concerning the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church. Whenever the missional orientation and effectiveness of the Church has risen sharply (church renewal), a "stress on the immediate operation or 'new work' of the Holy Spirit in the present day" had been present. (*Signs* 24). A Church oriented to God's mission will realize that the building of biblical community, incarnational service, bold witness, and reproduction of disciples is the work of God through the Holy Spirit to which the church is invited to participate. The Church is sent not to accomplish God's mission but to join Him through His Holy Spirit to participate in the mission. Without the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the Church may be on a mission, but it will not be the mission of God. Thus, an awareness and expectation of the living presence of the Holy Spirit in and through the community will be the reality of every church that is truly engaged in God's mission on the earth.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The church in North America, having been birthed out of and grown up within Christendom, has largely lost its sense of mission. North American society is a mission field today and not the Christian continent of decades past. If the church is going to impact its culture, it must come to grips with its mission and purpose. The mission of the Church is not to preserve or advance itself but to collaborate with God in reflecting and announcing his kingdom. The mission of the Church is the mission of God. All Christians must know that they are *sent* into the world to participate with God (through the Holy Spirit) in his mission, in the same way as Jesus Christ. Every Christian is a missionary.

The purpose of this project is to evaluate the missional orientation of the AXIS and Young Marrieds core communities at CSC, using the researcher-designed and validated Missional Church Orientation Tool (see Appendix A). The MCOT was administered to individuals in the small groups in these ministries in order to evaluate each group's orientation towards God's mission. A specific part of the MCOT will be to measure the awareness of the reality and guiding presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the small group to determine the correlation between a high awareness of the Holy Spirit and a high missional orientation. By collecting the scores of the small groups in these two ministry areas, a clearer picture of the overall missional orientation in each core community will unfold.

Research Questions

Coming out of the biblical and theological study, four foundational factors or components have been identified as central to God's mission in the world: biblical

community, incarnational service, bold yet humble witness, and reproduction of disciples involved in God's mission. A church with a high missional orientation values and will be moving forward in all of these characteristics. Thus, the MCOT is built upon these four components and seeks to measure the priority and involvement of the small group in each of these four areas. The first four research questions measured separately each of the four components using the MCOT. The fifth research question sought to measure the group's awareness of and interaction with the Holy Spirit.

Research Question #1 (RQ₁)

How do the small groups within AXIS and the Young Marrieds core communities at CSC rate on the component *biblical community* on the MCOT?

I have concluded through my biblical and theological study that one key component to God's mission is biblical community. The kingdom of God reflects his Trinitarian nature, and so too will God's mission. God desires to relate to and know people not only individually but also in the context of a loving family. A small group with a high orientation to God's mission should experience *authentic Christian community* and thus score highly on this factor.

Research Question #2 (RQ₂)

How do the small groups within AXIS and the Young Marrieds core communities at CSC rate on the component *incarnational service to those outside the church* on the MCOT?

Jesus came into our world as a human being. He incarnated himself. A mission oriented church will go where unchurched people are to serve them with God's love. Incarnational service to people who are not a part of the church, is a necessary component

of God's mission. God reveals his heart for the whole person throughout all of Scripture, and Jesus displayed God's same compassion throughout his public life and ministry. A small group that has a high missional orientation is involved in ministering to and serving people who are not in the church in a variety of ways as they reflect God's love for the whole person. As a result they should score high on the *incarnational service* factor.

Research Question #3 (RQ₃)

How do the small groups within AXIS and the Young Marrieds core communities of CSC rate on the component *bold and humble witness* on the MCOT?

Jesus came preaching and announcing a message. The Church is called to proclaim and witness to the person of Jesus Christ and his message and the present and coming kingdom of God. Reflecting the nature of Christ, this witness is done with boldness, but also with a true humility, respecting all persons and recognizing that not all questions can be answered. As with the previous two components, a small group that is highly missional should receive a high score on the *bold and humble witness* factor, because the members of the group are regularly involved in sharing their faith, and witnessing to God's presence in their lives.

Research Question #4 (RQ₄)

How do the small groups within AXIS and the Young Marrieds core communities of CSC rate on the component *reproduction of disciples* on the MCOT?

Jesus instructed his followers to make disciples who would make more disciples (Matt. 28:19; John 17:20). Disciples are made in the context of on-the-job training as a natural part of being a part of the community called the church. A missional church will understand that every Christian is a minister actively participating in God's mission. In

the Church no one is merely an observer, consumer, or pew sitter. A missional small group includes all members in the ministry of the group, and out of this participation, spiritual growth and the reproduction of disciples will result. These realities should lead to a high score on the *reproduction of disciples* factor on the MCOT.

Research Question #5 (RQ5)

What is the relationship between a high level of awareness of the reality and presence of the Holy Spirit in a small group and their scoring on each component of the MCOT?

This research question determined how aware the small group is to the activity, presence, and guidance of the Holy Spirit in their lives. I began the research expecting a correlation between the score in the *Holy Spirit* factor and the scores with the other four factors. This research question determined if such a correlation or relationship exists.

Instrument Development and Validity

Prior to data collection for the study, I developed, pilot tested, and subjected the instrument to factor analysis and reliability checks.

Pilot Study

For the purposes of this study, I initiated a pilot study in order to gather enough completed surveys to run factor analysis and reliability checks on the MCOT. Ninety-seven surveys were completed and received from three primary sources as outlined in Table 3.1. I was careful not to include any AXIS or Young Marrieds persons in the pilot study, assuring that there was no overlap of participants in the pilot study and the research group.

Table 3.1. Pilot Study Population

Date	Description of Sample Group	No. of Surveys Collected
July 2006	Adult small groups at CSC	42
January 2007	Grace Baptist Church in Kelowna, B.C.	38
June 2007	Cluster of House Churches Connected to CSC	17

I organized the raw data collected from the pilot study onto a spreadsheet, which I presented to the statistician for use in validation through factor analysis and to test for reliability. Validity of the MCOT was established through face and content validity measures.

Content Validity

Research methods contain several means of validation. “Content validation is the process of establishing the representativeness of the items with respect to the domain of skills, tasks, knowledge, and so forth of whatever is being measured” (Wiersma 300). The first step used to strengthen the content validity of the MCOT was to discover and describe the major theological and biblical facets of missional life that can be lived out in the social context of a small group. Through careful research of the literature and biblical observation, five missional factors or components emerged. Thirty items were initially designed, with each of the thirty items coinciding with one of the five components. Through discussion with the faculty mentor, who is well versed in survey design, we

concluded that twenty more items be added, bringing the total to fifty. Appendix B shows the original fifty items used in the pilot study with the ninety-seven participants.

A second step to strengthen content validity was to run a factor analysis on the fifty items using the expertise of an experienced statistician, Warren Vandale of IPSOS Reid:

The main applications of factor analytic techniques are: (1) to *reduce* the number of variables and (2) to *detect structure* in the relationships between variables, that is to *classify variables*. Therefore, factor analysis is applied as a data reduction or structure detection method. (“Principle Components”)

In this case, the factor analysis was used to detect structure in the relationship between the items based on the responses of the ninety-seven participants in the pilot study. The factor analysis determined that several items be relocated from one of the five components to another and that thirty items be extracted. Table 3.2 displays the rotated component matrix that resulted from the factor analysis. In the table, the following abbreviations indicate to which of the five components or factors each item belongs:

HS=Holy Spirit, IS=Incarnational Service, RD=Reproducing Disciples, BHW=Bold and Humble Witness, and BC=Biblical Community. The factor analysis was an important process to increase the content validity of the MCOT.

Table 3.2. Rotated Component Matrix of Twenty Items

Item #	Factor Abbreviation	Factor Loading				
		1	2	3	4	5
5	HS	0.84612*	0.05246	0.01560	0.23340	0.17696
15	HS	0.78813*	0.27573	0.08345	0.00531	0.03554
10	HS	0.76504*	0.13942	0.20064	0.19323	0.16241
20	HS	0.74741*	0.04112	0.15253	0.04750	0.13792
14	IS	0.04207	0.86620*	0.20049	0.00542	0.00302
4	IS	0.11768	0.84731*	0.03513	0.00339	0.06018
9	IS	0.25966	0.70981*	0.11915	0.11827	0.14587
19	IS	0.20968	0.68064*	0.25842	0.24962	0.00594
7	RD	0.04880	0.07122	0.76813*	0.02382	0.23080
17	RD	0.09632	0.03300	0.75619*	0.23816	0.03646
2	RD	0.11395	0.18305	0.73063*	0.15658	0.27560
12	RD	0.16652	0.17889	0.68269*	0.06091	0.02850
18	BHW	0.25774	0.01037	0.05519	0.75354*	0.15014
13	BHW	0.04001	0.07790	0.12195	0.72388*	0.08851
3	BHW	0.21052	0.00568	0.26649	0.63099*	0.06163
8	BHW	0.04715	0.41973	0.01200	0.60850*	0.18102
1	BC	0.06990	0.09713	0.06862	0.20789	0.80037*
6	BC	0.16067	0.02559	0.06653	0.12162	0.71248*
11	BC	0.08858	0.02581	0.26327	0.04302	0.67580*
16	BC	0.26684	0.23693	0.22472	0.28728	0.53511*

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
Rotation converged in 6 iterations

*Indicates scores used for each factor

The factor loading for each item was particularly strong in the components of Holy Spirit, incarnational service and reproduction of disciples. One of the four items (number 16) in the biblical community factor scored < .60, but the statistician suggested that the overall factor loadings were sufficient enough to satisfy the requirements of content validity.

Face Validity

Whereas content validity comes from the judgments of experts in a given domain, face validity refers to the judgments of people who are not necessarily experts but who are familiar with the domains in question:

Content validity should not be confused with face validity. The latter is not validity in the technical sense; it refers, not to what the test actually measures, but to what it appears superficially to measure. Face validity pertains to whether the test “looks valid” to the examinees who take it, the administrative personnel who decide on its use, and other technically untrained observers. (Anastasi and Urbina 144)

An important means of face validation occurred on 21 March 2006. On this date, the questionnaire was distributed to the staff members of Centre Street Church at a weekly staff meeting. One expectation of all staff members at CSC is to be a participating member of a small group, qualifying them as subject matter experts (SMEs), which is significant in terms of face validity (Burns). The thirty-three recipients completed the questionnaire in approximately 30 minutes. Each recipient had received a feedback sheet (see Appendix C) for the purposes of written feedback. I also conducted a general question and answer time after the questionnaire was completed to gain verbal feedback on the ease of use, clarity, unbiased language, and overall organization of survey appearance and content. In addition to the verbal feedback, nineteen sheets were received with written comments yielding valuable input, aiding in the construction of a more refined instrument. This meeting contributed to establishing face validity for the MCOT.

Reliability

Consultation with an experienced statistician and faculty mentor generated an Internal Consistency Reliability (Cronbach’s alpha) study that led to verifying the MCOT

as a reliable research instrument.

Internal consistency estimations assess the consistency of results across items within each domain, as well as within the overall instrument. In order to determine internal consistency reliability of the MCOT as a composite of the five factors, Cronbach's coefficient alpha was computed on the initial fifty items and yielded an average $\alpha = .812$. Table 3.3 shows the α value in each domain.

Table 3.3. Internal Consistency Reliability of Initial Items

Factor	α	No. of Items
Biblical community	.74	10
Incarnational service	.80	10
Bold & humble witness	.81	10
Reproduction of disciples	.80	10
Holy Spirit	.89	10

Although the α for each domain was above the acceptable .70, the fifty items did not show strong content validity. Based on the ninety-seven completed surveys, items were factor loading in their intended factors with values $< .60$. The analysis factor determined which items had lower values and these items were removed, with the exception of item 16 under the biblical community factor. The value of .53 was high enough to substantiate that it stay so that a balance of four items remained in each factor. When clean factor loadings were reached using Varimax rotation and inter-item

correlations (Chronbach's alpha), the results yielded an instrument consisting of 20 items (4 in each domain), $\alpha \geq .7$ (see Table 3.4).

Table 3.4. Internal Consistency Reliability of Missional Church Orientation Tool

Factor	α	No. of Items
Biblical community	.72	4
Incarnational service	.78	4
Bold & humble witness	.70	4
Reproduction of disciples	.83	4
Holy Spirit	.84	4
MCOT composite	.77	20

Design of the Study

The purpose of this study was to test the missional orientation of the AXIS and Young Marrieds core communities at CSC, using the researcher-designed survey.

Population and Subjects

The population for this study was the AXIS and Young Marrieds core communities. AXIS is primarily, although not exclusively, made up of young adults who are single. The Young Marrieds core community is comprised of married couples, with or without children. Both ministries are targeted to young adults who are in their mid-twenties to mid-thirties. I initiated the Young Marrieds core congregation in 2002 and had been providing leadership for both ministries until 2007. In 2005, when this project

began, AXIS consisted of forty-two small groups, and the Young Marrieds core community had twenty-four small groups with an average of ten persons per group for a total of sixty-six small groups and approximately 660 people. Between the start of the project in 2005 and the later stages in 2008, CSC changed their small group strategy, shifting from demographic-based groups to intergenerational, geographically based groups. In January 2008, at the time of data collection, CSC was still in transition. The core communities of AXIS and Young Marrieds still existed, but the overall number of small groups and participants in these core communities had decreased as energy shifted towards geographic, community-based groups. At the time of data collection, approximately twelve small groups existed in AXIS with a total population of approximately eighty-four individuals in these small groups, and nine small groups in Young Marrieds with a total population comprised of approximately seventy individuals. I invited all twenty-one groups to participate in the study. The vast majority of small group members are both followers of Jesus Christ and regular attendees at CSC.

The subjects of the study were the members of small groups whose small group chose to participate and complete the questionnaire. Seven of the twelve small groups in AXIS chose to participate with a total number of forty-five subjects. Seven of the nine small groups from Young Marrieds chose to participate, which included forty-four subjects. The MCOT was administered to individuals through the small group leaders in the AXIS and Young Married core communities.

Instrumentation

The researcher-designed questionnaire called *Missional Church Orientation Tool* discovered the missional orientation of the AXIS and Young Marrieds core communities.

As previously described, the MCOT was created on the basis of a four- factor scale (four components): biblical community, incarnational service to the unchurched, bold and humble witness, and reproduction of disciples. The MCOT includes four questions for each of these four factors that are based on Likert-type items. These items measured the attitudes, feelings, and actions of the participants within their small groups. The items are closed format questions, having five choices: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. In addition to these four factors, the MCOT also includes a section that measures the awareness and expectation of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the small group. The MCOT also contains four questions to measure this *Holy Spirit* component.

After some consideration, I determined that for the purposes of this project, the questions in the MCOT would direct the participants to consider their small group, as opposed to the entire church, when responding to the questions. In a large church such as CSC, the nature of the church gets lived out in the small groups. For example, if the small groups are committed to active prayer, then the church as a whole is a praying church. If the small groups in AXIS and Young Marrieds have a high missional orientation, then the ministries as a whole have a high missional orientation. The nature of the small groups reflect the nature of the church as a whole. Centre Street Church encourages small group leaders to view their group as a *small church* and to view themselves as lay pastors. In many ways, as go the small groups, so goes the church as a whole. I determined that a more accurate measurement of the missional orientation of the AXIS and Young Marrieds core communities would occur by having the participants reflect and answer the questions according to their experience in their small group.

Table 3.5 displays the questions that support each factor. The number preceding each question matches the number of the particular statement in the MCOT.

Table 3.5. Missional Factors

Biblical Community	
1.	I personally feel free to share my struggles or challenges in our group.
6.	Prayer is vital to our group.
11.	I would feel comfortable calling members of my group anytime, day or night, if I were experiencing a crisis.
16.	My group encourages me to pray regularly for people in my life who are not Christians.
Incarnational Service	
2.	In our group, we are challenged to use our financial resources to help those who are less fortunate.
7.	Through the influence of this group, I have personally given time to serve those who are less fortunate.
12.	As a group, our concern for the poor and disenfranchised in society has led us to respond through practical acts of service. (either individually or together as a group)
16.	Through the influence of my group, I have personally given money to a compassion ministry or organization.
Bold & Humble Witness	
3.	I have personally been encouraged to reach out more intentionally to my non-Christian friends through the influence of my group.
8.	Through the influence of my group, I now see my workplace as an opportunity for ministry where I am a "missionary."
13.	The influence of my group has led me to intentionally come alongside a new believer to disciple them.
17.	My group has challenged me to make disciples.
Reproduction of Disciples	
4.	We have integrated a new Christian into our group with the past 12 months.
9.	Together as a group, we have helped a new believer grow towards maturity in their faith in Christ.
14.	In our group, we have seen new believers step forward and become involved in ministry (Either inside or outside of the group).
18.	Our group discusses the importance of new leaders coming out of our group to begin new groups.
Holy Spirit	
5.	Our group meetings are rich with the presence of the Holy Spirit.
10.	The Holy Spirit is a living reality in our group and not just a theological concept.
15.	The Holy Spirit has led our group in very specific ways over the past year.
20.	My group has helped me to be more aware of the presence and reality of the Holy Spirit in my everyday life.

General information questions at the beginning of the survey determined the length of time the participants were Christians, the length of time they have been a part of the small group, and whether or not they were regular attendees of the group and members of CSC. All questionnaires were anonymous and did not ask for gender specification.

Data Collection

The MCOT served as the exclusive instrument of data collection for discovering the missional orientation of the AXIS and Young Marrieds core communities. In January 2008 I initiated meetings with the ministry leaders of AXIS, and with Pastor Rick who represents the Young Marrieds Core Communities, to finalize plans around the distribution and collection of the questionnaire among the small groups.

AXIS core community. I met with the leadership team of five individuals including the current pastor who gives oversight to AXIS, on 8 January 2008 to discuss plans for the distribution and collection of the MCOT from the AXIS core community. The leadership team approved the participation of the AXIS community in this study and asked me to deliver a written report on the findings to the leadership team.

On 15 January, I delivered a short presentation to the AXIS community on the purpose and use of the MCOT. Approximately eighty to ninety people were present on this evening. The AXIS community consists of twelve small groups (called Life Groups) whose participants attend regularly as well as visitors or individuals who choose *not* to be in one of the small groups. At approximately 7:30 p.m., all of those present gather in the fellowship hall of the CSC West Campus for a short time of greeting and announcements. During this block of time I delivered my presentation. After this short corporate time, people are dismissed into their small groups for the remainder of the evening until

approximately 9:45 p.m. Newcomers or people who do not desire to be in one of the eight small groups spend their time in a larger, more transient breakout group. The people in the breakout group were not part of the target group.

The small group leaders who chose to participate received a large brown envelope containing ten MCOTs in each, with instructions to complete the questionnaires in their small groups on this particular evening (15 January), or the following week of 22 January. The AXIS leadership team thought having two options for the small group leaders would encourage more participation. I was present on the first date to receive the completed surveys and arranged for an AXIS ministry leader to receive any completed surveys the following week. Small group leaders received directions to place their name on the envelope if they wished to receive a report highlighting the results of their group members' input. I received four envelopes with completed surveys on the evening of 15 January. The AXIS ministry leader received a fifth envelope with completed surveys, one week later (22 January 2008) and two final envelopes with surveys on 28 January 2008. I received the completed surveys of these three small groups from the AXIS ministry leader the following day (29 January 2008). Seven small groups, which included forty-five individuals from the AXIS community, completed the MCOT. Five small groups chose not to participate.

Young Marrieds Core Community. On 15 January 2008, I met with pastor Rick to gain consent and the necessary information to make contact with small group leaders of the approximately eight Young Marrieds small groups. Due to the shift in small group strategy at CSC, Pastor Rick was not able to be conclusive around the total number of Young Married small groups. Within the next several days, I contacted all eight small

group leaders by telephone, giving them an explanation and invitation to participate in the study. A ninth small group of Young Marrieds also participated in the study. This group consists of young married couples who are regular attendees of CSC and have formed their small group outside the program of the CSC small group structure.

In each phone conversation, I initiated a discussion around the purpose of the study, and arranged to e-mail the MCOT to them. The small group leaders agreed to make enough copies for the individuals in their groups and to facilitate the giving of the questionnaire by 26 January 2008. Leaders received instructions to place the completed surveys in a single envelope for pickup at a common drop-off area in the CSC building. The nine small group leaders with whom I had spoken received a reminder follow-up call, two days after the initial contact. By 28 January 2008, seven small group leaders had administered the MCOT in their small group with a total of forty-four individual subjects participating from the Young Marrieds core community. I gathered the surveys from the prearranged drop-off area or in person from the leaders. Two groups chose not to participate.

Data Analysis

The collected data underwent appropriate statistical methods for analysis. Beyond the immediate measurement of missional orientation, I also conducted a correlation study to determine a relationship between awareness of the Holy Spirit component and the other four components. An ANOVA study compared the missional orientation between the AXIS and Young Marrieds core communities.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Review of the Problem and Purpose

The church in North America, having been birthed out of and grown up within Christendom, has largely lost its sense of mission. North American society is a mission field today and not the Christian continent of decades past. If the church is going to impact its culture, it must come to grips with the mission and purposes of God for his church. The mission of the Church is not to preserve or advance itself but to collaborate with God in reflecting and announcing his kingdom. The mission of the Church *is* the mission of God. All Christians must know that they are *sent* into the world to participate with God (through the Holy Spirit) in his mission in the same way as Jesus Christ. Every Christian is a missionary.

The purpose of this project was to evaluate the missional orientation of the AXIS and Young Marrieds core communities at CSC, using the self-designed and validated *Missional Church Orientation Tool*. The MCOT was administered to individuals in the small groups in these ministries in order to measure their orientation towards God's mission. A specific part of the MCOT measured the awareness of the reality and guiding presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual and/or small group to determine any correlation between a high awareness of the Holy Spirit and a high missional orientation. By collecting the scores of all the small groups in these two ministry areas, a clearer picture of the overall missional orientation in each core community was determined. My desire for this study and tool was to assist CSC in particular and the church in general in its ongoing quest to be focused on and captivated by God's mission.

Profile of Participants

The AXIS and Young Marrieds core communities in general consist of people who are demographically in their mid-twenties to late thirties in age. From appearances, most of these people, as is common with the larger congregation of CSC, would be middle class. The vast numbers of participants in the AXIS community are unmarried, with only one or two married couples who are a part of this core community. The Young Marrieds community involves married couples with or without children.

The information questions at the front of the survey showed that 42 percent of the AXIS participants were new to their small group in the past six months or less. The MCOT revealed that 49 percent of the Young Marrieds participants have been a part of their small group for between one and three years. The Young Marrieds participants were also more likely to be members of CSC than the AXIS small group participants. As seen in Table 4.1, the participants all considered themselves regular attendees of the small group of which they were evaluating when they completed the survey. Of significant note is that more than 86 percent of participants in both core communities have been Christians for more than five years.

Table 4.1. Participant Member Information

	n	% Average Time in Small Group	% Average Time as a Christian	% Member of CSC	% Regular Attendee of SG
AXIS	45	42 < 6 mo. 33 = 1-3 yrs. 16 = 6-12 mo. 9 > 3 yrs.	86 > 5 yrs. 9 = 1-3 yrs. 5 = 6-12 mo.	56	98
Young Marrieds	44	49 = 1-3 yrs. 28 < 6 mo. 12 = 6-12 mo. 12 = > 3 yrs.	95 > 5 yrs. 5 = 1-3 yrs.	74	100

Statistical Results

The findings for the AXIS and Young Marrieds core communities were gathered and tabulated in each of the five factor areas and studied to find possible correlations between these values and the reported values found under the Holy Spirit factor.

As observed in Table 4.2 the reliability for the MCOT composite is .72 ($\alpha = .70$), making the MCOT as a whole a trustworthy instrument for observing significant findings. Unfortunately, because the reliability score for *biblical community* is .55 ($\alpha = .55$), it falls short of the acceptable level for observing significant findings. Observations on *biblical community*, while being recorded in Chapter 4, will not be used to identify significant findings. The missional factor of *incarnational service* has a reliability score of .68 ($\alpha = .68$). While this score $< .70$, it is approaching an acceptable level, and on the advice of my dissertation mentor, we decided to observe and report the findings from this missional factor. The other three missional factors are $> .70$.

Table 4.2 also shows that the highest values combined (between AXIS and Young Marrieds) are found in the *biblical community* and *awareness of the Holy Spirit* factors with the standard deviation also being the lowest in these two factors. The highest factor is *biblical community* with a composite value of 16.24 out of a possible 20, but as noted above, this score is only 55 percent reliable. *Awareness of the Holy Spirit* was the second highest value at 15.60 out of a possible 20. The lowest factor, *reproduction of disciples*, has a composite value of 9.80 out of 20.

Table 4.2. Descriptive Statistics for All Composite Scales (Missional Church Orientation Tool)

Missional Factor	α	N	n	\bar{X}	SD
MCOT Composite	.72	157	89	67.36*	11.68
1. Biblical community	.55	157	89	16.24**	2.43
2. Incarnational service	.68	157	89	13.40**	3.16
3. Bold and humble witness	.73	157	89	12.29**	3.24
4. Reproduction of disciples	.82	157	89	9.80**	4.20
5. Awareness of Holy Spirit	.85	157	89	15.60**	3.08

* Out of 100

** Out of 20

Tables 4.3 and 4.4 reveal a similarity of note between the AXIS and Young Marrieds in all of the missional factors other than *reproduction of disciples*. In the factor of *reproduction of disciples*, the Young Marrieds core community shows a lower score than the AXIS core community, rating themselves with a mean number of 8.15, while the

AXIS community scored themselves with a mean number of 11.42. The two core communities mirrored one another scoring *biblical community* as their strongest missional factor followed by *awareness of the Holy Spirit*, *incarnational service*, and then *bold and humble witness*.

Table 4.3. Descriptive Statistics for All Composite Scales: AXIS

Missional Factor	N	n	\bar{X}	SD
1. Biblical community	85	45	16.02*	2.06
2. Incarnational service	85	45	13.15*	3.06
3. Bold and humble witness	85	45	12.33*	3.00
4. Reproduction of disciples	85	45	11.42*	3.29
5. Awareness of Holy Spirit	85	45	15.80*	2.70

* Out of 20

Table 4.4. Descriptive Statistics for All Composite Scales: Young Marrieds

Missional Factor	N	n	\bar{X}	SD
1. Biblical community	72	44	16.47*	2.77
2. Incarnational service	72	44	13.65*	3.27
3. Bold and humble witness	72	44	12.25*	3.51
4. Reproduction of disciples	72	44	8.15*	4.41
5. Awareness of Holy Spirit	72	44	15.40*	3.44

* Out of 20

Biblical Community

The AXIS and Young Marrieds small groups displayed very little difference in terms of *biblical community* as shown from the descriptive statistics. Of notice, in Table 4.1, is that 42 percent of the AXIS participants have been in their small group for six months or less, as compared to 48 percent of the Young Married participants having belonged to their small group for between one and three years. While stating this observation I again acknowledge that the factor of *biblical community* is $< .70$, negating the opportunity to observe acceptable significant findings.

Table 4.5. Biblical Community Comparison

Biblical Community	n	\bar{X}	SD
Composite	89	6.24*	2.43
Axis	45	16.02*	2.06
Young Marrieds	44	16.47*	2.77

*Out of 20

As highlighted in Table 4.6, the ANOVA test shows no significant difference between the AXIS small groups and Young Marrieds small groups in their measurement of the *biblical community* factor. ANOVA significance = .38 (significant statistical difference < .02).

Table 4.6. ANOVA Score for Biblical Community

Biblical Community	Degrees of Freedom	F Distribution	Significance
Between AXIS and Young Marrieds	1	.77	.38
Within Groups	87	.77	.38

Incarnational Service

Both core communities, as represented by the participants, rated the missional factor of *incarnational service* as an area of average strength, with mean numbers of

13.40 and 13.15. This factor was the third strongest factor for both the AXIS and Young Marrieds core communities.

Table 4.7. Incarnational Service Comparison

Incarnational Service	n	\bar{X}	SD
Composite	89	13.40*	3.16
Axis	45	13.15*	3.06
Young Marrieds	44	13.65*	3.27

*Out of 20

Minimal difference showed between the AXIS and Young Marrieds small groups in the *incarnational service* missional factor. Table 4.8 indicates how similar the two communities were in the factor of *incarnational servic*, with an ANOVA score = .45.

Table 4.8. ANOVA Score for Incarnational Service

Incarnational Service	Degrees of Freedom	F Distribution	Significance
Between AXIS and Young Marrieds	1	.56	.45
Within Groups	87	.56	.45

Bold and Humble Witness

The AXIS and the Young Marrieds groups rated themselves as average in the

bold and humble witness component. The mean score in both core communities was just over 12 out of 20, at 12.29 and 12.33 respectively.

Table 4.9. Bold and Humble Witness Comparison

Bold and Humble Witness	n	\bar{X}	SD
Composite	89	12.29*	3.24
Axis	45	12.33*	3.00
Young Marrieds	44	12.25*	3.51

*Out of 20

Table 4.10 shows no significant statistical difference between the Young Marrieds and the AXIS small group members participating in the study. The ANOVA score is greater than .02 indicating an absence of statistical difference between the two core communities in the missional factor of *bold and humble witness*.

Table 4.10. ANOVA Score for Bold and Humble Witness

Bold and Humble Witness	Degrees of Freedom	F Distribution	Significance
Between AXIS and Young Marrieds	1	.01	.90
Within Groups	87	.01	.90

Reproduction of Disciples

The missional factor of *reproduction of disciples* is the only missional factor that was less than half or below a mean score of 10 as a composite score in this study. The AXIS groups scored themselves slightly above the halfway mark with a mean score of 11.42 and the Young Marrieds were below the halfway mark with a mean score of 8.15.

Table 4.11. Reproduction of Disciples Comparison

Reproducing Disciples	n	\bar{X}	SD
Composite	89	9.80*	4.20
Axis	45	11.42*	3.29
Young Marrieds	44	8.15*	4.41

*Out of 20

The ANOVA score in Table 4.12 at .00 shows a significant statistical difference between the AXIS and Young Marrieds small groups in the missional factor of *reproduction of disciples*. The AXIS small groups rated themselves as significantly higher in the factor of *reproduction of disciples* as compared to the Young Marrieds small groups. This factor is also the lowest missional factor of both groups.

Table 4.12. ANOVA Score for Reproduction of Disciples

Reproducing Disciples	Degrees of Freedom	F Distribution	Significance
Between AXIS and Young Marrieds	1	15.65	.00
Within Groups	87	15.65	.00

Awareness of the Holy Spirit

The AXIS and the Young Marrieds small groups as shown in Table 4.13 rated themselves as being reasonably high in the missional factor of *awareness of the Holy Spirit*, with a composite value of 15.60. As noted in the Table, AXIS had a slightly higher mean score at 15.80 as compared to the Young Marrieds mean score of 15.40. For both groups, this component value was their second highest rating, scoring only below the missional factor of *biblical community*.

Table 4.13. Awareness of the Holy Spirit Comparison

Awareness of the Holy Spirit	n	\bar{X}	SD
Composite	89	15.60*	3.08
Axis	45	15.80*	2.70
Young Marrieds	44	15.40*	3.44

*Out of 20

The ANOVA value of .55 in Table 4.14 indicates no significant statistical difference between the AXIS and Young Marrieds in the missional factor of *awareness of the Holy Spirit*.

Table 4.14. ANOVA Score for Awareness of the Holy Spirit

Awareness of Holy Spirit	Degrees of Freedom	F Distribution	Significance
Between AXIS and Young Marrieds	1	.35	.55
Within Groups	87	.35	.55

Correlation of the Holy Spirit to Four Missional Factors

After the completion of the statistical descriptions and the mean score comparisons observed between the AXIS and Young Marrieds small groups in the five missional factors, further tests commenced to observe a possible correlation between small groups with the highest score in *awareness of the Holy Spirit* and the other four missional factors. In order to observe the correlation, I tabulated the mean score for *awareness of the Holy Spirit* among the fourteen groups participating in the study. Six of the groups, which included forty-three respondents, classify as high in *awareness of the Holy Spirit* with a mean score > 16 out of 20. These six groups formed the group labeled “1—High HS.” Group 1—High HS had a mean score in the missional factor *awareness of the Holy Spirit* of 17.53. The remaining eight groups all had a mean score in the factor *awareness of the Holy Spirit* < 16 and formed the second group labeled “2—Low HS.”

This group included forty-six respondents. Together, these eight groups had a mean score of 13.80 in the missional factor of *awareness of the Holy Spirit*. Table 4.15 illustrates these numbers.

Table 4.15. Distribution of Holy Spirit Awareness Values

Awareness of Holy Spirit	Mean	N (Number of Participants)	N (Number of Small Groups)	Standard Dev.
1.00—High HS	17.53*	43	6	2.06
2.00—Low HS	13.80*	46	8	2.77

*Out of 20

No correlation exists between the AXIS and Young Marrieds groups and the two groupings of high and low *awareness of the Holy Spirit*. Of the six High HS groups, three were AXIS small groups and three were Young Marrieds small groups. Correspondingly, of the Low HS groups, four were from each core community. The gray shaded area in Table 4.16 shows the six groups that were placed in the High HS group.

Table 4.16. Distribution of High AHS Groups in Core Communities

Core Community	Group ID #	Mean	N	Standard Deviation
Young Marrieds	5	19.50*	6	0.55
AXIS	3	18.40*	5	1.52
Young Marrieds	3	18.00*	6	1.67
Young Marrieds	1	17.17*	6	1.72
AXIS	7	17.00*	6	2.76
AXIS	1	16.57*	14	2.10
Young Marrieds	4	15.14*	7	2.85
AXIS	4	15.00*	6	2.76
AXIS	5	14.20*	5	3.19
AXIS	2	14.14*	7	2.04
Young Marrieds	7	13.63*	8	3.02
AXIS	6	12.50*	2	2.12
Young Marrieds	6	12.50*	4	1.29
Young Marrieds	2	12.14*	7	3.39
Totals		15.60*	89	3.08

* Out of 20

Table 4.17 does show a correlation between small groups with a higher *awareness of the Holy Spirit* and three of the other four missional factors. Group 1—High HS recorded a higher score in three of the other four missional factors. In other words, where small groups scored a higher *awareness of the Holy Spirit*, they also scored higher in *biblical community*, *bold and humble witness*, and in *reproduction of disciples*. The reverse is also true. Where groups scored lower in *awareness of the Holy Spirit* they also scored lower in the same three out of four missional factors where 1—High HS scored higher. I observe no correlation between a high *awareness of the Holy Spirit* and *incarnational service*.

Table 4.17. Correlation between AHS Factor and Other Four Factors

Awareness of Holy Spirit		N	Mean	Standard Deviation
BC	1—High HS	43	17.30*	2.26
	2—Low HS	46	15.26*	2.18
IS	1—High HS	43	13.46*	3.44
	2—Low HS	46	13.34*	2.91
BHW	1—High HS	43	13.69*	3.22
	2—Low HS	46	10.97*	2.69
MD	1—High HS	43	11.06*	4.41
	2—Low HS	46	9.63*	3.65

*Out of 20

The data also underwent a Pearson Correlation test. As displayed in Table 4.18 the Pearson Correlation showed the same results as the means comparison in which the groups with the highest mean scores in *awareness of the Holy Spirit* also had the highest mean scores in three of the other four missional factors. The Pearson Correlation test shows a strong statistical correlation between groups that had high scores in *awareness of the Holy Spirit* with a high score in *biblical community, bold and humble witness, and reproduction of disciples*. While the Pearson Correlation test shows some statistical correlation between *awareness of the Holy Spirit* and *incarnational service*, this data, as interpreted by my statistician, is insufficient and for all practical purposes, or conclusions, is untenable.

Table 4.18. Pearson Correlation

		BC	IS	BHW	MD	AHS
BC	Pearson Correlation	1	.364**	.466**	.249**	.603**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.019	.000
	N	89	89	89	89	89
IS	Pearson Correlation	.364*	1	.418**	.327**	.247*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.002	.019
	N	89	89	89	89	89
BHW	Pearson Correlation	.466*	.418**	1	.485**	.503**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	89	89	89	89	89
MD	Pearson Correlation	.249*	.327**	.485**	1	.397**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.019	.002	.000		.000
	N	89	89	89	89	89
AHS	Pearson Correlation	.603*	.247*	.503**	.397**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.019	.000	.000	
	N	89	89	89	89	89

**—Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*—Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Significant Findings

The following summary represents the major findings of the research conducted in the AXIS and Young Marrieds core communities using the MCOT.

1. The composite missional orientation of the AXIS and Young Marrieds core communities, as represented by the fourteen small groups, combined among the five missional factors has an alpha score of .72 ($\alpha = .72$).

2. The AXIS and Young Marrieds core communities, as represented by the seven small groups from each community, evidence similar responses in the following factors: *incarnational service, bold and humble witness, and awareness of the Holy Spirit.*

3. Statistical correlation between *incarnational service* and *awareness of the Holy Spirit* factors is present, but sufficiently weak to provide no practical or real life significance.

4. The only noteworthy difference between the AXIS and Young Marrieds groups is that the AXIS small groups scored higher values on the missional factor *reproduction of disciples*.

5. Both groups, and in particular the Young Marrieds group, registered their lowest score in the factor of *reproduction of disciples*. This missional factor for the Young Marrieds groups was the only mean score between both groups and in consideration of all five of the missional factors less than 10, or below the 50 percent value.

6. A statistical correlation exists between an *awareness of the Holy Spirit* and the following missional factors: *reproduction of disciples* and *bold and humble witness*.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This dissertation project came out of a passion for God's Church and how the Church is to relate and respond to God's mission on earth. Out of the study and research, I concluded that four factors are foundational for a healthy missional orientation and would, in fact, be active in a missional church. A fifth factor was laid over top of these four (an awareness of the Holy Spirit), and out of these factors I developed the Missional Church Orientation Tool. The MCOT was used to achieve the purpose of this project: to assess the missional orientation of the AXIS and Young Marrieds core communities at CSC. Regular attendees of small groups from within these core communities completed the questionnaire based on their small group experience and perspective. I have made the following observations based on this research.

Major Findings

The following observations and findings were the result of research conducted on the AXIS and Young Marrieds core communities using the MCOT.

Overall Missional Orientation

The composite missional orientation of the AXIS and Young Marrieds core communities was $\alpha = .72$, with a mean score of 67.36 out of 100. While the overall missional orientation is on the positive side, room for growth and improvement in their orientation to God's mission exists. In converting the mean score to a percentage, AXIS scored 68 percent and the Young Marrieds scored 66 percent in their composite missional orientation scores.

A natural implication for those providing leadership to these core communities might be to look at how missional orientation can be developed and strengthened to an even greater degree for these groups. One idea might be to look at the lowest missional factor and then to emphasize this factor through teaching and/or programming. As the lowest missional factor is strengthened, the composite value will increase. While this idea may be helpful, I would suggest a different approach that is consistent with what various authors are suggesting, as revealed in the research in Chapter 2.

The theological literature concludes that the current ineffectiveness of the church in North America is not a result of ineffective programming or methods. Mere programming changes may not result in increased missional orientation. Guder et al. begin their book with the premise that the crisis of the church in North America cannot be solved through new methods or programs because the issues are much more deeply rooted. They state that “the real issues in the current crisis of the Christian church are spiritual and theological” (3). Guder et al. conclude, “This is a time for a dramatically new vision. The current predicament of churches in North America requires more than a mere tinkering with long-assumed notions about the identity and mission of the Church” (77). The heart of the issue, in terms of lack of vitality in the church, is *spiritual* and *theological*. My suggestion to increase overall missional orientation in a group of believers is twofold. First, provide a focused and renewed teaching on life in the Spirit. As discussed further in one of the following findings of Chapter 5, there is a distinct correlation between an increased awareness of the Holy Spirit and the other missional factors. This correlation is a *spiritual* correlation. Where an increased sense of expectation and communion with the Holy Spirit of God is present among a community

of believers there is a higher sensitivity and response to God's work. A second focus would be to raise the conversation and provide clear teaching on the *theological* subjects: the kingdom of God and the Trinity. Biblical evidence supported by the literature strongly suggests that fuller appreciation and understanding of God's kingdom and the Trinity are necessary foundations for a missionally active and healthy community of believers. Stevens affirms this connection:

A trinitarian theology of ministry proposes that service is the expression of the relational love life of the triune God through the whole people of God, in the empowering presence of the Spirit. Trinitarian ministry expresses God's grace through the incarnational service of Jesus to create unity through diversity in the gathered life of the church, and build kingdom community on earth. (Stevens 144)

Jesus came announcing that the kingdom of God was at hand (Mark 1:15). This proclamation was the good news. The more fully the Church understands this good news and the interrelationship of the members of the Trinity as this good news relates to God's kingdom, the greater its missional orientation is likely to be. Therefore, my informed opinion is that in order to raise the overall missional orientation of a group of believers, the focus must not be on the factor or factors that score the lowest on the MCOT, but on approaching the issue of missional orientation holistically from a spiritual and theological basis as discussed above.

Similarity of AXIS and Young Marrieds

The AXIS core community and the Young Marrieds core community, as represented by the seven small groups from each community, are strikingly similar. The only noteworthy difference is that the AXIS small groups are doing a better job of making and reproducing disciples. Both the AXIS core community and the Young

Marrieds core community scored the highest in *awareness of the Holy Spirit* with a mean score of 15.80 (out of 20) and 15.40 (out of 20), respectively. Both communities were nearly identical in their scores on *bold and humble witness* and *incarnational service* as well.

I was surprised to see how the research results between the AXIS groups and the Young Marrieds groups mirrored one another. These findings caused me to wonder about the corporate personality and culture of a megachurch, which CSC is. My research suggests that even in a megachurch, with all of the varied ministries, sub-congregations (core communities), and small groups, the attendees develop similar strengths and weaknesses in their missional orientation. One would expect church culture, strengths, and weaknesses to be cohesive in a small church, where everyone knows one another. A cohesive culture is certainly evidenced in this study between two core communities where individuals do not necessarily know one another but all belong to the same church family. Over the years, the leadership of CSC has worked hard to bring a unified focus in terms of core values, mission, and vision to all ministry areas of the church. An annual *state of the church* address given in January by the senior pastor is one of the primary forms used to remind attendees of these core statements and to challenge practical living in accordance with them. This brief snapshot of continuity and similarity between the AXIS and Young Marrieds core communities suggests to me that the leaders of CSC are effective in delivering a focused vision, mission, and core values so that attendees are all influenced towards similar strengths.

Incarnational Service: A Lack of Correlation

I am puzzled by the lack of correlation between an *awareness of the Holy Spirit* and *incarnational deeds*, or acts of love, in this study (Tables 4.16 and 4.17). While there is some statistical correlation, it is significantly lower than the correlation between *awareness of the Holy Spirit* and the other three factors. *Incarnational service* is evidenced in and through the groups participating in this study, as both groups rated this missional factor as the third highest. However, no significant or practical statistical correlation between this missional factor and that of *awareness of the Holy Spirit* is present in the research. Perhaps the nature of *incarnational service* makes this missional factor the easiest to perform on one's own strength and without a sense of the Holy Spirit's leading and help. Perhaps authentic *biblical community* or *reproducing disciples* or sharing a verbal *witness* are more difficult to engage in without a more direct awareness and dependency on the Holy Spirit.

Another suggestion worthy of contemplation is that respondents relate the work of the Holy Spirit more to inner feelings of joy, peace, patience, and other fruit of the Spirit or to mystical experience and do not as readily connect the Holy Spirit to more practical expressions of the faith. Perhaps a group will serve in its culture with a general sense of incarnating the love of Jesus in practical ways but not necessarily connect this activity to the leading of the Holy Spirit. The parameters of this study did not allow me to investigate the reasons behind the lack of correlation between *awareness of the Holy Spirit* and *incarnational service* beyond these suggestions. These brief suggestions might provide impetus for further study.

Disciple-Making Challenge

In addition to the component of the Holy Spirit, the missional factor of *reproduction of disciples* may be a type of cornerstone for the remaining three factors. Jesus himself is the model in this regard. The gospels display how he called twelve disciples to become his apostles: “that they might be with him” (Mark 3:14). Authentic community came out of his discipleship strategy. Jesus proclaimed the gospel in both word and deed (*bold and humble witness* and *incarnational service*), and the apostles were by his side, learning and being sent out to do the same. The pattern of Jesus in the Gospels was to model an intentional strategy of equipping a few who would, in turn, equip others. While Jesus had a heart for the multitudes, his primary agenda (other than communion with and obedience to his Father) was to invest in the lives of these twelve men:

The entire leadership style of Jesus in His three years of active ministry was to find, select, and train His twelve successors. By the time of the crucifixion, Christianity was only a small band of followers. Jesus set the pattern for what we call discipleship when He charged them to go and fulfill what He had begun. (Finzel, 172)

The strategic plan of Jesus Christ was to call and equip these twelve men who would go and do likewise. Jesus was conveying the importance of this strategy when he said to the twelve: “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (John 21:10). “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations ... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19-20).

Both groups, and in particular the Young Marrieds group, registered their lowest score in the area of making or reproducing disciples. I suspect there are at least two ways to interpret these findings. One is to conclude that the process of making disciples is

extremely challenging in our culture and the AXIS and Young Marrieds groups felt the impact of these realities work against them in this missional factor. As a pastor for over twenty years, I have observed several challenges in our culture that make Jesus' model of discipling difficult.

Busyness. Discipleship occurs in the context of relationships, which take time. Jesus spent significant amounts of time with the twelve. Busyness conflicts with the making of disciples. Disciple making is not a program; it involves making time to invest in the lives of others.

Independence. The culture we live in values independence greatly. In effective disciple-making relationships, independence must give way to interdependence. Through interdependence, relationships are formed where truth and grace can be modeled and taught in the way of Jesus Christ.

Clergy/Laity model. As long as the North American church culture promotes a two-tiered level of Christianity (where the clergy are the specially called *ministers* who serve the laity), a culture of reproducing discipleship will be hindered. Without diminishing the role of leadership in the church, there must be a new understanding that all Christians are to be disciples and ministers of Jesus.

Results focused. Churches in North America value weekend attendance at their services and budgets that are moving upwards. Jesus did not seem to value these things. In several instances, he seemed to thin out the crowds intentionally. In a subtle manner, quantity of people can become more important than quality or depth of people. In other words, church leadership can become content with the large crowd, assuming discipleship is occurring through the weekend service.

Leadership over-emphasis. From my experience in the past ten years, the spiritual gift of leadership has been elevated above discipleship in the local church. Christian bookstores contain more books and churches promote more conferences on leadership than on discipling. I believe this emphasis is a natural outcome of seeing the pastoral role more like that of the CEO of a business. The danger in emphasizing leadership, which is just one of many spiritual gifts, above discipleship is that the church can have excellent leaders who are shallow or immature spiritually. Reproducing leaders is not the same as reproducing disciples.

The issue of making disciples is perhaps one of the greatest challenges in affluent, modern times. *Christianity Today* recently reported that Willow Creek Community Church, one of the most influential churches in North America, had admitted their error over the years in assuming that programs and activities were making disciples of their attendees. To their credit, they launched a qualitative study within their congregation and discovered that more involvement in their programs did not lead to more mature believers or to a reproduction culture (“Willow Creek”). In observing Jesus’ example, walking with and mentoring the twelve through life together, the process of discipleship is so very simple, yet reproducing disciples may be the greatest challenge the church faces today. This challenge is one explanation for the low values reported in *reproduction of disciples* in the AXIS and Young Marrieds groups.

A second way to interpret the low value of discipleship is to suggest that the MCOT defined the *reproduction of disciples* too narrowly, focusing primarily on the early stages of discipleship in the life of a new convert. The items on the MCOT did focus on the growth of *new believers*, yet discipleship is a lifelong process. The

demographics of the small groups, as revealed by the question in the front of the MCOT—"How long have you been a Christian?"—revealed that the groups had not incorporated many new believers into their groups. In the AXIS community, 86 percent of group members have been Christians for over five years, while in the Young Married groups, 95 percent of the members have been Christians over five years. In the AXIS groups, only 5 percent of the participants had become Christians within the past six to twelve months, while in the Young Married groups, no new believers were reported within the past twelve months. No new believers were integrated into the small groups within the past six months and very few within the past five years. Since the *reproduction of disciples* items focused on new believers, the logical or natural result would be lower scores in this factor. There is the real possibility that discipleship is relatively healthy in the AXIS and Young Marrieds groups among more mature believers as they help one another become more like Christ.

Another example of defining *reproduction of disciples* too narrowly might be seen specifically in the Young Marrieds groups. Young families are generally busier with their children and issues around the home and have less discretionary time than most unmarried or older families. Little children demand much time, energy, and focus. While these young married couples may have less time to give to intentional discipleship of peers, perhaps they did not consider the ministry and time they were giving to their children as being the ministry of discipleship. Since discipleship is not a program, but occurs in the context of intentional relationships, the raising of one's children is a primary means and fulfillment of discipling. I surmise that this element of discipling may not have been recognized as such by the participants due to the nature of the

questions. It may be necessary and good to add items to the MCOT that would broaden the definition and understanding of discipleship.

I suspect that both of these issues are causes of the low score in the *reproduction of disciples* factor. The making and reproducing of disciples is challenging in our society, and the items on the MCOT defined this factor too narrowly. While discipleship is a lifelong process and occurs within all levels of the Christian walk, I still maintain that a truly missional culture will exhibit new believers walking alongside the more mature believers, learning to obey all that Jesus commanded.

Correlation between Awareness of the Holy Spirit and Missional Orientation

I began with the speculation of a correlation between the degree of awareness a group of Christians have of the Holy Spirit in their midst and their orientation to and involvement in God's mission. The theological and biblical evidence behind this speculation was discussed at the conclusion of Chapter 2. The biblical record, including both the Old Testament and the New Testament reveal that the Holy Spirit is integral to God's work through his people. Jesus did not begin his public ministry until the Holy Spirit filled him at his baptism. He instructed the disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they were filled with the Holy Spirit before they joined in God's mission. A church can be busy doing many activities, but if these activities are not done out of a sense of leading and dependency upon the Holy Spirit, they may simply be human busyness, void of God's power and unengaged in His mission.

There is no surprise, then, that a correlation between an awareness of the Holy Spirit and the other missional factors or activities within the small groups was present. In other words, where groups are more aware of the presence and reality of the Holy Spirit,

a greater likelihood of disciple-making and the sharing of the gospel with boldness and in humility is greater when compared to groups that have a lower awareness of the Holy Spirit. Conversely, where groups have a lower awareness of the Holy Spirit, they have a lower score in the other missional factors.

As mentioned earlier in this paper, one of the key understandings of a missional church is that they do not create their own mission; rather, they join God in his mission. As Jesus came to earth in pursuit of God's mission, so now the Holy Spirit through God's people (the Church) joins in the mission of the Father. The Church cannot join God in his mission without the presence of God's Spirit in and among the people. Fee argues that the Church must see the coming of the Holy Spirit as important and critical to our faith as the coming of the Son to earth. As the coming of Jesus changed everything, so too did the coming of the Holy Spirit. "In dealing with the Spirit, we are dealing with none other than the *personal* [original emphasis] presence of God" (25). God is on a mission. His kingdom is here in part and coming in fullness. Through the Holy Spirit, the Church is led and empowered to join him.

Limitations of the Study

An important limitation of this study is the low reliability of the missional factor *biblical community*, which was $< .70$. As a result, I was unable to discover reliable significant findings around this missional factor. While both core communities appear to enjoy a high level of biblical community within their small groups based on the surveys, the results cannot be considered reliable. However, having spent the past twenty years immersed in the life of CSC, I can affirm that the value of biblical community is emphasized both within the core communities and within the larger community. In

preparation for the building of the new worship, education, and office complex (in 2002), architects met with staff and ministry leaders to learn about the values of CSC for the purposes of designing and constructing a facility that would reflect those values. One of the strongest values they discovered through the interview process was that of biblical community. Although the responses cannot be considered reliable, the fact that *biblical community* rates as the strongest missional factor within these two core communities is significant to me.

A second limitation was my inability to garner the participation of all of the small groups in either core community; therefore, the reporting of the results must be qualified with the fact that the missional orientation for the AXIS and the Young Marrieds core communities are represented by seven small groups for each ministries.

In retrospect, a third limitation of this study was the way I defined *disciplemaking*. While new believers are certainly an integral part of any discipleship making process, discipleship is a continuous journey for all believers. The items related to *disciplemaking* in the MCOT did not take into consideration the lifelong nature of a Christian's growth and focused almost exclusively on the development of new converts. If a small group had not incorporated a new Christian into their group recently, by nature of the questions they would score lower in the *reproduction of disciples* factor, when in fact, they may have been engaged in disciple making at a different level, with more mature believers in their group. The MCOT would be more effective if items would encompass a broader definition of *disciple making*.

The purpose of this project was to measure the missional orientation of the AXIS and Young Marrieds core communities. Missional orientation is a complex issue. One

instrument given on one occasion will not provide a complete picture of the level of missional orientation within a small group or community. Such a tool can provide a vantage point from which group members can begin to dialogue, study, and seek to make adjustments prayerfully.

A fourth limitation is the issue of attempting to isolate the five components of missional orientation. While *biblical community*, *incarnational service*, *bold and humble witness*, *reproduction of disciples*, and *awareness of the Holy Spirit* can be discussed in isolation from one another, in reality these five components cannot be dissected or truly understood on their own. Biblical community is necessary for effective discipleship. Incarnational service and verbal witness are interrelated; one without the other leaves the gospel message incomplete. Witness without the power of the Holy Spirit is powerless. The Holy Spirit must be welcomed and present for community to be *biblical* community. The challenge of trying to create separate questions in order to isolate each component showed itself in the process of the factor analysis. In several instances, items designed for one component factor loaded in another. A prime example of this misloading is item number fifteen, as illustrated in Appendix 2. This item reads “Prayer is vital to our group,” and it was designed to fit under the *awareness of the Holy Spirit* component. However, this item factor loaded under *biblical community* as noted in Table 3.5. The five components can be studied separately, but they must always be seen holistically and as completely interdependent on one another. The research method and the development of the MCOT attempted to measure each component separately and then, using the parts, to indicate an overall measurement of the whole of missional orientation. This method does present some challenges and limitations.

Implications and Contributions

Hopefully, this study has contributed to the growing field of knowledge on the missional church. I am confident that the five missional factors discussed in this work are the foundational elements for any church that desires to be a healthy and dynamic expression of God's kingdom here on earth. These five factors could be a useful reference point in the formulation of a mission statement or core values. The Missional Church Orientation Tool comprises a valid and reliable instrument for the church in providing a self-assessment of its missional orientation. The MCOT could also be used as a guide to initiate or add to the ongoing conversation around what makes a church missional. Further, a sermon series could be built around the MCOT to complete the overall focus for the church.

Through this work, I have come to conclude that a thoughtful theological understanding of the Trinity and the kingdom of God is critical for the church. I have sought to clarify and reinforce the important connection between theology and mission in this project. The temptation for many church leaders is to place pragmatism and programs before theological reflection. I trust that this work will affirm the importance of thinking carefully and biblically about the church in order to act and lead accordingly within the church.

One of my desires for this project is for the small group leaders and participants: that their involvement will contribute to their own understanding and living out of God's mission. I was gratified to receive positive feedback from several groups indicating that the process of doing the survey sparked productive discussion. My hope and prayer is that any small group or church that uses the MCOT will be challenged and moved to

become a more missional expression of God's church. If small churches (of under two hundred regular attendees) desire to use this tool, I suggest that participants change the word "small group" to "church" (in each question), as much of the church life is lived out in one corporate body in this context.

Suggestions for Further Study

The Missional Church Orientation Tool is a reliable and valid instrument. I believe the five factors are solid and can provide a firm foundation upon which the tool could be improved. My suggestion is to design and add further questions to the tool in order to strengthen the depth to which it measures missional orientation.

The MCOT does not ask for the gender of the participant. If this information was included, another suggestion for further study would be to research and analyze the five factors based on gender. Does one gender rate higher among any of the five factors? What might this information reveal about the necessity of men and women working together within the body of Christ?

Postscript

I am amazed how this project has influenced my life. Had I suspected the tumultuous changes that this project would help spark, I might not have had the courage to begin. My involvement in this study was one of several significant factors that led to my resignation from Centre Street Church, where I had been on staff for nearly twenty years. Without a doubt, my decision to resign was the most difficult decision I have ever made. As I took a long, hard look at the Church and God's mission for his Church, this dissertation became one more point tugging me from within to leave my paid clergy role in the church and to engage more fully in my culture by finding employment in the

marketplace. The process of immersing myself in God's word and in the literature dared me to practice what I was writing in a bold and new way. I was challenged to leave my place of comfort and security as a full-time employee of the church and to become a missionary in the marketplace. In the beginning, these radical thoughts were easy enough to ignore. The thoughts became more persistent. In time, I knew that the Holy Spirit was asking me, much like Abraham, to leave my place of security and to step out in faith. As I write this postscript, the most difficult decision of my life is now behind me. Ten months ago I stood before the beloved congregation at CSC announcing my resignation. The journey since then has been both wonderful and terrible. I have often used the cliché to describe these past ten months as being the *best of times* and the *worst of times*. Like Peter, I felt as if I was stepping out of the security of my boat into the raging sea beneath me. I have been forced and have had the privilege to trust God in entirely new ways. I have lived the past number of months having no idea what I was to do in terms of career and supplying for my family. However difficult these months have been, I can already say that the journey has been good in the way it has drawn me to God and out into my culture. My spirit has come alive as I am on mission with God out in the marketplace. The Lord has given me numerous opportunities to join Him in his mission in very direct ways. The short incident I now share highlights this reality.

My first job after my resignation was to be a laborer on a construction site. I was at the bottom of the ladder in terms of authority, experience, and skill. I was just a common laborer, picking up garbage, providing materials, and getting tools for my coworkers. The men with whom I worked welcomed me, even though I was very open with them that I had been a pastor. They were hardworking and lonely men. They were

crude in their language and personal morals. God gave me a love for these men, and I began not only to pray for them but also to look for opportunities to serve and share God's love with them. After four months of working together, I could sense that God was giving me favor in my relationships with these men. Christmas was approaching and the Holy Spirit prompted me to purchase a Bible for each of the men as a gift. A bit nervous, I agreed in my heart to obey. The day arrived on which I had decided to give the Bibles to the men. At the end of the day as we gathered in the trailer, I asked for their attention. The following day would be my last on this job. I thanked them for the warm welcome they had given me during the past four months, and proceeded to communicate that I believed the reason I had joined them on this job was for them to see, and hear from me that God loves them. I went on to share briefly about my love for Jesus and how we all need his forgiveness. The room went deathly silent. I could sense that the men were listening intently, and the presence of the Holy Spirit was very real. As I gave them their gift of a Bible, I expressed that I hoped they would read it and then something unexpected happened. One by one, these tough, crude construction men stood up to hug me and express their appreciation. These moments were precious to me. I knew I was joining God on his mission in the lives of these men. I also knew that this opportunity was only possible through the Holy Spirit because I had come to live and work among the men incarnationally. This opportunity to announce God's kingdom and to share the love of Christ would not have been possible for me as a paid clergy. I had to come and be among them, following the model of Jesus, who left heaven to come and live among mankind. As I drove away from the site that afternoon, I wept with joy. I experienced firsthand being on mission with God in the marketplace. It will be out in the marketplace,

in schools and theatres, in parks and hockey arena's where God's mission must be engaged by his followers. These are the places, where people live their daily lives, that God's people must be unleashed to live and minister and love.

These experiences leave me with perhaps more questions than answers regarding my role in the church, the role of clergy in the church, and the way church is envisioned in North America. I find myself wondering if the church in North America has put too much focus on buildings and programs and budgets. I question whether the church building with all of its programs actually hindered God's people from reaching their full missional potential.

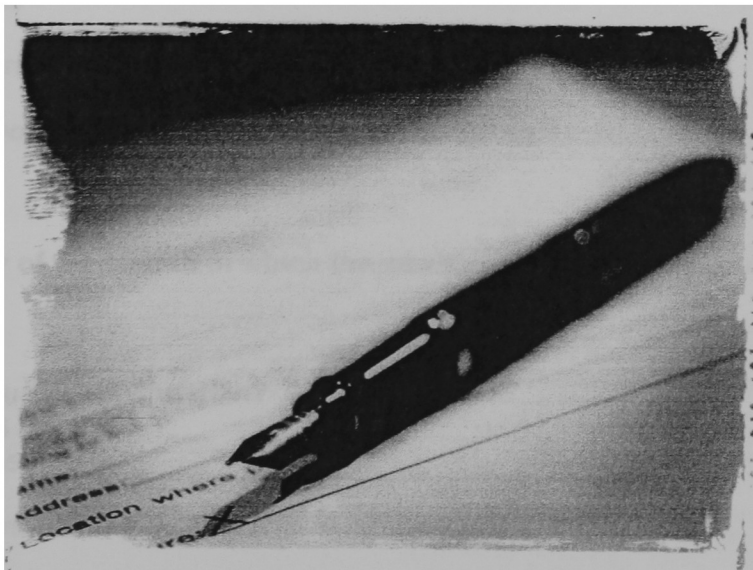
I have committed myself to two years in the marketplace. As of now, I do not know if I will return to paid pastoral ministry. In many ways I am as much a pastor now as when I was on staff. Without question, I am now more directly engaged in God's mission in my culture. God may or may not lead me back into full-time pastoral ministry. If he does, I am convinced that I will be more effective, both as a pastor and as a missional leader. If God keeps me in the marketplace, my prayer is that I will continue to learn and become more effective as a disciple of Jesus who is on mission with God through the power of the Holy Spirit.

As I close this project, I am indebted to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The final product may or may not be widely used by the church, but the process has forever changed me. God is so good.

APPENDIX A

MISSIONAL CHURCH ORIENTATION TOOL

Tim Volkman



MISSIONAL CHURCH ORIENTATION TOOL

This questionnaire is designed to help small groups, ministries or churches determine their level of missional orientation (to what degree their group, ministry or church is oriented toward and involved in God's mission in the world) based on both personal observation and experience and on observable attitudes and behaviours within your group.

Five factors are used in this instrument to measure missional orientation. Answer the 20 questions by writing the number (1 – 5) under the appropriate column and then use the guide at the end of the questionnaire to receive a score for each factor. Your score will measure your experience and observations within your group for each factor.

As you respond to each question, please be consistent to the same subject throughout. In other words, do not answer some questions with your small group in mind, others with your entire church in mind, etc. Rate your answer for each question based upon your own experience and perspective.

It is hoped that others from your small group, ministry group or church will also complete this questionnaire and that you will then discuss your findings together and prayerfully determine what the Lord might be saying to you.

As I complete this questionnaire the subject I will be evaluating is:

- ☐ My Small Group
- ☐ My Ministry Group
- ☐ My Church
- ☐ Other: _____

How long have you been involved in this group?

- ☐ Less than 6 months
- ☐ 6-12 months
- ☐ 1-3 years
- ☐ Over 3 years _____

Do you consider yourself a regular attendee of this group?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Are you a member of the church in which the small group or ministry group functions?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

How long have you been a Christian?

- ☐ Less than 6 months
- ☐ 6-12 months
- ☐ 1-3 years
- ☐ Over 5 years
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ Not a Christian

Statement	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Somewhat	3 Neutral	4 Somewhat Agree	5 Strongly Agree
1. I personally feel free to share my struggles or challenges in our group.					
2. In our group, we are challenged to use our financial resources to help those who are less fortunate.					
3. I have personally been encouraged to reach out more intentionally to my non-Christian friends through the influence of this group.					
4. We have integrated a new Christian into our group with the past 12 months.					
5. Our group meetings are rich with the presence of the Holy Spirit.					
6. Prayer is vital to our group.					
7. Through the influence of this group, I have personally given time to serve those who are less fortunate.					
8. Through the influence of my group, I now see my workplace as an opportunity for ministry where I am a 'missionary'					

9. Together as a group, we have helped a new believer grow towards maturity in their faith in Christ.					
10. The Holy Spirit is a living reality in our group and not just a theological concept.					
11. I would feel comfortable calling members of my group anytime, day or night if I were experiencing a crisis.					
12. As a group, our concern for the poor and disenfranchised in society has led us to respond through practical acts of service. (either individually or as a group.)					
13. The influence of my group has led me to intentionally come alongside a new believer to disciple them.					

Statement	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Somewhat Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Somewhat Agree	5 Strongly Agree
14. In our group, we have seen new believers step forward and become involved in ministry. (Either in or outside of the group.)					
15. The Holy Spirit has led our group in very specific ways over the past year.					
16. My group encourages me to pray regularly for people in my life who are not Christians.					
17. Through the influence of this group, I have personally given money to a compassion ministry or organization.					
18. My group has challenged me to make disciples.					
19. Our group discusses the importance of new leaders coming out of our group to begin new groups.					
20. My group has helped me to be more aware of the presence and reality of the Holy Spirit in my everyday life.					

Tabulating Your Results

Individual Score for Each Factor:

	Question Number:				TOTAL
Total Score for Biblical Community	1	6	11	16	
Total Score for Incarnational Service	2	7	12	17	
Total Score for Bold & Humble Witness	3	8	13	18	
Total Score for Multiplying Disciples	4	9	14	19	
Total Score for Awareness of Holy Spirit	5	10	15	20	
Combined Score of all Factors (add totals from all 5 categories):					

Interpreting Your Results

Individual Factors:

- 4 - 6 score: This factor is virtually non-existent in your group. Cause for prayer and discussion.
- 7 – 9 score: Not a strong indicator. Is this factor a new and growing value or a value that is declining in your group?
- 10 – 14 score: Average. You will need to be intentional and prayerful to continue to grow in this factor.
- 15 – 17 score: This factor is relatively strong in your group. Why? How can you continue to grow and strengthen this value?
- 18 – 20 score: Very high factor rating. What has caused this value to be so high? Do all group members give this factor a high rating?

Is the Holy Spirit factor high? Is there a correlation between the Holy Spirit factor and the others?

Combined Factors:

- 20 - 44 score: You do not see your group as oriented to God's mission. Is the purpose of your group clear? What is your group oriented towards?
- 45 – 75 score: You have determined that your group is average. You are seeing some good signs in your group of being oriented to God's mission in the world. Prayerfully seek the Lord. Look at the factors that you scored lower. What might God be showing you? How do you need to respond?
- 76 – 100 score: You believe that your group is oriented strongly to God's mission in the world. The purpose and focus of the group are in line with scripture and God's desires. Continue to seek God. Listen for his leading and follow.

Applying Your Results

This tool is based on 4 primary factors to test the missional orientation of your group, ministry or church. These 4 factors are **Biblical Community**, **Incarnational Service**, **Bold & Humble Witness**, and **Multiplying Disciples**. A fifth factor is **Awareness & Receptivity to the Holy Spirit**.

These factors will be a part of the DNA or makeup of a group of Christians who are missional (on mission with God in this world). When these factors are strong and vibrant you will find a group or ministry that is strongly oriented to God's mission.

The purpose of this tool is for a group to evaluate themselves based on these 5 factors, observing and scoring their own, and/or the group's values, attitudes and actions. A group discussion would be encouraged after group members have taken the survey to determine perceived strengths, weaknesses and to ask what actions could be taken to grow in missional orientation

Below is a brief description of each factor:

Biblical Community:

Biblical community is another word for *fellowship* or *koinonia*. Biblical community is a group of Christians who share common unity under the headship and leadership of Christ, and who know, love and serve one another in an ever-flowing stream of interdependence. This community is marked by joy and a desire to invite and include others into their Christian family.

Incarnational Service:

Incarnational service flows from a heart of love. This love, from God, compels a church to enter into the life of the community (neighbourhood or city) in order to support, meet the needs of and bless the community in practical ways. Incarnational service is patterned after the life of Christ, who being in very nature God, humbled himself, and came to earth as a man, to live among people in order to serve them and die for their sins.

Bold & Humble Witness:

Bold and humble witness describes a courageous church or Christian, who speaks the truth of the gospel message with sureness, and courage. Yet, at the same time, there is humility; an attitude that admits to not having answers to all of life's questions (including theological questions). A bold and humble witness is secure in Christ's love, and is not threatened by the mysteries and unanswered questions of life. Most importantly, a bold and humble witness realizes that only the Holy Spirit can change a heart. As a witness, they are only the messenger of love.

Reproducing Disciples:

Jesus' great commission to the Church was to go and make disciples. Making a disciple is helping a Christian become more like Jesus Christ in thought, word and deed. A disciple of Christ displays the fruit of the Spirit as they come under the control of the Holy Spirit and become immersed and involved in the life of the church. Reproducing discipleship occurs when a church sees every Christian, young or old, as a disciple of Jesus Christ, and has an intentional plan to help them realize their potential in Christ. Every new Christian is taught that, just as Jesus called them, he now sends them to go and make more disciples, who will in turn make more disciples. When every Christian catches hold of this vision, there is exponential growth in God's kingdom.

Awareness of the Holy Spirit:

The Holy Spirit was sent into the world after the ascension of Christ to continue the mission that Jesus had come to participate in. Through the body of Christ the Holy Spirit is at work accomplishing God's mission and agenda. The New Testament commands the church to be filled with the Spirit (keep on being filled), to keep in step with the Spirit, to pray in the Spirit, to be guided by the Spirit, to not quench the Holy Spirit and to follow the Spirit. The Church is powerless without the Holy Spirit. There can be no eternal change or fruit apart from the activity and power of the Holy Spirit working through his people. A people's awareness and affirmation of the Holy Spirit in their presence is a hopeful indicator that they are responsive to the work and leading of the Holy Spirit.

APPENDIX B

Original Items on MCOT

Biblical Community	
1.	There is freedom in our group to lovingly ask individual members about their spiritual condition.
6.	I personally feel free to share my struggles or challenges in our group.
11.	Our group enjoys spending time together beyond our weekly meetings.
16.	I see my group as my spiritual family.
21.	This group is a very important part of my spiritual life.
26.	In our group, members will often share their struggles.
31.	I rarely miss attending when my group is meeting.
36.	Our group recognizes that Christ is present and the ultimate leader of our group.
41.	Our group members regularly help meet the needs of one another.
46.	I would feel comfortable calling members of my group anytime, day or night, if I were experiencing a crisis.
Incarnational Service	
2.	Our group often prays for social issues that make the daily news.
7.	Our group regularly participates in ministry or service projects in our community.
12.	In our group, we are challenged to use our financial resources to help those who are less fortunate.
17.	Through the influence of this group, I have personally given time to serve those who are less fortunate.
22.	As a group, our concern for the poor and disenfranchised in society has led us to respond through practical acts of service. (either individually or together as a group).
27.	Our group is having a positive influence in our neighbourhood/city.
32.	Through the influence of my group I have personally given money to a compassion ministry or organization.
37.	In the past year our group did a hands-on outreach event that blessed our neighbourhood or city.
42.	My group has helped me to see my responsibility as a Christian to care for those who cannot care for themselves.
47.	Our group is strong at ministering to the needs of those outside our group.
Bold & Humble Witness	
3.	This group has encouraged me to see myself as a "missionary" right here in my culture.
8.	Our group regularly prays for one another's non-Christian friends.
13.	I have personally been encouraged to reach out more intentionally to my non-Christian friends through the influence of my group.
18.	Group members regularly invite non-Christians into our group.
23.	Group members routinely tell stories about how they are sharing their faith with non-Christians.
28.	Our group has helped me to be more mindful of spiritually lost people around me.
33.	We have experienced the privilege of helping someone come to faith in Christ through the joint effort and testimony of our group.

38. Through the influence of my group, I now see my workplace as an opportunity for ministry where I am a 'missionary.'
43. We would gladly welcome non-Christians to join our group.
48. My group encourages me to pray regularly for people in my life who are not Christians.
Reproducing Disciples
4. We have integrated a new Christian into our group with the past 12 months.
9. My group has helped me to live as a fully devoted follower of Christ.
14. In our group, we have seen new believers step forward and become involved in ministry (Either inside or outside of the group).
19. Our group discusses the importance of new leaders coming out of our group to begin new groups.
24. I have stepped out in ministry or service because of the influence and encouragement of my group.
29. The influence of my group has led me to intentionally come alongside a new believer to disciple them.
34. In the past year our group has reproduced itself by sending out a new leader.
39. My group has challenged me to make disciples.
44. Together as a group, we have helped a new believer grow towards maturity in their faith in Christ.
49. My small group has been influential in helping me become a more fully devoted disciple of Jesus Christ.
Holy Spirit
5. The culture within our group allows for the spontaneous leading of the Holy Spirit at our weekly meetings.
10. I regularly sense the presence of the Holy Spirit when we meet as a group.
15. Prayer is vital to our group.
20. Our group regularly invites the Holy Spirit to fill us anew for holy living and/or ministry.
25. My group has helped me to be more aware of the presence and reality of the Holy Spirit in my everyday life.
30. There is a sense of expectation surrounding our group, about what the Holy Spirit is doing in and through us.
35. The Holy Spirit has led our group in very specific ways over the past year.
40. The Holy Spirit is a living reality in our group and not just a theological concept.
45. Group members talk about how the Holy Spirit leads and directs them in everyday life.
50. Our group meetings are rich with the presence of the Holy Spirit.

APPENDIX C

Feedback Form

Name _____

Please note comments or questions regarding any specific questions below. Thank you.

Question #

Comment

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