The Copyright law of the United States (title 17, United States code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specific conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.

By using this material, you are consenting to abide by this copyright policy. Any duplication, reproduction, or modification of this material without express written consent from Asbury Theological Seminary and/or the original publisher is prohibited.

© Asbury Theological Seminary 2011
ABSTRACT

A MODEL FOR PREACHING IN THE MISSIONAL CHURCH: COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF PREACHING FOUND IN EFFECTIVE MISSIONAL CHURCHES WITHIN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST DISTRICT OF THE CHRISTIAN AND MISSIONARY ALLIANCE

by

Paul William Smith

I am a pastor who is drawn to the ministry of preaching, and I have done a great deal of reading and studying to that end. But when I sought to find characteristics in preaching that embodied the theological values of the missional church, I found a glaring shortcoming. Because the missional church is so theological, there is often a dearth of knowledge regarding practical ramifications of its theological foundations. This lacking with regard to the preaching in the missional church is a clear shortcoming for the missional church, and the problem that this study addresses.

This study sought to discover common characteristics of preaching which are found in identified missionally effective churches. Furthermore, it sought to discover if these preaching characteristics were congruent with the values of the missional church. By studying and identifying common preaching characteristics that exist in identified missionally effective churches, this study sought to develop a model for preaching in the missional church. This model would be developed not only from the stated theological values of the missional church, but from common preaching characteristics which exist among pastors who are currently preaching in identified missionally effective churches.
This study was limited to the 107 churches within the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, the district in which I currently pastor. A panel of experts who have thorough knowledge of the churches within the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance was assembled. Through a survey the panel of experts identified churches that live out the values of the missional church. The identification of these churches led to a studying of the preaching that is happening within these churches, thus, leading to the identification of common preaching characteristics.

Each sermon was examined using a sermon evaluation tool that was designed by Boda, but was modified so the common preaching characteristics could be identified within the light of the stated values of the missional church. After common preaching characteristics were identified, they were examined against the stated values of the missional church for the purpose of identifying their congruence or incongruence with the stated values.

The author concludes the following: (1) A varying congruence exists between the stated values of the missional church and the preaching characteristics within identified missional churches within the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, and (2) denominational and theological influence was the key factor in determining congruence and incongruence. The pastors of the identified churches had preaching characteristics that were similar to the theological values of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, the denomination of which they were all a part. The research discovered that when congruence or incongruence existed theologically between the Christian and Missionary Alliance and the missional church, congruence or incongruence
also existed between the preaching characteristics and the stated values of the missional church.

These findings lead to a model that is made up of the following three aspects: (1) self-disclosure by preachers that illustrates discipleship to Jesus, (2) corporate application of a biblical text that values denominational heritage, and (3) equipping disciples of Jesus for participation in the everyday mission of Jesus.
This is to certify that the dissertation entitled

A MODEL FOR PREACHING IN THE MISSIONAL CHURCH: COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF PREACHING FOUND IN EFFECTIVE MISSIONAL CHURCHES WITHIN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST DISTRICT OF THE CHRISTIAN AND MISSIONARY ALLIANCE

presented by

Paul William Smith

has been accepted towards fulfillment of the requirements for the DOCTOR OF MINISTRY degree at Asbury Theological Seminary

Mentor

Date

March 18, 2010

Internal Reader

March 18, 2010

March 18, 2010

March 18, 2010

March 18, 2010
A MODEL FOR PREACHING IN THE MISSIONAL CHURCH:
COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF PREACHING FOUND IN EFFECTIVE
MISSIONAL CHURCHES WITHIN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST DISTRICT OF
THE CHRISTIAN AND MISSIONARY ALLIANCE

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of

Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Ministry

by

Paul William Smith

May 2010
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1 PROBLEM</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question #1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question #2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question #3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preaching</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missional Church</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumentation</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delimitations and Generalizability</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biblical Foundation</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview of Project</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of Participants

Research Question #1

Self-Disclosure

The Corporate Application of a Biblical Text

Achieving Clarification through Original Languages

Embracing a Degree of Pain for the Disciple of Jesus Christ is Essential

Knowledge of Secular Culture but a Life Contrary to that Culture

Summary of Research Question #1

Research Question #2

High Congruence—Disciples of Jesus as a Contrast to Society

High Congruence—High Christology

Medium Congruence—The West as a Mission Field

Medium Congruence—The Church as a Sent Community

Medium Congruence—Incarnational Ministry to the Marginalized

Low Congruence—Missional Churches Preaching the Gospel

Research Question #3

Summary of Major Findings

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

Major Findings

Self-Deprecating Self-Disclosure for the Purpose of Establishing Relational Affinity

Corporate Application of a Biblical Text That Grounds Church Mission
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Embracing Pain as a Disciple of Jesus</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture Placed in a Negative Light</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varying Congruence</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications of the Findings</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Disclosure That Illustrates Discipleship to Jesus</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Application of a Biblical Text That Values Denominational</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipping Disciples of Jesus for Participating in the Everyday Mission</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of the Study</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unexpected Observations</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postscript</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**APPENDIXES**

A. Project Participants ............................................................................. 139
B. Sermon Evaluation Tool ....................................................................... 140
C. Panel of Experts Follow-up Letter ..................................................... 142
D. Effective Missional Church Questionnaire ........................................... 143
E. Letter of Follow-Up to Participating Pastors ..................................... 151
F. Documented Preaching Characteristics of Participants ......................... 152

**WORKS CITED** .......................................................................................... 160
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.1.</td>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.2.</td>
<td>Self-Disclosure</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.3.</td>
<td>Corporate Application</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.4.</td>
<td>Original Languages</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.5.</td>
<td>Pain Embraced</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.6.</td>
<td>Knowledge of Culture</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.7.</td>
<td>Preaching Congruence</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For many years I lived with the dream to complete doctoral work that focused on the intersection of preaching and church leadership. I never knew that I would need the help and love of so many individuals for that dream to become a reality.

I would like to thank the panel of experts and the participants in this project. Your ongoing interest in the project brought a personal touch to my research that allowed me to endure long stretches of writing.

I would like to thank my editor, Judy Seitz, and my dissertation committee, Dr. Jim Hampton, Dr. Milton Lowe, and, most of all, my mentor, Dr. Stacy Minger. Your belief in me and interest in this project was astounding. You pushed me beyond my self-imposed limitations and would not let me give in to the voices of discouragement. Thanks, Stacy, for your investment!

I would like to thank all of my classmates who made up the 2007 Beeson Pastor class at Asbury Theological Seminary. Through our friendships I experience love and friendship like I have never experienced before. Thanks, guys, for making that year one of the best years of my life.

I would like to thank the people and the staff of Warner Avenue Alliance Church. Many pastors have told me I pastor a very special church; they are seeing what I have known for the last eleven years. The people of Warner Alliance are some of the best people in the Church. Thank you for who you are; it truly is a blessing to be your pastor. And thank you to the staff. Many days you had to carry extra duties around the office and in everyday church life while I hid myself away writing. Thanks Dan, Bill, Jonathan, Viv, and Geri! I couldn’t have done this work without you!
I would like to thank my mother and father-in-law, Randy and Marilyn Nutter, my mom and dad, Don and Paula Smith, and my brother, Cy. Your encouragement and prayers while I did my theological studies was priceless. Because of your love for me and your dedication to Christian education, I was able to go from almost not graduating from high school to the completion of this doctoral project. Thanks so much!

To my daughter, Elliott, and my son, Quinn, I love you so much. I will never forget the way you would welcome me home after a long day in my study carrel. I pray you grow to love Jesus with all your heart and that you love his Church.

To my wife Heather, no one but God himself knows the hundred of hours you had to watch the kids by yourself as I spent time writing. You proofread more papers than we can count, you dialoged with me over theological concepts that often left us with more questions than answers, and you enabled our family to move to Kentucky for a year so my Beeson dream could become a reality. I truly believe that not one of the last eight years of my educational life could have happened without you, and I cannot thank you enough. You’re my best friend, and I love you with all my heart. Thanks babe!

Lastly, to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I continue to be amazed at your grace. Only by your sustaining grace every day could a project such as this one have ever been completed, and I pray it is useful to your kingdom in my life and in the lives of others.

To God be the Glory, Solo Dios!
CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM

A phone call in late July 2007 changed my life. The local hard-nosed, ill-reputed land baron called to inform me that he wanted to sell our church a twelve acre parcel of prime land in our city. The miracle of this situation is that he wanted to offer it to us at nearly one million dollars under the going rate for land. His offer quickly set in motion a series of meetings, bank forms, and phone calls. Within 2½ months, the church I pastor, which had been traditionally land locked on two acres for fifty years, was now the owner of the best available twelve acres in our city.

Coupled with this purchase of land came the knowledge that God wanted our church to be a community of people that reached our city for Christ. No longer could reaching our community and city for Christ be a mere slogan that we purported as a church; it needed to be a lived-out core value of our body. Furthermore, it needed to be lived out passionately and with great conviction, for God had brought us this land, and he desires us to fulfill his purposes with it.

Around this same purchase and realization time frame, our Beeson class took a theology of ministry course from Dr. Steve Seamands. In the course Dr. Seamands had us read the book *The Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*. This work describes the role of the church not as having to reach people for Christ but instead as God’s agents of redemptive mission in the world as the church responds to God’s prompting, which sends the church out into the culture in which it is located in the same Spirit and grace as Jesus (Guder 3). The more I read regarding the missional church, the more I discovered that the missional church movement grew out of the realization by eclectic ecumenical leaders that the North American church is currently
experiencing a clear loss of influence in North American culture. The early writings show that the realization was brought about through the works of J. E. Lesslie Newbigin, a foundational theologian of the missional church movement. At the same time, even nonreligious organizations, such as ABC News, have noticed this trend: In the past, certain religions had a real holding power, where people from one generation to the next would stay. Right now, people’s confidence in organized religion is dropping, especially in the traditional religious forms (Gorski). Admittedly the preceding paragraph is an oversimplified historical account, but it gives background to the movement on the religious front.

In the recent past, with the church and its leaders desiring a solution to the dropping confidence culture has in organized religion, they have often looked in the direction of a new method or ministry idea (i.e., the purpose-driven everything), but the missional church is quite different. The missional church believes that the solution is found in the theological arena rather than in a new ministry method. A key writer in the missional church states the following:

The answer to the crisis of the North American church will not be found at the level of method and problem solving. We share the conviction of a growing consensus of Christians in North America that the problem is much more deeply rooted. It has to do with who we are and what we are for. The real issues in the current crisis of the Christian church are spiritual and theological. (Guder, “The Missional Voice and Posture of Public Theologizing” 1)

In the missional church, I found a theological view that highly interested me, and as I surveyed the missional church literature, I came to the conclusion that it would be perfectly suited for serving as a theological foundation for reaching our community.

I then shifted to examining the ministry of preaching in the missional church. I did so for three reasons. First, I believe that preaching is central to the Church because it is the
Second, I am a pastor who is naturally drawn to the ministry of preaching. Third, I pastor within the denomination called the Christian and Missionary Alliance or the C&MA, a denomination that has as its heritage a heart beat for missions. The C&MA has a proud and impressive history of taking the gospel message of personal salvation to the unreached people of the world. However, with denominations and the church in North America experiencing so much change, currently the C&MA is struggling to find its missional expression in its next one hundred years of existence. Because the C&MA is often unclear on how it will be missional in the years to come, the C&MA could go from being a movement to a denominational machine with the looming danger of simply becoming a pointless monument if we do not change course.

For these three reasons, therefore, I sought to find what the missional church says regarding the ministry of preaching, especially looking for common characteristics of preaching by those preachers who embody the values of the missional church. The desire to know these characteristics sent me deeper into the missional church literature where I discovered a glaring shortcoming regarding preaching and the characteristics that would be considered congruent with the stated values of the missional church. Very little, if any, literature has been written where the missional church has actually studied the preachers who embody their values and then extrapolated the common preaching characteristics among them.

Because the missional church holds to the belief that spiritual, communal, and theological issues must be addressed before dealing with technical aspects of ministry, I have discovered that much of the literature regarding the practices of the missional church is unclear, especially the characteristics of preaching that one might find in a church that
would be characterized as a missional church. Seemingly the knowledge between missional churches and the preaching characteristics that are found in missional churches is missing a link.

This *gap of knowledge* is seen as a problem by scholars who work in the area of homiletics. Ervin R. Stutzman, preaching professor at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, writes the following with regard to the lack of literature written:

> In spite of the growing body of literature on the missional church, I have found very little emphasis on preaching by its proponents. I found mostly references to preaching. Only one chapter-length essay directly addressed the topic. Perhaps the likely reason for this gap is that the missional church theorists seem to carry some disdain for traditional preaching. Most seem to consider it a service of the “vendor church” that must be altered to reach people on the margins of society.

With the same emphasis John Addison Dally, the associate professor of Christian communication at Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, notes the lack of emphasis on preaching by those who are the main proponents of the missional church—the Gospel and Our Culture Network:

> The renewed vision of a “sent” church that fills the multiple volumes of the Gospel and Our Culture Network’s publication since 1998 is both rich and deep, but to date the authors have not explored the implications of the work for preaching except in some brief and passing references. (6)

Dally and Stutzman agree; a gap of knowledge exists regarding missional churches and the preaching characteristics that are found in missional churches.

The surprising aspect regarding this gap of knowledge is that it exists in the missional church even though the foundational thinker and writer for the missional church, Newbigin, states the following about preaching:

> Preaching is part of the mystery of the Gospel. It can be—or seems to be—just foolishness. But it can be the power of God in action. We should preach Christ, Christ as both Savior and Lord, in the assurance that such preaching can be the power of God at work. (5)
Clearly Newbigin sees a place for preaching in his theology. Conversely, those of who have chosen to follow his lead who are now the missional church theorists lack this emphasis. According to Stutzman, this deficiency represents a push back to the megachurch machine’s quick-fix preaching meal with a side order of coffee and a small group.

To date no common body of knowledge holistically informs preaching in the missional church. Literature on preaching in the missional church centers its discussion on missional theology, personal experience, the biblical text or hermeneutical theory. The following examples are representative of the whole of missional church literature.

Stutzman derives his conclusions from a review of the literature regarding the theology of the missional church. Stutzman explores the subject for the following reasons: “The seminary where I teach is part of a denomination that is committed to becoming a ‘missional church,’ thus, I hope to better ‘equipped’ for the task of preparing ‘missional preachers’ for effective Christian ministry in a secularizing world”. Like Stutzman, Paul Windsor seeks to bring “a comprehensive vision to the task of missional preaching” (1). Windsor builds his model by combining the Engel Scale, a tool that shows an individual’s progress as a disciple of Jesus, and foundational missional theology.

Edwin Searcy, who pastors University Hill congregation in Vancouver, Canada, discusses preaching in the missional church as he and his church try to embrace the values as stated by various preachers in the area’s numerous churches. Like Searcy, Cheryl Bridges Johns constructs a theory of preaching for the missional church out of her own preaching experience in South America but combines it with an examination of the preaching ministry found in the book of Acts. Johns concludes that because of the
outpouring of the Holy Spirit, preaching ministry in a missional church would be widely
distributed among the laity of the church (19).

An article written by Carlos F. Cardoza-Orlandi is radically different than the others
previously explored. Cardoza-Orlandi qualifies his article by stating that he is not a teacher
of homiletics but rather a teacher of world Christian mission, history of religion, and
intercultural studies at Columbia Theological Seminary. Cardoza-Orlandi’s teaching
expertise shapes his focus with regard to this work. In his article, Cardoza-Orlandi does not
give examples of missional sermons; instead, he seeks to explore how one can motivate
individuals toward missional practices. He also seeks to examine the theological
foundation for missional preaching.

In his article, George R. Hunsberger shows what he believes to be “the four
different streams of thought about what a missional hermeneutic is and how it affects
biblical interpretation” (1). In drawing upon the four streams of thought in missional
hermeneutics, Hunsberger constructs a preaching theory that emphasizes the biblical story
of the *missio Dei* and equips the laity for the work of the ministry in their local context (4).
With this same emphasis, James V. Brownson states that he is a New Testament scholar
whose interest is the intersection of hermeneutics and missiology. Brownson believes that
significant hermeneutical questions arise when a church enters into its missional calling (2-
3). Brownson places emphasis on personal credibility in preaching when he says, “How we
speak [with our everyday lives] is as important to our missional vocation as what we
speak” (82).

Lastly, Dally’s work revolves around the following pressing and needed central
question: “If mission is not an activity of the church but an attribute of God, what are the
implications for preaching?” (11). Dally finds his answer comes through the exposition of
a single passage of Scripture, Luke 9:1-11. Dally writes, “Is there ‘missional preaching’ in Scripture? The words [missional and preaching] were indeed used together, in a passage that has since become foundational to my thinking about missional preaching” (30). In this way Dally is unique in that he is the most biblically grounded of the other authors examined.

In reading, comparing, and contrasting these works, I discovered they often drew both similar and different conclusions regarding preaching in the missional church, while leaving out vitally important details for effective missional preaching to take place. The following paragraphs summarize their similarities.

First, the authors agree that preaching in a missional church should prepare God’s people for the work in the world. The authors draw the conclusion that the Western church has historically given their congregations mission sermons. These were sermons that placed high emphasis on those who need to be reached with the gospel by those involved in full-time Christian service (Stutzman and Brownson). Although sending missionaries to distant places was and still is correct and right for churches in the West, the missional church recognizes that the West itself has become a mission field. “Now each congregation is called not to just send missionaries but to be a missionary people in its local context” (Searcy 3). Thus, the authors agree that preaching in missional churches in the West has as an emphasis on the equipping members for effective missional witness in their own context.

Second, the authors agree that preaching in missional churches is a highly relational event. Challenging the traditional concept and form of preaching, calling it “speaching” (Stutzman), the authors agree that preaching in the missional church should be a highly relational experience, “Learning Christ is a communal activity” (Searcy 3).
According to Cardoza-Orlandi, missional preaching is a ministerial, personal, and communal action in which the congregation listens and discerns the testimony of the Christian people in their struggle with and participation in the activity of God in the world. He writes, “Missional preaching is tentative preaching; provisional and temporal, but sustained by the discernment and activity of a people to be faithful to God” (8). The authors point out that that missional church practitioners are doing so much more than preaching that is heavy with illustration or even narrative (Windsor 21). In some cases they are doing what is called, “progressive dialogue” (Stutzman). Progressive dialogue is described by missional church pastor Doug Pagitt as “bringing about substantive changes in the content of the ‘sermon’ in the context of healthy relationship between the presenter and listener” (Stutzman). This highly relational experience is characteristic of the whole process from sermon development to the actual delivery, as Pagitt points out: “Sermon preparation is an in-depth conversation with others regarding the truth and relevance of the text, then a weekly open discussion happens during the sermon about the sermon” (24). Pagitt’s sermon preparation and interactive delivery flow from his vision of church in which he sees pastor and people doing church together, sharing in each other’s lives in an extreme way and from their commitment to keep churches small enough to facilitate in-depth relationships (Stutzman).

Third, the authors loosely agree that preaching in the missional church gives meaning to the current work of the church by framing the work in the grander mission of God as told by the Scripture (Hunsberger). The authors in various ways communicate that no longer can a preacher just stand in front of a congregation for the purpose of extracting communication principles from a given biblical text. Stutzman states that preaching in the missional church will use stories and metaphors that are designed to seize people’s
imaginations and transport them from their current worldview to a new one, and in this new worldview, which is the biblical worldview, the current work and mission of the church finds its meaning (Stutzman). Searcy states, “This missional context requires a new genre of speech in the pulpit that reframes the mission of the church in the missio dei, the mission of God” (3). Dally frames preaching in the missional church in the larger story of Scripture by giving a scriptural foundation for missional preaching which is the Luke 9:1-11 text. Dally believes that the preachers in the current missional church see themselves commissioned to preach not so much by an institution or an ordaining body. But like the disciples, today’s preachers in the missional church see themselves as commissioned by Jesus to preach the gospel and given the same message as the disciples sent out in the Luke 9 passage, which is the message, “The kingdom of God at hand.” Dally clarifies the Luke 9 passage:

The notion that missional preachers are sent out by Jesus and not an institution seems too obvious, but it is the essential starting point. Missional preachers are empowered by Jesus specifically for their work of proclaiming the kingdom of God which is God’s reign on earth in the here and now. (30-31)

Dally’s statement links today’s missional preacher to those whom Dally sees as the original missional—preachers, the disciples, thus framing today’s missional work in the overarching biblical story.

Fourth and finally, the authors agree that missional preaching seeks to build a community that holds to values that are distinctly different than that of secular society, even if it means receiving hostility from the secular government. According to the studied authors, preaching in the missional church deliberately draws contrast between the gospel message and the practices and values of American civil religion, aiming for conversation from habits shaped by participation in American democracy to habits formed through
Christian discipleship. Stutzman, drawing upon the work of Alan J. Roxburgh, states that missional preaching will aim higher than just social justice or helping the needs of the community. Stutzman states, “The primary focus of the apostolic congregation is formation of a people whose lives witness to the apostolic message. Missional preaching helps to accomplish this task by continually clarifying the Gospel for the life of the church.” Cardoza-Orlandi, who studies the current cultural condition of Africa and Asia, says that preaching that is happening in this area of the world is happening in a context that is often very similar to the challenges faced by the early Church: “These challenges emerge as faith and cultural context intersect, thus becoming indicators of the vitality of the churches faith” (3). For Cardoza-Orlandi preaching in the missional church is more about standing courageously in the midst of possible persecution. According to Dally, preaching in the missional church challenges secular governments. The challenge is not a direct address; rather, it is expressed in a confidence in the reality of the kingdom of God and the ruler of all humankind who is none other than God himself (41).

Based on the common denominators discussed in the previous paragraph, elements of missional church preaching include preaching within a missional church that prepares God’s people for work in the world. Preaching within a missional church is a highly relational experience that attempts to frame the contemporary life in the overarching story of Scripture. Finally missional preaching seeks to build a community that holds to values that are different than that of society even if means hostility from society. Upon reflection, these common denominators are very close to what the missional church literature has stated about itself, thus, one could infer that those who have written about preaching in the missional church just transferred principles regarding the missional church to the subject of preaching, without a deliberate attempt to address the practice of preaching as a
specific expression of the missional church.

A major disconnect in the literature regarding preaching in the missional church comes from Dally. Dally, who seems to ignore others who have written on the subject, bases his beliefs about preaching in a missional church on a single passage of Scripture. He gives the impression that the characteristics found in Luke 9:1-11 are the same ones that need to be part of preaching in the missional church. Dally’s foundational verse is Luke 9:1, which states, “When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent [emphasis mine] them out to preach [emphasis mine] the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.” Building on the fact that Jesus sent his disciples out to preach, Dally concludes that the factors in this single text should be the factors of preaching in the contemporary missional church (29-30). Dally draws the conclusion that physical healing should accompany the preaching event in today’s missional churches. At this point Dally distinctly diverges from the other authors. He writes, “If the Luke narrative up to this point is any indication of his understanding of the [missional] world, then healing is to be extended across racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic lines, and it represents a proclamation of the Gospel” (36-37).

In summary, none of the already mentioned works have actually studied preaching in effective missional churches. These works comment on the nature of missional preaching based on missional theology, personal experience, biblical text or a missional hermeneutic rather than studying the actual preachers and preaching that is happening in effective missional churches. In addition to the void of direct observation of missional preaching or sermons, the writing about missional preaching is contradictory, limited in its perspective, unclear, and untested in an actual missional church pulpit. This lack of practical knowledge regarding preaching in the missional church is probably why church
authority Dr. George G. Hunter states in a personal interview, “The missional Church has had a lot written about it, but it sure doesn’t have a lot to show for it.” Indeed, this lack of practical knowledge is a problem for the missional church.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to identify common characteristics of preaching in congregations identified as effective missional churches within the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance and evaluate these characteristics in light of missional church stated values. The accomplishment of this purpose should result in the formulation of a model for preaching that will enhance the effectiveness of missional churches not only in the Christian and Missionary Alliance denomination but in other churches in the United States.

**Research Questions**

The following three research questions help guide this study of common characteristics of preaching found in effective missional churches.

**Research Question #1**

What are common characteristics of preaching found in effective missional churches within the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance?

**Research Question #2**

In what way are these characteristics of preaching congruent with the missional churches’ stated values?

**Research Question #3**

Where is there a disconnect between preaching characteristics found in missional churches and missional church values?
Definition of Terms

Three critical terms exist that require definition as they are foundational for this study: characteristics, preaching, and missional church.

Characteristics

For this study, characteristics will be defined as the preaching style, the observed values, and the thematic content of the preaching participants.

Preaching

For this study, preaching is defined as the proclamation of God’s written word by an individual who, in turn, leads others to the person and the mission of Jesus Christ in a way that is culturally sensitive, personally challenging, and applicable to his or her life.

Missional Church

A missional church is a church that is shaped by participating in God’s mission, which is to set things right in a broken, sinful world, to redeem it, and to restore it to what God has always intended for the world. Missional churches see themselves not so much as sending but being sent; they are congregations that let God’s mission permeate everything that they do—from worship to witness to training members for discipleship.

Context

The urgency of this study is enhanced by the cultural context of the identified effective missional churches. The cultural context of this study is limited to the states of Alaska, Washington, Oregon, and the northern section of Idaho. These states have traditionally been called the Northwest section of the United States of America. The Northwest has been documented as the most non-churched section of America. An authority on religious demographics in America has said the following about spiritual climate of the Northwest, “The Pacific Northwest is an ‘open religious environment.’
Here fewer people (37%) affiliate with a religious institution than in any other region of the country. More adults respond ‘none’ when asked their religious identity (25%) than in any other region” (Killen and Silk). Oregon ranked the lowest of all states with 35.5 percent of its population having a religious affiliation, followed by Washington at 38.1 percent and then Alaska at 39.8 percent. These numbers find greater significance with the realization that the national average of a state’s population claiming a religious affiliation is 59.4 percent. As one former Catholic archbishop of Oregon reportedly stated, “There are no Christians here, they are all pagans” (Killen et al. 28). Lewiston, Idaho, my pastoral context, is consistent with the given religious demographics of the Northwest. According to the Association of Religious Data Association (ARDA), Lewiston, Idaho, had population of 37,410 in the year 2000. Lewiston reported forty-five churches, but it also reported that 43.1 percent (16,135) have no religious affiliation (ARDA). The two largest churches are the Roman Catholic Church, reporting 4,656 members, followed by the Church of Latter-Day Saints with 1,714 members (ARDA).

These numbers raise the question of why the Northwest has low religious attendance. Though no one factor solely contributes to the religious demographics of the Northwest, the most commonly given answer is for the low attendance is the Northwest has some of the most beautiful parts of the American landscape. “The region’s ethos is shaped by the encounter of a relatively small, primarily urban population with a vast and beautiful landscape” (Killen and Silk). With open land, mountains, rivers, and beautiful campsites, the Northwest offers some of the best places in America to experience the outdoors. In Lewiston, Idaho, the beauty of the outdoors could also play a major role in the low religious affiliation. A 2008 article in Outdoor Life Magazine rates Lewiston as number two in the nation regarding places to live if one wanted to experience the
outdoors:

Glorious diversity of opportunity, from smallmouth bass and white sturgeon to 9 feet in the Snake River to strong runs of magnum steelhead in the Clearwater. On the terrestrial side, black bear, elk and deer (both whitetails and muleys) dominate hunting, turkeys are everywhere up the Clearwater and pheasants are numerous in the Palouse region to the north. (McKean)

Whether in big cities such as Seattle or Portland or small cities such as Lewiston, the factors of the outdoors have consistently proven to be a huge hurdle for churches to overcome when wanting to make an impact on the community.

The Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance has fully realized that the cultural context in which they are placed is one of low religious affiliation; thus, the district vision states the following: “Lost people matter to God and He wants them found. Evangelism and outward focus to the community must be a major concern of every local church.” This vision of seeing “Lost people” coming to faith in Christ is becoming a reality in the 107 churches of the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance:

On any given weekend you would find 24,000 people worshipping in the churches under our care. In the 12 months up to March 2004, the churches reported more than 2000 conversions and almost 1,000 baptisms. Our churches minister regularly to 10,000 children and youth.

The work in Lewiston, Idaho, is similar to the reports in the rest of the Pacific Northwest District. In spite of its placement in one of the top outdoor paradises in the United States, the Alliance Church in Lewiston has grown in the past ten years from 125 in average weekend attendance to a weekend attendance of 525 with three services.

**Methodology**

The methodology for this study began with a panel of experts who have a thorough knowledge of the churches within the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and
Missionary Alliance. This panel of experts (1) have at least ten years of ministry within the Pacific Northwest District of the C&MA, and (2) hold or have held a leadership position within the Pacific Northwest District of the C&MA. Through a questionnaire (see Appendix D), this panel of experts identified at least ten effective missional churches within the Pacific Northwest District of the C&MA. The questionnaire stressed the importance of the church actually doing missional practices; thus, the church did not need to self-identify as a missional church. Upon identification of these churches, this study followed a qualitative research methodology similar to Matthew Christian Boda and S. Thomas Reid, Jr. I listened to three sermons of the identified churches through a sermon evaluation tool, which focuses on positive and negative congruence with six stated values of the missional church based on the literature. The sermon evaluation tool was constructed based on the research methodologies modeled by Boda and Reid.

**Participants**

The participants for this study were preachers who were identified by a panel of experts as pastoring effective missional churches within the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (see Appendix A). The panel used three criteria for selecting the participants. First, the participants had to preach to the same audience on a weekly basis. Second, the sermons collected were from a *normal* Sunday in the life of the church and were selected by the participants (for a definition of *normal* see Appendix E). Third, the sermons had to be preached in churches that the developed panel of experts recognized as having characteristics that embody the values of the missional church.

**Instrumentation**

The instrumentation used for this project was a sermon evaluation tool (see Appendix B) as modeled by Boda and Reid who both did qualitative doctoral research in
the area of preaching.

Data Collection

The data source for this study was audio recordings of the sermons delivered by selected missional church practitioners. The practitioner could choose the sermons they would like to submit for research, or they allowed the researcher to choose the message submitted for research. The sermons were accessed using one of the following mediums; (1) compact disk or CDs, (2) audio tape, (3) or sermons that were posted on the church Website of the participant’s home church.

Data Analysis

Following the models of Boda and Reid, several stages of analysis took place in the course of this study. First, in the evaluation stage I listened to and documented each of the thirty sermons according to the sermon evaluation tool (see Appendix B). Second, after I listened to and evaluated each sermon, I used the evaluation tool to identify common characteristics. Third, I identified how the content was congruent with the stated values of the missional church. Fourth, I identified how the content was not congruent with the stated values of the missional church. After the completion of these steps, the findings were organized and documented.

Delimitations and Generalizability

The research in this study focused only on the preaching and the preachers of identified missional churches within the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. It acknowledges that preaching is only one aspect of an effective missional church and also that the relevance of this study is limited to specific cultural conditions that make up the Pacific Northwest. In addition this study is limited to the knowledge of the panel of experts with regard to effective missional churches within the
Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. Furthermore, this study acknowledges that the panel of experts does not have complete knowledge of all district activity but will concede that together it has sufficient knowledge to identify effective missional churches within the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

**Biblical Foundation**

This study acknowledges that some in the missional church movement would state that preaching in the traditional sense has a limited place in the missional church. As stated in the works of Stutzman, they would say that traditional preaching would be part of the Christendom of church and continues to make the church a vendor of religious services in the culture. Contrary to their claims, this study has the foundational assumption and belief that preaching in the traditional sense is needed for a church to be effectively missional. This assumption is built on the biblical witness of Jesus’ ministry of kingdom proclamation. Furthermore, it desires to reveal churches that are missionally effective while holding to a traditional preaching model.

Jesus, who is seen as the perfect embodiment of the mission of God by missional scholars, commissioned his disciples in the following manner: “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (John 21:21). This text is seen as the heart of missional theology by missional scholars. Called the *misio Dei* (mission of God), John 21:21 shows the Father sending the Son, and the Son sending the Church in the power of the Spirit. The church is sent in the same manner that the Father has sent the Son. Thus, the ministry of Jesus becomes the relevant model for the ministry of the church because Jesus himself sends the church out in ministry in the same manner that God the Father sent the Son.

When the ministry of Jesus is examined according to the Gospel accounts, one sees
that preaching is a central characteristic to his ministry. Matthew introduces Jesus to his Jewish audience as one who preached the kingdom of heaven: “From that time on Jesus began to preach, ‘Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near’” (Matt 4:17). Mark introduces Jesus in a similar manner as one whose ministry is marked by preaching: “After John was put in prison, Jesus went in to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom” (Mark 1:14). Luke gives the fullest account of Jesus’ preaching with the account of Jesus opening the scroll of the prophet Isaiah and stating, “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind” (Luke 4:17). Luke gives special attention to the centrality of Scripture and the Spirit’s anointing in Jesus’ preaching.

Just as the biblical records highlight Jesus’ ministry of preaching in the Gospels, there is an emphasis on the central role of preaching in the book of Acts and throughout the Pauline and Pastoral Epistles. In Acts, God uses the preaching of Peter to thrust the newly born church into a place of cultural influence in its Jerusalem context. Preaching the light of the gospel to the Gentiles fuels Paul’s ministry: “For I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I don’t preach the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:16). Paul gives direction to Timothy regarding the priorities of ministry. He writes, “Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage-with great patience and careful instruction” (2 Tim. 4:2). Paul wants Timothy to know that preaching should have a central place in his pastoral work in the church. Furthermore, Paul communicates that Timothy must hold to sound doctrine in his preaching, for in doing so, it will have an effect on the rest of the church: “Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers” (1 Tim. 4:16). Timothy’s faithfulness in preaching, specifically, sound doctrinal preaching, had saving and sanctifying effects not only for
himself, but also on his hearers. The ramifications of Paul’s instructions could be that preaching has a foundational effect on all other aspects of ministry.

The biblical foundation finds its urgency in light of those within the mission church who do not hold a high regard for the traditional form of preaching. Michael Frost, a prime writer and scholar within the missional church, speaks against traditional preaching for two reasons. First, communication has changed dramatically in recent years. “Let’s face it! The entertainment industry—in particular, film—has changed traditional education and communication in profound ways, and the church had better take notice” (151). Second is the low impact that traditional preaching is having on culture: “Except for the preaching of outstanding communicators (and they have to be very good), sermons have little or no impact” (151). As a result of such observations leading missional church practitioners have opted for a more communal form of preaching, as exemplified in Pagitt’s “progressive dialogue.” Acknowledging that communication has changed, and that the effectiveness of the traditional sermon has been found wanting, this study does not call for an abandonment of the traditional form of preaching. Disregarding traditional preaching is not the answer. This study desires to learn from those who pastor effective missional churches and who practice the traditional form of preaching.

**Overview of Project**

Chapter 2 of this dissertation reviews the relevant literature to missional theology and the missional church conversation. Chapter 2 acts as a theological framework for the project. In Chapter 3 the research design is presented in detail. Chapter 4 reports the findings and answers the research questions of the study, and Chapter 5 summarizes the findings, makes conclusions, as well as offers suggestions for further research inquiry.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE

This study sought to examine the congruence between missional churches, their stated values, and the preaching that is happening in these churches. The study also sought to discover if this preaching is congruent with the values stated by the missional church. This literature review gives attention to three areas. First, it gives focused attention to the biblical, historical, and theological grounds of mission; this section is essential as it serves as a foundation for ones understanding of the missional church. Second, it gives the current understanding of the missional church as summarized by missional theologians and missional church scholars. These two sections lay the foundation for what this study will state as the characteristic of effective missional churches. Lastly, it focuses on preaching, giving attention to the gospel accounts of the preaching ministry of Jesus, which the missional literature sees as the perfect embodiment of God’s mission.

Theology of Mission

Any study of the missional church must inevitably begin by studying a theology of biblical mission. Five basic elements make up the theology of biblical mission. They function as key tenets for shaping the values and ethos of the missional church. These five basic elements are the source of mission, the goal of mission, the perfect embodiment of mission, the narrative of mission, and the people of mission.

The Source of Mission

Those who write on and minister in the values as stated by the missional church place a high value on knowing and articulating the source of biblical mission. Knowing the source of mission answers some pivotal questions regarding the missional church concerning the origin of mission, the ownership of mission, and the object of mission.
An authority on the theology of the missional church shows that before the modern missionary era, the dominant disposition with regards to mission was that those outside of Christendom would have the gospel communicated to them in a way that showed the sovereignty of God regarding human history and salvation. The prevailing attitude with regard to missions during this time was, God would accomplish it without your help or mine (Nussbaum 95). This attitude began to change with the missionary efforts of William Carey. Carey believed that the West should take some initiative in mission and missions. From this change of perspective and Carey’s influence, missionary societies formed, money was raised, and people went out. With regard to the importance of human initiative during this time period, Stan Nussbaum states, over the next century and a half, people became so convinced of the importance of human initiative that they hardly thought of God as being active in mission. They only thought of human resources, human strategies and human efforts (95). Though this time period was seen as effective regarding mission, in retrospect it was foundationally imbalanced.

The work of Karl Barth took mission from an imbalanced human initiative perspective, which placed high emphasis on the doctrine of the church and the doctrine of salvation, to the doctrine of God, specifically the Trinity. This theological shift by Barth and his followers firmly planted God as the source of all mission and argued that God the Father invites humans, specifically the redeemed, to play an active role in biblical mission. For Barth, the key doctrine in biblical mission is summarized in the Latin phrase *missio Dei*. Though this phrase was not coined by Barth, *missio Dei* authorities agree that it perfectly depicts Barth’s theology regarding the mission and activity of God (McPhee, “The Missio Dei and the Transformation of the Church” 6).

Speaking at the Brandenburg Missionary Conference in 1932, Barth did not speak
about mission in terms of the church or our mission but about mission as the activity of God that finds its source in the Trinity:

Must not even the most faithful missionary, the most convinced friend of missions, have reason to reflect that the term missio was to the ancient church an expression of the doctrine of the Trinity—namely the expression of the divine sending of self, the sending of the Son and Holy Spirit to the World? Can we indeed claim that we do it any other way? (qtd. in McPhee, “The Missio Dei and the Transformation of the Church” 6)

This address by Barth began a slow process of placing God back at the center of the church’s theology of mission.

Scholarship shows that the phrase missio Dei as understood by modern scholarship seems to be connected with German missiologist Karl Hartenstein. Christopher Wright states, “It [missio Dei] seems to go back to a German missiologist Karl Hartenstein, he coined it as a way of summarizing the teaching of Barth” (62). Wright goes on to show how the phrase became popular in 1952 through the work of George Vicedom who gave it theological strength by connecting mission to the theology of the Trinity. According to Wright, Vicedom shows how, mission flows from the inner dynamic movement of God in personal relationship (63). Through the work of Vicedom, the missio Dei doctrine was strengthened, but according to Wright those who took Vicedom’s work to extremes seriously weakened the doctrine by linking the missio Dei doctrine simply to God’s involvement with the whole historical process, not to any specific work of the church. This extreme view left no room for the church in mission (63). According to missional scholarship, the missio Dei doctrine returned to a place of theological respect under the work of two men—J. E. Lesslie Newbigin and David J. Bosch.

Newbigin is undisputedly one of the greatest figures in missiological thinking; however, his reflection on evangelism has not received the attention it deserves, states Krish
Kandiah of the Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics (51). Scholarship shows congruence with Kandiah’s view of Newbigin’s work. Kandiah goes on to say with regards to Newbigin, “In an age of increasing pragmatism, it is vital that the church pay careful attention to this respected elder statesmen’s work (51).

Newbigin, in the year 1958 at the International Missionary Council in Achimota, Ghana, had the following as part of his address: “The mission is not ours, but Gods. We are invited to participate in the activity of God which is the central meaning of creation” (qtd. in Hoffmeyer 108). This recognition that the mission is Gods, not the church’s was a central and a continual theme throughout Newbigin’s scholarship on the missio Dei.

The missio Dei doctrine continues to gain respect under the work of Bosch. He states the following with regards to the missio Dei doctrine:

Mission [the missio Dei] is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. God is a missionary. Mission is thereby seen as a movement from God to the world; the church is viewed as an instrument for that mission. To participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God’s love toward people. (qtd. in Nussbaum 95)

Bosch goes onto say, “Mission has its origin in the heart of God. God is a fountain of sending love. This is the deepest source of mission. It is impossible to penetrate deeper still; there is mission because God loves people” (qtd. in Nussbaum 96). For Bosch the source of mission is found in the heart of God, which is the fountain of sending love. Bosch continues to be seen as a seminal thinker with regard to defining and communicating the missio Dei doctrine.

In the landmark book Missional Church, Darrell L. Guder uses Bosch’s work to define and communicate the missio Dei:

Mission is understood as being derived from the very nature of God. It is thus put in the context of the doctrine of the Trinity, not of the ecclesiology or soteriology. The classical doctrine of the missio Dei as God the Father
Guder comments on Bosch’s formulation and articulation of the *missio Dei* doctrine: “This formulation reflects the Western tradition, of course; our Orthodox colleagues uphold the missionary nature of God while emphasizing that the Father sends both the Son and the Spirit” (5). In the given statement, Guder affirms that both Western and Orthodox churches affirm the missional nature of God, and both Western and Orthodox churches have the doctrine of the Trinity being foundational reality behind this doctrine.

Guder clarifies church mission rooted in the character of God:

The ecclesiocentric understanding of mission has been replaced during this century by a profoundly theocentric reconceptualization of Christian mission. We have come to see that mission is not merely an activity of the Church. Rather, mission is the result of God’s initiative, rooted in God’s purposes to restore and heal creation. *Mission means sending*, and it is the central biblical theme describing the purpose of God’s action in human history. We have come to speak of God as a *Missionary God*, thus have learned to understand the church as a *sent people*. “As the Father has sent me, so I send you (John 20:21).” (5)

Clearly the *missio Dei* doctrine places God and his missional nature preexisting the Church and before the salvation of humankind. Those seen as authorities in the *missio Dei* doctrine as viewed through the lens of classical missional church thinking would state that the Church exists because God is a God of mission; mission does not exist because God created the Church.

Recent publications from missional church thinkers have tended to develop the understanding of the *missio Dei* doctrine. Craig Van Gelder, an authority on missional thinking and the missional church, states the following regarding the missional church: “In understanding the *missio Dei*, we find that God as a creating God also creates the church through the Spirit, who calls, gathers, and sends the church into the world to participate in
God’s mission” (18). Though Van Gelder’s definition involves creation, it still communicates the core of the missio Dei doctrine, which is God as the source of the Church’s mission.

British Scholars Howard Peskett and Vinoth Ramachandra speak of the missio Dei doctrine in the following way:

All Christian mission finds its root and foundation in the God whom we worship, revealed in Scripture as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Before all human sending we stand in wonder and gratitude before the God who sent his Son for us and the Son the Spirit to us. (15)

This statement reveals that before any church undertakes missional activity, it must have at its roots and foundation the missional activity of God.

Roxburgh is the president of Allelon, formally known as the Missional Leadership Institute. Roxburgh describes Allelon, saying simply, together we are a movement of missional leaders. Roxburgh, who is seen as the leading practitioner of the missional church, describes his understanding of the missio Dei doctrine:

The missio Dei is about a theocentric rather than anthropocentric understanding of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection which itself, as the apocalyptic engagement of God with the world, breaks into creation in order to call forth that which was promised from the beginning—that in this Jesus all things will be brought back together and made new. (“Missional Church” 4)

In more recent publications, Roxburgh gives readers a definition of the missio Dei doctrine that is less academic and more “bottom shelf regarding language and implications.” The missio Dei is about a “God-centered rather than a meeting-personal-need-centered understanding of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection, the focus of the church is missional and doxological” (“Missional Church” 4). In this more recent definition, Roxburgh places emphasis on the missio Dei being about God and his character rather than individual need.
In summary, according to Nussbaum, when mission is grounded in the doctrine of the *missio Dei*, and when the Triune God is seen both as the source and owner of mission at least three implications follow:

1. Mission is bigger than the church. That is, God may work outside the church too. The church cannot be arrogant about its mission or itself.

2. The church is derived from mission, and not the other way around. Mission cannot be incidental to the life of the church.

3. Mission cannot be reduced to conversion and church membership. God has bigger, wider things in mind (96).

**The Goal of Mission**

Coming to a clear understanding with regard to the goal of mission as seen through the lens of those who ascribe to the *missio Dei* doctrine and the missional church view of ecclesiology is not simple. The literature shows three main ways in which missional church thinkers have articulated the goal of biblical mission.

The first came from Bosch who articulates the twin goal of mission as salvation and justice. Regarding salvation Bosch asks the question, “But what is ‘salvation’?” (393). He continues to say, “Our answer to that not so simple question will determine the scope of our missionary activities” (393). Bosch additionally states the following regarding salvation and how one’s conviction regarding salvation shapes and forms their view of Christian mission:

For Christians, the conviction that God has decisively wrought salvation for all in and through Jesus Christ stands at the very center of our lives. Naturally Christians want to make that salvation known and available to everyone. This salvation-sharing desire is the throbbing heart of Missiology. (393)

Bosch sees salvation in a way that is in contrast to much of the Western church. Western
church’s often associate salvation with the one-time baptism into the death of Christ and the church’s guarantee of salvation in the world to come (Nussbaum 97).

Bosch sees scripture as treating the concept of salvation in a variety of ways by different Gospel and New Testament writers. For example, according to Bosch, “Luke emphasizes salvation here and now, while Paul puts equal or greater emphasis on the future and the final dimension of salvation” (97). Bosch places an emphasis on the Eastern Church and how salvation was a gradual process in which the believer was uplifted to become more God-filled and God like (97). Bosch’s view of salvation did not seem to emphasize one aspect of salvation over another, but Bosch sought in his theology of salvation with regards to mission a bringing together under the theological umbrella of mission. This statement would be a more encompassing view of salvation:

The Eastern Church focuses on his incarnation, the Western Church on his Crucifixion, and the post-Enlightenment Liberals on his teaching ministry. Why not bring all these emphases, plus the resurrection and the return, together in a comprehensive picture of Christ that will carry us straight into a comprehensive picture of salvation? We should find a way beyond every schizophrenic position and ministry to people in their total need. We should involve individuals as well as society, soul and body, present and future in our ministry of salvation. (399)

Reflecting on the scholarship of Bosch, salvation as seen through the lens of his missional theology reveals that he sees salvation is more holistic in nature. Salvation would entail being what the Apostle Paul calls a “new creation in Christ” (2 Cor. 5:17), not just assurance of heaven (97). Seeing justice as the secondary goal of biblical mission gave Bosch what he sees as a “comprehensive view of salvation.”

Because social justice is often overlooked by the church, Bosch concludes the following about the churches’ current understanding of the goal of mission: Narrow definitions of salvation have often been preached (qtd. in Nussbaum 99). Bosch knows that
the inclusion of a societal dimension to salvation would be an element of theological tension for some; and he sees that the relationship between the evangelist and the societal dimensions of the Christian mission constitutes one of the thorniest areas in the theology and practice of mission.

For Bosch, his theological context presented two missional emphases with regards to the ultimate goal of mission: the ecumenical view, which often focused only on the “just universe” aspect of mission, and the evangelical view, which presented a “saved universe” aspect of mission. Bosch did not see these two realities as an either/or issue; Bosch saw evil in the hearts of humanity and in the societal orders of his day, and Bosch saw both the redemption of hearts and social order as the ultimate goal of the mission of God:

Evil is not only in the human hearts but also in social structures. The mission of the church includes both the proclamation of the Gospel and its demonstration. We must therefore evangelize, respond to immediate human needs, and press for social transformation. (407)

Bosch sees two goals of salvation, that being, individual salvation, and social justice.

The second authoritative view regarding the goal of mission comes from the book *Missional Church*. Guder articulates the goal of mission as the reign of God or the kingdom of God (86). Guder states the following about the goal of mission: The gospel, centered profoundly for Jesus in the announcement that the reign of God is at hand, is eschatological in character. It pulls back the veil on the coming reign of God, thereby revealing the horizon of the world’s future (86). Based on the information given by Guder, the hearing of the gospel as proclaimed by Jesus was not one of an individual salvation but that which produces an eschatological community of salvation (86). This eschatological community of salvation is the goal of mission.

Guder places some value on preaching with regards to it as the medium in which
the reign of God or kingdom of God is known:

As such, it [the Church] comes from the preaching of the reign of God—the reign of God is its beginning and its foundation. And it moves towards the revealed consummation of the reign of God—the reign of God is its goal, its limitation, its judgment. The church is defined by its origins in a gospel cast vision of its destiny that always draws it forward. (Guder, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* 86)

In context, this reference to preaching reveals they often blur the lines between preaching and evangelism; thus, this reference to preaching should not be taken to mean preaching as commonly understood.

Regarding the effects of the reign of God or the kingdom of God, Guder states the following:

The reign of God most certainly arises as God’s mission to reconcile the creation accomplished in the death and resurrection of Jesus… Ruling by way of a cross and resurrection, God thwarts the power of sin that distorts the creation once good at its beginning. The future rule of God breaks in ahead of time as a harbinger of the world’s future to be fully and finally reconciled to God. (Guder, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* 91)

Guder uses traditional terms such as “receiving” or “entering” when speaking of how a person enters into an experience of the goal of mission, which as stated, is the kingdom as announced by Jesus. He states, “The reign of God is, first of all, *a gift one receives* [emphasis mine]. The reign of God is something taken to oneself. It is a gift of God’s making, freely given. It calls for the simple trust of receiving” (95). He continues, “In addition to being a gift, the reign of God is equally a realm one enters. The reign of God is a realm—a space, an arena, a zone-inhabited” (95). In summary, the goal of mission is the experiencing of the reign of God or kingdom of God as Jesus announced it. Guder sees the experiences as gifts that must be welcomed and an anticipated future. The call to receive warns against the consequence of rejecting the gift. The invitation to enter casts a shadow
The third and final articulation of the goal of mission is represented by C. Wright and his work. Wright, who is fundamentally an Old Testament scholar, demonstrates that based on his biblical study, the goal of biblical mission is God being known as God. He says, “Biblical mission is driven by God’s will to be known as God. The one living God wills to be known throughout his whole creation. The world must know its Creator. The nations must know their Ruler, Judge and Savior” (127). Wright sees this theme of God being known as God as the goal of biblical mission and a clear theme all throughout the Old Testament (Josh 2:10-11; 2 Sam. 7:23; Ps. 106:8; Jer. 32:20; 1 Sam. 17:46; Isa. 45:6; Isa. 63:12). According to Wright, one might say that the whole Old Testament is intended to be a “world window shop” for the knowledge of God on the earth (127).

C. Wright addresses the reality that some might object to his arguments. He says God should be known as God, for he is God, and this act is the most loving thing he can do for his creation—that is, reveal himself as God. To clarify his point Wright quotes Bauckham:

> We may have difficulty with this picture of God desiring and achieving fame for himself, something we would regard as self-seeking vanity and ambition if it were said of human beings. But this is surely one of those human analogies which actually appropriate uniquely to God. The good of Gods human creatures requires that he be known to them as God. There is no vanity, only revelation of truth, in Gods demonstration of his deity to the nations. (127)

Because of this perspective, Wright does not see the spreading of the Gospel in the New Testament church age as the telling of another religion but as the liberation of humanity through exposing them to creation’s ultimate reality. Wright states, “Mission is not the imposition of yet another religious bondage upon an already overburdened humanity. It is the sharing of the liberating knowledge of the one true living God in knowledge of whom
sendeth our eternal life” (128). Wright’s Old Testament scholarship gives him this unique perspective on mission.

In summary, missional church thinkers see the ultimate goal of biblical mission as the following: Regarding individuals and communities, missional church thinkers deduce that salvation in the mission of God is salvation from sin that places the individual into the redeemed community called the church. The church, though not the kingdom of God, experiences the kingdom and has as its mission to announce the kingdom, for the purpose of bringing about justice. The reality of redemption spreads the knowledge of God to all humanity for the sake of God being known as God.

The Perfect Embodiment of Mission

Conversation with regards to the mission of God, or biblical mission, eventually makes its way to the person and work of Jesus Christ. Missional church scholars are consistent in communicating that Jesus is the perfect embodiment of the mission of God. Geoffrey R. Harris states, “The Gospels are very much preoccupied with mission. The coming of Jesus, his ministry and work on earth and all that followed—his death, resurrection and ascension—are all interpreted as the climax of God’s mission to the world” (ix). Harris clarifies his point:

The Gospels reflect the fact that mission is the essence of the Church’s life not just an aspect of it. The life of Jesus is invariably represented as being enacted in the world at large, among ordinary people of all sorts and, in particular, a reaching out to those beyond the normal scope and influence of the religious establishment. Jesus’ early nickname, “friend of sinners,” is transformed in the Gospels from the term of abuse into a badge of honor and respect…It is clear from the Gospels that Jesus’ own mission form the starting point for the mission of the Church later on. (x-xi)

The primary text that missional theologians use regarding the mission of God embodied in the person of Jesus Christ is Luke 4:16-19, 21. Jesus in the synagogue quoted Isaiah 61:1-2:
And he [Jesus] stood up and read. The scroll of the Prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recover of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” And he began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

Missional church scholars agree that Jesus did nothing dramatic by choosing the Isaiah text, but what is of missional significance is the statement found in verse 21: “Today, this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (Roberts). In his article, Roberts points to five elements as seen in the life of Jesus that function as the perfect embodiment of the mission of God; these five elements serve as summarization of how Jesus was the perfect embodiment of mission according to missional theologians.

First, Jesus was sent by God in the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:18). Even though Jesus was the divine Son of God, he was empowered by the Holy Spirit for ministry. Peskett and Ramanchandra note regarding verse 18, “Observe, first, that the anointing of the Holy Spirit is for the purpose of ‘bringing good news to the poor’” (159). Harris states the following regarding this verse, “Luke makes a strong link between the Holy Spirit and mission” (116).

Second, Jesus was sent to proclaim the good news (Luke 4:18). Jesus, in the perfect embodiment of mission, proclaims the good news of God’s kingdom. Missional thinkers draw attention to the fact that Jesus did not proclaim himself in this text. “Notice that Jesus’ own preaching was not primarily about himself, but about the coming of the long-awaited kingdom of God, that which the prophets had promised and for which the Jewish people prayed every day” (Roberts). Regarding the Luke 4:18 text, New Testament Scholar Joel Green rightly draws attention to the importance of grounding our understanding of “the poor” in “the ancient Mediterranean culture and the social world of

The “poor” would serve as a cipher for those of low status, for those excluded according to normal canons of status honor in the Mediterranean world. Hence, although the ‘poor’ is hardly devoid of economic significance, for Luke this wider meaning of diminished status honor is paramount. (221)

The importance of the poor being mentioned is drawn out by Green. The poor in Jesus’ day had a wider meaning than just economic. *Poor* had connotations of diminished status, specifically diminished social status. In a cultural age when social status had significant ramifications, “The culture in Jesus day was consumed with who was in and who was out in the social world” (Green, “Biblical Foundation”). Jesus stated that his preaching perfectly embodied the mission of God will not be limited to the social conditioning of the day. Meaning, missional preaching and the missional preacher will not be limited to social, economic, or ethnic divisions but will seek to reach all people no matter their status.

Harris, a missional scholar, draws significant attention to the fact that through this text one sees that preaching was a significant aspect of Jesus fulfilling the embodiment of the mission of God:

The preaching of the good news is clearly seen as mainly to benefit those who are presently downtrodden or marginalized. There is obviously a political and social thrust to this mission. Preaching is part of it—and even then the message will challenge the privileged and the proud and cause fury in the some circles—but the rest concerns action on behalf of those who can’t help themselves. (119)

Harris draws attention to the fact that the word *preaching* is not chosen at random but with great passion and precision.

Third, Jesus was sent to enact the good news, meaning Jesus practiced what he preached (Luke 4:18). Jesus proclaimed freedom for prisoners, sight for the blind, and a
released of the oppressed. Jesus early ministry was marked by a fulfillment of this proclamation. Those held captive by demonic powers he set free (Luke 4:33-35); those who were sick he gave back their sight (Luke 7:21-22); and, those who were bound by social injustice and prejudice he liberated (Luke 5:12-15; 7:36-58; 8:43-48). Jesus consistently embodied the proclamation of his kingdom.

Jesus was sent to form a community of the good news (Luke 4:18-19). About this fourth point, Arthur F. Glasser writes, “Although not explicitly stated, when the poor, the blind, and the captives received the good news of God’s kingdom, they also had the opportunity to join the community of kingdom people” (210). The expansion of community results from embodying the mission of God. He continues by stating, “Jesus was willing to adjust his personal schedule to give time to anyone who began to follow him. He was accessible, adaptable, and capable of showing love and attention” (210).

Fifth and finally, Jesus was not only sent to proclaim and demonstrate the good news of God’s reign by overcoming the barrier of sin. Jesus was sent to consummate the good news through his death and resurrection (Luke 4:19). In doing so, Jesus fulfilled the mission of Isaiah’s suffering servant of God (Isa. 53:5).

In summary, Jesus is the perfect embodiment of the mission of God. The given Luke 4:16-19 passage functions as an announcement of what is seen in the life of Jesus as he lived in mission. Jesus in mission had the anointing of the Spirit to preach good news to the poor. Jesus proclaimed freedom for the prisoners, and Jesus gave sight to the blind. An authority on the missional church writes the following regarding Jesus and mission: “In Jesus the reign of God has become present in his actions and in his resurrection he demonstrated that God is acting incarnationally to redeem and renew creation” (Guder, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* 185). In Jesus
the missional church finds the perfect embodiment of the mission of God.

The Narrative of Mission

When missional scholars refer to the Bible and its role in God’s mission, they often refer to it as “God’s Story” or “God’s Narrative.” Peskett and Ramachandra state, “An underlying conviction is that the grand narrative of the Bible may be accurately summarized in the sentence, ‘God makes and chooses a people for himself, so that he may be glorified throughout the world’” (11). Missional scholars agree that mission without the Bible is impossible. John R. Stott states the follow about the importance of the Bible and mission:

Without the Bible world evangelization [mission] would be not only impossible but actually inconceivable… In the face of opposition we need to be clear about the mandate the Bible gives us. It [mission] is not just the Great Commission, but the entire biblical revelation. (Living Church 21)

Agreeing with Stott, Dan H. Beeby states the following of mission and the Bible:

Mission not only turns on and points to a united church; it also depends on Trinitarian and biblical unity as, ideally, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the whole Bible is heard speaking within the whole church to the whole world. (24)

Beeby can be understood as grounding mission in the unity of God and the unity of the Scriptures. He continues with the following on how theological developments during the time of Christendom tended to ignore mission in the Scriptures: “It [Christendom] obscured the fact that theology was the hand maiden of mission. And it obscured the fact that the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, if taken as a unit, is a handbook of mission” (3). C. Wright asserts the primacy of mission in the Bible. “Mission is what the Bible is all about” (29). Wright develops this statement:

To say that the Bible is “all about mission” does not mean that we try to find something relevant to evangelism in every verse. We are referring to something deeper and wider in relation to the Bible as a whole…. There is a
close connection between the biblical grand narrative and what is meant here by biblical mission. (31)

Glasser affirms this statement when he says, “The whole Bible, both Old and New Testaments, is a missionary book, the revelation of God’s purpose and action in mission in human history” (17). According to Glasser, the Bible clearly has a central place in the mission of God in the world.

In stating that the Bible is a book of mission, primarily the mission of God, biblical scholars give clarity to two fundamental issues: how to read the Bible with a missional hermeneutic and how to use the Bible as an adequate tool for mission.

Scholar Michael W. Goheen responds regarding a missional hermeneutic and the use of Scripture. Regarding a missional hermeneutic, Goheen states first that the Bible is the true story of the world in which humanity find its place and role, meaning the Bible is the story of the world. The truth of Scriptures is not just Christian truth but truth for the world which has significant missional implications.

Furthermore, God’s mission to redeem the world is the main storyline of the narrative of the Bible. The Bible renders the story of God’s mission through God’s people in their engagement with the world for the sake of the whole of God’s creation. Goheen goes on to state that in the Old Testament, God chooses and forms Israel as a people with a view to bring salvation to the whole world. Of the nation of Israel and the purpose behind God’s choosing them, “the particular community that God chooses is both place and instrument, locus and channel of God’s mission.”

Additionally, in Jesus, God’s purpose to restore the creation came to a climax. In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, God revealed and accomplished his final purpose of creation’s restoration. Jesus fulfills the Old Testament story: He gathered and renewed
Israel to continue God’s mission. Furthermore, the Church is taken up into God’s mission to continue the mission of Israel and Jesus. Regarding the church and its connection with Israel and Jesus, Goheen states the following:

The word of Jesus in John 20:21 defines the identity and role of the church in God’s mission: “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” As the church is incorporated into Christ they take up his mission, but also the mission of Israel.

The mission of the Church being connected to the work of Jesus and the mission of Israel, gives the present work of the church a historical and theological grounding.

Finally, the mission of God’s people involves missional encounter with culture, which both embraces the treasures and opposes the idolatry of all cultures. Goheen writes, “The gospel is translatable by its very nature. It will take on many cultural forms. In the translation into various cultures, it both affirms the creational structures and judges the idolatrous twisting of all cultural forms.” A consistent theme in the missional literature was the gospel confronting idolatry. Idolatry, specifically cultures with many gods, is not freeing or liberating to a people, but religiously enslaves them; thus, missional writers see a common event in scripture with the mission of God confronting the idolatry of its day for the sake of spiritual liberation. “Mission is not the imposition of yet another religious bondage upon an already overburdened humanity. It is the sharing of the liberating knowledge of the one true living God” (C. Wright 128). Biblical examples of the mission-confronting idolatry would be statements in the book of Deuteronomy that point to God’s demands for monotheism from the nation of Israel. (e.g., Deut. 4:39; 10:14,17; 32) and Paul the Apostle in the New Testament preaching in the city of Athens, a society that took pride in its many gods (Acts 17:16-32).

Goheen continues to show not only a missional hermeneutic but how the Bible can
be used as a tool in mission. “The Scriptures do not only record God’s mission through his people to bring salvation to the world; they are also a tool to effectively bring it about.”

Goheen elaborates by giving two ways Scripture can be a tool for mission. First, the Old Testament Scriptures were written to equip God’s people for their missional purposes. Goheen, who reflects on the work of scholar N. T. Wright, says the following of this scriptural equipping for mission: “A full account of the role of scripture within the life of Israel would appear as a function of Israel’s election by God for the sake of the world” (4).

Second, the New Testament scriptures tell the story of God’s mission through Israel as it climaxes in Jesus, and bring that story to bear in various ways on the early Church to form and equip them for their missional calling in the world. Goheen shows how the Scriptures functioned in the early Church with regard to mission.

The New Testament authors, conscious of their authority and inspired by the Spirit, wrote books that would shape the church for mission. The messages of these books called the church into existence, sustained them as God’s faithful people, and equipped them for their missional calling.

Goheen concludes his work on mission and the Bible: “I am convinced of this, for the church to be engaged in God’s mission it must read the Bible because that is what engaged the original authors” (4). Engaging in the Scriptures for the purpose of mission is the key hermeneutical principle for mission and church to exist.

**The People of Mission**

God is on a mission, and he has chosen not to accomplish mission independently. The literature all concur that the nation of Israel and the New Testament church were both intended by God to be his agents of mission.

God is using the nation of Israel as an agent of his mission, Old Testament authority Walter C. Kaiser writes. “There is a rumor abroad that the Old Testament does
not have a missionary message or vision, but that rumor and view will not square with the claims the Old Testament itself makes” (10). Regarding a people of mission, Kaiser sees the Old Testament as a significant key to understanding the mission of God.

Johannes Verkuyl, regarding the amount of literature affirming the congruence of the Old Testament, the nation of Israel, and the mission of God, states the following: “The 20th Century has produced a steady stream of literature which regards the Old Testament as an indispensable and irreplaceable base for the Church’s missionary task among the nations of the this world” (27). Verkuyl’s view of seeing the Old Testament as the critical foundation for New Testament mission is affirmed by Glasser: “The New Testament People of God need the Old Testament—every word of it!” (18).

Missional scholars also agree that the Old Testament has some key passages that shape the missional vision of the Old Testament and how this missional vision has the people of Israel at the core. Genesis 12:1-3 states the calling of Abraham. Missional scholars concur that the Bible records a general dealing with humanity in chapters 1-11 of Genesis. In chapter 12:1-3, the biblical record shows God initiating his missional work through the selection of one man, Abraham, and how God’s blessing to Abram and his seed would be the primary means of the missional work of God during this period of human history. Kaiser writes with regard to the text and its missional role in history:

The significance of this grandest of all missionary text cannot be fully appreciated until we begin to realize that there are actually three promises of blessing in Genesis 12:2-3 in which God promises:
1. “I will make you a great nation,”
2. “I will bless you,” ‘and’
3. “I will make your name great”
But this is immediately followed by a purpose clause. It is, “so that you may be a blessing.” Not one of these three promises of blessing was to be for Abraham’s self-aggrandizement. Indeed, he and his nation were blessed so that they can become a blessing.
Stott writes with regard to the missional call of Abraham, “God chose one man and his family in order through them, to bless all the families of the earth” (Kaiser, Perspectives on the World Christian Movement 5). C. Wright in agreement with Stott and Kaiser states the following:

As we turn to think of the people whom God has called and created to be the agents of his mission, God’s covenant with Abraham is the single most important biblical tradition with a biblical theology of mission and a missional hermeneutic of the Bible. (189)

Missional scholars agree that the call of Abraham and his lineage is foundational in properly understanding the mission of God.

Another key Old Testament passage is Exodus 19:3-6, which is about participation in the priesthood. This text is referred to by Kaiser as the famous “On the Wings of Eagles Speech,” which God gave to Moses. It reveals the nation of Israel’s role in his continued mission. Kaiser gives clarification to the Exodus text.

Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, “This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.” (12)

Kaiser draws out the missional emphasis of this text by stating the following:

They [Israel] were to be God’s special possession ... the role Israel was to perform was that of being kings and priests of God. It is here that Israel’s role became explicit, if any doubt remained. The whole nation was to function on behalf of God in a mediator role in relation to the nations. (13)

The Exodus 19:3-6 passage shows that the blessing God gave the nation of Israel brings attention to the fact that Israel was God’s special possession, evidenced in the fact of God’s work in delivering them from Egypt, and the purpose for this was to allow them to
fulfill their role of functioning as a nation of priests on behalf of humanity.

The previous two biblical passages are just a small sampling of the overwhelming evidence in the literature regarding God’s call and desire for the nation of Israel to be a missional nation. As Roger E. Hedlund states, “God deals with one people, Israel, in order to deal with the entire world. He manifests his salvation through his works in Israel in order that men may have the possibility of salvation” (32).

God also is using the church as an agent of mission in the New Testament. The church, the people of God in the New Testament, does not replace the nation of Israel but emerges from and connects to the history of God’s activity in the world through the nation of Israel. Hedlund writes, “The New Testament concept of mission is not unrelated to that of the Old. Though they are not identical, there is continuity. The New grows out of the Old” (151).

Three main elements exist with regard to the use of people or people groups in the New Testament: Jesus’ calling and commissioning of his disciples, the establishing and forming of the New Testament Church found in Acts, and the concluding missional work of the Apostle Paul.

A simple reading of the Gospel accounts reveals that Jesus did not function in his earthly ministry alone. Early on in his ministry, Jesus extended a missional call to his disciples, “Follow me and I will make you fishers of men” (Matt 4:19). Robert E. Coleman writes, “Jesus was not trying to impress the crowd, but to usher in a kingdom. This meant that he needed men who could lead the multitudes. Men were his method” (101). The Gospel accounts reveal that Jesus throughout his ministry continued to clarify his missional calling to his disciples:

Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over
unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness… These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel As you go, proclaim the good news, ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’” (Matt. 10:1, 5-7)

Jesus as recorded in the Gospel gave clarification of his New Testament mission in the context of the community of the disciples; these recorded Gospel accounts of Jesus imply that the mission of God in the New Testament will be mission done in community.

After Jesus’ death and resurrection, a key event occurred affecting mission in the New Testament. The risen Jesus, in a glorified state, as described in John 20:21 states to his disciples the following: “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” In essence, Jesus is stating that the disciples will continue his mission while he is at the right hand of the Father.

The last chapter of Matthew serves as a significant dynamic with regard to the focus and extent of mission that will characterize the New Testament people of God. In Matthew 28:18-20, often referred to as the Great Commission, Jesus extended the scope of mission to include all nations:

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

As seen clearly through the verses given, Jesus’ desire for mission in the New Testament is an extension to all nations. Glasser is clear on the universal mandate of the Gospel when he writes the following regarding the previous verses above:

The universal Gospel is intended for all peoples. It is not enough that Jesus’ universal lordship be assured by his resurrection triumph. This universal reality must not only be proclaimed throughout the world, the disciples were obligated to “make disciples of all nations.” (253)
In the book of Acts, Luke records how the disciples, and what will eventually be the Church, received the promised empowerment for this enormous task. Just before ascending, Jesus conveyed this promise and commission to them: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). According to Hedlund, “Acts 1:8 is the key text stating the role the Holy Spirit was to play in mission” (191).

The promised Holy Spirit is the key to empowerment for mission. Scripture shows that the acts of the Apostles must be regarded as foremost interpreter of the work of the Holy Spirit and Christian mission. At the very outset, it shows that the mission and witnesses of the Church is entirely dependent upon the coming of the Holy Spirit in new power.

The establishment and formation of the New Testament Church is found in Acts. Hedlund contends that “the New Testament church as a missionary community was inaugurated at Pentecost” (199). In Acts 2:1-8, Jesus’ promise of the Holy Spirit was fulfilled:

> When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Utterly amazed, they asked: “Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? We heard them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!”

This Acts 2 passage shows how the sending of the Holy Spirit is integral in the formation
of the New Testament community, which had at its core God’s mission to the nations, evidenced in the speaking of multiple languages for the sake of hearing the wonders of God in each person’s own native tongue.

Missional scholarship reveals that the New Testament church was slow in accepting their missional commissioning to the nations. For example, Bosch argues that the newly formed people of God tended toward a Jerusalem-centered vision of ministry that saw the “eschatological pilgrimage of the nations to Jerusalem, as depicted in the Old Testament. Their self-definition made it impossible for them to embark on a mission to the world outside Israel” (42-43). A case could be made that the disciples were slow in heeding the instruction of Jesus regarding mission. Hedlund writes, “The disciples, having received the commission from the Lord, did not rush out to evangelize non-Jews” (189). Therefore, two significant events in the life of the early church propelled it out of Jerusalem and opened the door for the integration of the Gentiles into the life of the newly formed people of God. First came the stoning of Stephen as depicted in Acts 6 and later came the Acts 15 account of the Jerusalem council.

The stoning of Stephen is significant in the life of the church because the record of Acts reveals that this event seemed to push the New Testament church out of Jerusalem and into the world that God had intended it to infiltrate:

And Saul was there, giving approval to his death. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison. (Acts 6:1-3)

Dean Flemming gives clarity to the missional significance of the stoning of Stephen:

The scattering of the Jerusalem disciples following Stephen’s martyrdom allows the gospel to cross new cultural and geographical thresholds through
the ministry of Philip, the Hellenist evangelist. By freeing the Christians from the centrality of Jerusalem and the temple, Philip the Hellenist cultivates the theological soil for the church’s universal witness. (33)

Missional scholars agree that Stephen’s martyrdom was a key event for the New Testament people of God because though it was slow in coming, it pushed the church out of its known context of Jerusalem and into the surrounding geographical locations.

The second key event in the missional events of the New Testament is recorded in Acts 15. The Jerusalem council of the newly formed church is wrestling with the issues of what to do with the Gentiles who display characteristics of New Testament grace but who also have characteristics of their home culture that are different from that of traditional Judaism. Paul and Barnabas tell about the miraculous signs and wonders God did through them while they were among the Gentile people. James goes on to states that the Gentiles should incorporate them into the church in spite of the fact that they have cultural practices that are different from those who have their Christians roots in Judaism. “When they finished James spoke up: ‘Brothers, listen to me. Simon has described to us how God at first showed his concern by taking the Gentiles as a people for himself’” (Luke 15:13-15). James continues by stating in verse 19, “It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.” As a result of James’ statements, a decision by the whole church was made to send the Gentile Christians in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia a statement that is recorded in Acts 15:24-29. This statement had significant ramifications for theology and mission in the early church as well as in the Church today. The key phrase found in verse 28 states, “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements.” The verse continues by stating the requirement to be abstaining from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from meat of strangled animals and sexual immorality. Acts 15 is significant
because it shows how mission is the driver of theology in the New Testament church. The church would be contextual in their theology, meaning they would consider culture when shaping what would be the orthopraxy in the New Testament church.

Regarding contextualization, missional scholar Andrew J. Kirk writes, “There is not theology without mission, or, to put it another way, no theology which is not missionary in nature” (11). As Bosch writes, quoting Martin Kahler, “Mission is the ‘mother of theology’” (16). Bosch explains Kahler in light of the Acts 15 passage:

The New Testament writers were not scholars who had the leisure to research the evidence before they put pen to paper. Rather they wrote in the context of an emergency situation of a church which, because of its missionary encounter with the world, the church was forced to theologize. (16)

Flemming writes with regard to the Acts 15 event and the statement by James and the decision of the Jerusalem Council:

In a fascinating example of doing contextual theology, James is apparently drawing out the pragmatic social implications of the soteriological decision of the church. The inclusion of the uncircumcised Gentiles meant that the church was faced with the challenge of maintaining fellowship within a culturally diverse community. (47)

The New Testament Church has as part of its God-given design a missional calling to the world. Paul says, “This mystery is that through the Gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus” (Eph.3:6).

The New Testament people of God are moving toward a consummation in which God’s ultimate purposes for creation will be fulfilled. This could be stated as mission fulfilled. Mission fulfillment in the New Testament is primarily given in the vision God gives to the Apostle John in the book of Revelation chapters 20 and 21.

Michael B. Allen writes regarding the consummation of church and mission.
John’s vision returns to the centripetal concept of consummation that so characterizes the Old Testament prophets. In this context, the holy city Jerusalem descends from heaven, and God gathers together in Christ all those who believe from every nation and kingdom to worship him in glory. (61)

God is on mission, and he is calling his people to be part of it for his purpose and glory. As one considers preaching in the New Testament church, I conclude that the articulation of the mission of God must be seen as primary, for it is primary in Scripture. This study turns to the subject of the missional church and will conclude with a summary section that will give the characteristics of an effective missional church as viewed through the lens of this review of literature.

The Missional Church

To have an adequate understanding of the missional church, one must have a basic understanding of the cultural condition that fostered the birth of the missional church movement. Though often written about and often misunderstood, postmodernism is the era in which the church in North America currently finds itself. This postmodern reality has huge ramifications for ministry and is the cultural condition that gave way to the articulation and urgency of the missional church.

Postmodernism is not for anything and it is no ideology; but instead it is defined by its cynicism to that which the modern world has held in high regard and firm belief. Stott states the following with regard to postmodernism:

In general, modernism proclaims the autonomy of the human reason, especially in cold objective of science, whereas postmodernism prefers the warmth of subjective experience. Modernism is committed to the quest for truth, believing that certainty is attainable; postmodernism is committed to pluralism, affirming the equal validity of all ideologies, and tolerance as the supreme virtue. Modernism declared the inevitability of social progress; postmodernism pricks the bubble of Utopian dreams. Modernism exalts self-centered individualism; but postmodernism seeks togetherness of community. Modernism is supremely self-confident, where postmodernism
is humble enough to question everything, for it lacks the confidence in anything. (*Between Two Worlds* 13)

According to Stott and others, the culture in which the preachers find themselves is the post-Christian West, which is marked by a need for the subjective experience, pluralism, community, and a lack of confidence in anything. These are the ideological realities that preachers face every time they steps into the pulpit. Further, to be blind to the fact that these cultural factors have invaded the church would be folly. (For a more complete understanding of postmodern thought, see Griffin.)

As noted, the effects of postmodernism have caused the relationship between the church and North America to change. A relationship that once was marked by North American culture coming to the church and desiring its influence is now characterized by a North America that sees little or no value in the institutional church. An authority on this problem states the following: “Rather than occupying a central and influential place, North American Christian churches are increasingly marginalized, so much so that in our urban areas they represent a minority movement” (Guder, “Missional Theology for a Missionary Church” 4). Stutzman writes, “Christian churches no longer assume the hegemony of Christian beliefs in the public square.”

With a clear loss of influence in North American culture, the church and its leaders desire a solution. Often the solution has come in the form of a promoted method or ministry idea, but one solution called the missional church is quite different. One evangelical scholar summarized it in a statement.

The forces of modernization, trailed by the deconstructive troops of postmodernism, have left Western civilization writhing in the throes of secularization. In response, some evangelicals are “going missional” in an attempt to reach an increasingly pagan culture with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Proponents seek to move beyond traditional emphasis on “missions” by establishing “missional churches” that engage all members
and align all aspects of life with God’s mission in the world. (Stutzman)

The missional church concept came from a small network of theologians who came together to write the book *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*. The network gathered over the work of missiologist Newbigin, who, after returning to Britain after thirty years of mission work in India, saw that the challenge of the Western church was the reconversion of its own people.

Missional church theorists would not say they are theorists with a new church methodology for the church; they would say the problem is much deeper than what a new methodology is able to address. Promoters of this solution state the following; “The real issues in the current crisis of the Christian Church are spiritual and theological” (Guder, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* 3). Because missional church theorists see the missional church as more of a theological conversation than as a methodology or even a movement, finding exactly what a missional church is often difficult. Based on a review of literature two authors have done the most thorough job of summarizing and clearly communicating the characteristics of a missional church.

**Developments in Missional Church Clarity**

Roxburgh in his work *What Is a Missional Church?* states that missional churches are marked more by characteristics than by a definition: “If we could provide a simple straight-forward definition of missional church, there wouldn’t be so much confusion” (5). In other words, he does not define the missional church, only describes its traits. He cites three qualities of a missional church.

First, the missional church sees Western society as a mission field. Roxburgh states, “Missional churches recognize that Western societies are now, themselves, mission fields. This fact calls for more than just new evangelism tactics… This requires more than
adjustments; it calls for a new kind of church” (What Is a Missional Church? 6). Second, the missional church sees itself as part of the missio Dei:

If the West is once again a mission field where the central narratives of the Gospel are being lost or profoundly compromised by other values and stories, then the focus of this mission is the God who has encountered us in Jesus Christ—the One whom we confess in the Trinitarian confession of Father, Son and Spirit. The church’s focus and attention is toward God not the other way around. (6)

Third, he states that the missional church is about being a contrast society:

The church is an ecclesia, which means an assembly that has been called out in a public way as a sign, witness, and foretaste of where God is inviting all creation in Jesus Christ—the church, in its life together, and witness in the world, proclaims the destiny and future of all creation. The God we meet in Jesus calls the church to be a community of people who no longer live for themselves and their own needs but as a contrast whose life together manifest God’s future for the whole of creation. (7)

According to Roxburgh, this contrasting society is formed around the beliefs and practices that continually teach the church how to live as a contrasting society (7).

Another significant work that has come from the gospel and our culture network, the perceived leaders of the missional church movement, is the book Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness. This work was written as a supportive response to the book Missional Church. The editor, Lois Y. Barrett, a leading missional thinker, worked with others to help answer the very pressing question, “What does a missional church look like and how would you know one if you saw one?” (x). Unlike Roxburgh, Barrett does define the missional church:

A missional church is a church that is shaped by participating in God’s mission, which is to set things right in a broken, sinful world, to redeem it, and to restore it to what God has always intended for the world. Missional churches see themselves not so much as sending, but being sent. A missional congregation lets God’s mission permeate everything that it does—from worship to witness to training members for discipleship.” (x)

Like Roxburgh’s characteristics, Barrett gives twelve indicators of what a missional church
might look like:

1. Missional churches proclaim the gospel. The story of God’s salvation is faithfully repeated in a multitude of ways (Treasure in Clay Jars 160).

2. Missional churches are communities where all members are involved in learning to become disciples of Jesus. The disciple identity is held by all; growth is expected by all (160).

3. Missional churches hold the Bible as normative in the church’s life. What does this look like? The church is reading the Bible together to learn what it can learn nowhere else—God’s good and gracious intent for all creation, the salvation, and the identity and purpose of life together (160).

4. Missional churches understand themselves as different from the world because of its participation in the life, death, and resurrection of its Lord. In its corporate life and public witness, the church is consciously seeking to conform to its Lord instead of the multitudes of cultures in which it finds itself (160).

5. Missional churches seek to discern God’s missional vocation for the entire community and for all of its members. The church has made its “mission” its priority and in communal ways is seeking to be and do God’s will (160).

6. The Missional Church is a community in how they as Christians behave toward one another. Acts of self-sacrifice on behalf of one another both in the church and in the local community characterize the generosity of the community (161).

7. The missional church is a community that practices reconciliation. The church community is moving beyond homogeneity toward a more heterogeneous community in its racial, ethnic, age gender, and socioeconomic makeup (161).

8. Missional churches have people within their community who hold themselves
accountable to one another in love. Substantial time is spent with one another for the purpose of watching over one another in love (161).

9. Missional churches practice hospitality. Welcoming strangers into the midst of the community plays a central role (161).

10. In missional churches, worship is the central act by which the community celebrates with joy and thanksgiving both God’s presence and God’s promised future. Significance and meaningful engagement are experienced in communal worship of God, reflecting appropriately and addressing the culture of those who worship together (161).

11. In missional churches, the community is a vital public witness. What does this look like? The church makes an observable impact that contributes to the transformation of life, society, and human relationships (161).

12. In missional churches a recognition exists that the church itself is an incomplete expression of the reign of God. A widely held perception is that this church is going somewhere and the somewhere is a more faithfully-lived life under the reign of God (161).

As seen in Barrett’s work, individuals have studied what missional churches look like when they are congruent with the values of the missional church, but because the missional church holds to the belief that spiritual, communal, and theological issues must addressed before dealing with technical aspects of ministry, in my opinion, much of the literature regarding the practices of the missional church is unclear, especially concerning the characteristics of preaching that one might find in a church that would be characterized as missional.

Trying to discover the values of a missional church and how to recognize one sparked the writing of *Treasure in Clay Jars* by Barrett, a study that sought to describe a church that had characteristics that were congruent with the values of the missional church.
This study sought to discover the look of preaching in a missional church and how to recognize it.

**Summary: Characteristics and Stated Values of Effective Missional Churches**

Based on the biblical and theological foundation for mission, and the literature on the missional church, this section identifies the characteristics and stated values of effective missional churches. These traits and values serve as the description of what this study understands to be an effective missional church. It also serves as the lens for the sermon evaluation tool in deducing if the preaching in the recognized effective missional churches is congruent with the stated values of the missional church.

These characteristics and stated values serve as the factors that the panel of experts will receive in order to make their selection of participating churches; thus, their titles will be simple and clear. However, these six will also fully embody the theology of mission and the values of the missional church.

**Effective missional churches have a high Christology.** The characteristic and value of a high Christology is rooted in the signature biblical text of missional theology, “As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you” (John 20:21), and the missional church literature. This characteristic and value also points to the reality that the missional literature has an overwhelming emphasis on pointing to the person of Jesus as the perfect embodiment of the mission of God. For missional churches, Jesus acts like a guiding compass always helping them find their direction with regards to God’s desires for the church. Authors supportive of this value are Harris, Robert and Glasser.

**Effective missional churches see the West as a mission field.** The review of literature shows that viewing the West as a mission field was the main cultural condition that sparked the works of Newbigin and Bosch and is the current message of the Gospel...
and Our Culture Network, the main proponents of missional church thinking and literature. Effective missional churches have come to grips with the words of Guder: He believes the church in North America no longer occupies a central and influential place in culture and that the North American churches have been increasingly marginalized to where today they represent a minority movement ("The Missional Voice and Posture of Public Theologizing" 16). Effective missional churches have come to grips with this cultural element. Authors supportive of this value are Guder, Roxburgh, Brownson and Murren.

**Effective missional churches view the local church as a “sent” community.**

Effective missional churches have seen that just sending people and/or money to third world countries is not God’s design for a local church. In keeping with the theological teaching of the *missio Dei*, missional churches see training those in their congregation to think and act like missionaries in their own home town as their responsibility. This characteristic and value is congruent with Art McPhee who states, “A missional church lets the mission of God permeate all that they do” (Personal interview). Authors supportive of this value are Verkuyl, Kaiser, and C. Wright.

**Effective missional churches display incarnational ministry to the marginalized in their community.** This characteristic and value once again points to the ministry of Jesus, who is, as the review of literature states, the perfect embodiment of God’s mission. Jesus’ ministry is characterized by personal contact with the marginalized within the community to whom he ministered. In ministering to the marginalized, Jesus fulfilled the Isaiah 61 passage that he read in Luke 4:16. Effective missional churches will not so much preach to the marginalized in their communities, but through actions of love and charity announce the reign of God. They will seek to show the culture the love of Jesus, not just talk about it. As Guder states, “In Jesus the reign of God has become present in his actions,
and in his resurrection he demonstrated that God is acting incarnationally to redeem and renew creation” (Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America 185). Authors who support this value are Guder, Roxburgh, and Barrett.

Effective missional churches see disciples of Jesus as a distinct contrast to society. This characteristic and value is grounded in the fact that God has shown himself as One who chooses a people for himself to be agents of his mission throughout the earth. The review of literature reveals that the nation of Israel and the New Testament Church are called by God to be a distinctive contrast to the culture around them. This distinctive contrast is not one that repelled but actually attracted the culture around them to the person of Jesus: “Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matt. 5:16). Thus, effective missional churches do not see disciples of Jesus as skilled in the ways of the world but as distinctive by having different values, priorities, and schedules. Authors supportive of this view are Guder and Hunsberger.

Effective missional churches preach the Gospel. Grounded in the reality that missional theologians see the Bible as the grand narrative of mission, effective missional churches communicate the truths of the kingdom of God, redemption through Christ, and an eschatological hope. This characteristic and value is clearly communicated by Guder who writes, “The church is defined by its origins in a gospel cast vision that always draws it forward” (Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America 86). Authors supportive of this view are Brownson, Hunsberger, and Guder.

For this study, these are the characteristics and values of effective missional churches. They will serve this study by helping the selected panel of experts identify effective missional churches within the Pacific Northwest District within the C&MA, for
the purpose of identifying the common characteristics of preaching found within them. These stated characteristics will also serve as the lens through which each sermon was studied in the desired goal of finding congruence or incongruence with the stated values of the missional church.

**Preaching**

The biblical record reveals that preaching is crucial to God’s work in the world. The biblical narrative shows that throughout human history, God has chosen to use his Word spoken to others as a primary way of communicating his redemptive mission and message. Paul asked the church at Rome, “And how can they believe in the one whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching?” (Rom. 10:14).

The biblical record also shows that God has gifted some individuals in the life of the church with the specific gift of preaching (1 Tim. 5:17). These individuals are called by God to be stewards of this gift and to develop this gift to its fullest potential for the purpose of the church growing to maturity and the mission of God being realized. As Boda, an authority on preaching states, “The faithful communication of God’s word is critical to the success of the Church’s mission” (5).

**The Preaching Ministry of Jesus**

Investigating the preaching ministry of Jesus as revealed in the New Testament gospel is essential. The relevance of Jesus’ preaching ministry to the subject of preaching in the missional church cannot be overstated. Jesus’ preaching relevance is deducted from the fact that all of the preaching Jesus does as depicted in the Gospels is in the context of Jesus fulfilling the mission that God the Father had called him to do: “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work” (John 4: 34).

Recent studies, such as Loren B. Mead’s, have compared pastoral ministry today to
that of the first few centuries following Christ’s birth (9-29). Meaning, the Church finds itself in a missional arena that is similar to the apostolic era of the church. As such, an examination of the preaching ministry of Jesus, who was a successful communicator in the first era of the church, could provide valuable insights for preaching in the missional church. Ralph and Gregg Lewis espouse on the preaching ministry of Jesus:

Orthodox Christians though the ages have held Jesus up as our model for living. Why hasn’t He been our model for preaching? Jesus’ sermons not only capture the attention of his listeners, but they also convincingly drove home unforgettable messages. (13)

Recognizing the value of Jesus as a model for preaching is not new. Several books have come out regarding this subject, and often when examining a book about preaching, a full chapter is devoted specifically to the preaching of Jesus. One specific example is *Learning to Preach like Jesus* by Lewis and Lewis. Though helpful, this work is more bent on communicating how Jesus preached and how people learn.

The pursuit in this section primarily will cover the Gospel accounts and depict the preaching ministry of Jesus, showing its value for those who ascribe to the values and message of the missional church.

**Jesus’ Ministry of Preaching Introduced**

All of the synoptic gospels contain many episodes that reveal the preaching ministry of Jesus. Evidently the Gospel writers made a deliberate choice to show that the preaching ministry of Jesus was significant to who Jesus was and what Jesus’ ministry was intended to accomplish. These synoptic gospel accounts show that preaching was not an aspect of Jesus’ ministry to which he graduated; instead, the Gospels record that Jesus’ ministry began with his preaching. The first chapter of Mark records, “Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom
of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news’” (Mark 1:14-15). Matthew records a similar but different account when he states the following regarding Jesus’ ministry: “From that time Jesus began to proclaim, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near’” (Matt. 4:17). Luke records, “But he said to them, ‘I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities for I was sent for this purpose’” (Luke 4:43).

The biblical texts reveal that preaching was an essential element and foundational aspect of Jesus’ ministry. Robert H. Mounce writes, “The portrayal of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels is supremely that of one who came ‘heralding the kingdom of God’” (28). Mounce goes on to say, “When the ministry of healing threatened to eclipse that of preaching, Jesus drew apart from the clamoring crowd and moved to the next town. He had come to preach; healing was secondary” (29). According to Mounce Jesus did not give equal amount of time to different aspects of his ministry; he gave more time to preaching.

The Gospels also provide an abundance of material regarding the setting in which Jesus preached, the people who were attracted, and the response that people had to his preaching. The Gospel accounts show that Jesus preached in a wide array of physical locations. Early in his gospel, Luke shows Jesus preaching in the synagogue as was customary (Luke 4:14-19). Matthew shows Jesus preaching throughout the week on mountainsides and in fishing boats (Matt. 5:1-2; 13:1-3). Mark’s gospel shows Jesus as a traveling preacher, one who preaches in the towns and villages in the region of Galilee (Mark 1:38-39). This fact of Jesus preaching in multiple places is summarized well by Boda:

Between synagogue appearances, we find Jesus in divergent settings from hillside to fireside to well-side to boat to grain field to temple. We catch him in the act of teaching from his home town of Nazareth all the way to
Boda’s statement regarding the multiple places that Jesus chose to preach in is important. His statement gives greater clarity to the preaching ministry do Jesus.

The preaching of Jesus also drew a wide variety of people. Jesus taught all who would listen: rich, poor, men, women, Jews, or Gentiles. The Gospels show that no individuals were considered insignificant as recipients of Jesus’ preaching. The wide variety of people Jesus touched with his preaching ministry is seen in its clearest form in the third and fourth chapters of John’s Gospel. John shows Jesus being skilled at communicating truth to the highest religious leaders of the day and the lowest social outcasts. Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus is found in chapter three, while in chapter four, John shows Jesus communicating truth to the Samaritan woman.

The Gospel records how the preaching ministry of Jesus gained him a reputation as a skilled and gifted communicator who taught by the authority of God (Matt. 4:23-25, Mark 6:1-3). Mark’s Gospel records that Jesus’ preaching not only drew him followers but enemies by those who were part of the religious establishment of the day. Mark records, “The chief priest and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for ways to kill him, for they feared him, for the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching” (Mark 11:18). As one preaching expert comments, “Jesus’ preaching and that of his sent ones brought the combined wrath of politics and religion down upon them” (Dally 41). The reality that Jesus’ preaching gained him enemies that wanted to kill him may point to the consideration that preachers’ effectiveness may be best measured by the number of both followers and enemies they draws. As such, no other conclusion can be drawn except that the Gospel accounts communicate and want their readers to know and understand that Jesus was seen by the people as an effective preacher and communicator.
The question of what made Jesus such an effective preacher needs to be addressed because of the obvious impact it could have on the missional church as it seeks to come to some understanding about common characteristics that should be found in missional church preachers and their preaching. The Gospel accounts and the literature point to two possible factors that made Jesus an effective preacher; they are the content that he preached and how he preached.

**The Content of Jesus’ Preaching**

A summary of Jesus’ preaching as revealed in the Gospels show that Jesus’ preaching content was the revelation of God. The Gospels show that Jesus came to earth with the specific mission of making God known to the human race. In John’s Gospel, Jesus comments about his own ministry in his prayer to his Father: “I have revealed you to those you gave me out of the world” (John 17:6). The reality that the content of Jesus’ preaching was that of revealing the Father is seen most clearly in Matthew’s recording of the Sermon on the Mount. The Sermon on the Mount is the revelation of God the Father’s will for his people. No less than fourteen times in this sermon does Jesus refer to God the Father. This revelation of God, as found in Jesus’ preaching, contradicts those who see Jesus simply as a great teacher. As one authority on preaching states, “A thorough study of the whole of Jesus’ teaching reveals nothing less than a deep concern to reveal God to the human race” (Boda 70).

Coupled with the biblical evidence that the preaching of Jesus revealed the Father, the Gospels also make clear that the content in Jesus’ preaching was the kingdom of God. The Gospel accounts are clear regarding Jesus preaching the message of the kingdom of God. Mark 1:14-15 states, “Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, ‘the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in
Along with the Mark text, Matthew 4:17 and Luke 4:43 also give clear accounts of Jesus announcing the content and subject of his preaching ministry, that being the kingdom of God. Preaching authority Dally writes about this reality:

The proclamation of the kingdom of God inaugurates Jesus’ public ministry in each of the synoptic gospels. It thus contextualizes everything to follow: teaching, healing, exorcisms, confrontation with representatives of the Jewish and Roman religious and political authorities, suffering, death and resurrection. The whole story of Jesus illustrates the mysterious proclamation of the reign of God come near. (47)

Dally’s statement is important because it states that Jesus’ ministry of preaching contextualized and brought definition to the rest of his ministry.

At this point, further understanding of the kingdom of God is needed to have an adequate grasp of the content of Jesus’ preaching ministry. The literature shows many definitions of what the kingdom of God is as Jesus preached it.

This study will use the succinct definition given by Jack Nelson Pallmeyer:

The kingdom of God is present on earth whenever life accurately reflects the will and the sovereignty of God. It is the way life and society would be if a compassionate God were in charge instead of Roman governments, client kings and the temple establishments. (17)

In Jesus’ communicating and preaching of the kingdom, he is not contradicting his revelation of God the Father; rather, in communicating the kingdom of God, Jesus is expounding the desires and hopes of the Father for the people.

Closely related to the content of his teaching is the fact that much of Jesus’ teaching was rooted in the Old Testament Scriptures. Preaching that is rooted in the Old Testament is best seen in how the gospels reveal Jesus as the fulfillment of what the Old Testament promised regarding the sending of a Messiah. Because of this, Jesus clearly intended his teaching to be rooted in the Old Testament Scriptures. This is seen most clearly in Matthew’s gospel where he identifies many events as direct and specific fulfillments of a
prophet’s predictions fulfilled in Jesus (Matt. 1:22; 4:14-16; 8:17; 21:4). These passages by Matthew show that Jesus made the claim that his intent was not to abolish the law and the Prophets but to fulfill them. Luke’s gospel also makes this point very clear in the fourth chapter when Jesus began his preaching ministry. He grounded his preaching ministry in the words spoken by the prophet Isaiah (Luke 4:18).

The final aspect regarding the content of Jesus preaching comes as a counter balance to his preaching being steeped in the Old Testament Scriptures: The Gospels also reveal that Jesus’ preaching was rooted in the everyday life of the people. The gospel accounts show that Jesus found a way draw upon the everyday elements of life and to use them as word pictures for the sake of imparting a spiritual principle that he wanted to teach. In simple review of Jesus’ preaching, one finds very little abstraction; rather, one finds concrete images to which people in everyday life can relate. Examples of Jesus using concrete images in his preaching would be: When Jesus teaches about worry in Matthew 7 he uses flowers and birds; in Matthew 13 when Jesus is teaching about the condition of the human heart as it hears the message of the kingdom, he uses the elements of soil, seed, thorns, birds, pathways, and harvest; in John’s Gospel when Jesus wants to teach about what is needed to produce fruit in the Christian life, he uses the image of a vine and branches. All of these elements had their grounding in everyday lives of the people. “Jesus scratched where the ordinary listener itched. He cited daily incidents, personal experience, and common events to grab their attention and maintain their involvement” (Lewis and Lewis 84).

In summary, revealing God, the kingdom of God, the fulfillment of the Old Testament, and elements from the daily life of people seem to be the basic content of Jesus’ preaching. These elements need to be communicated in an effective manner. Thus,
this study will examine how Jesus delivered his content that made up of these elements in a way that made him such an effective preacher.

The Elements of Delivery in Jesus’ Preaching

A simple reading of the Gospels reveals that the gospel writers placed emphasis on the content of Jesus’ preaching but also emphasized the elements of delivery that were employed by Jesus. These elements of delivery are worth documenting because, as the literature shows, Jesus was an effective preacher, and he preached in the context of mission.

First and foremost, the Gospels reveal that Jesus is best known for his powerful stories. A simple survey of the Gospel accounts underscores the fact that he understood the power of story. From his story of the prodigal son found in Luke 15 to the parable of the kingdom found in Matthew 13, Jesus’ preaching ministry is marked by great stories. These stories are often called parables, and they were the major delivery system used in his sermons. In fact, over thirty parables are found in the gospels with several of them being repeated. This reality gives way to the reason why the disciples asked the question, “Why do you speak to the people in parables?” (Matt. 13:10).

Lewis and Lewis write about Jesus’ use of story in his preaching ministry.

Jesus’ parables represent humans as they really are, human life as it really is. They serve as Polaroid snapshots of first-century life in Palestine. They are stories based on fact. They reveal real men, real women, and the common things of daily living. No wonder the people listened so willingly. (28)

This use of story or parables is a fundamental foundation when building an understanding of Jesus’ preaching and then coming to a basic grasp of sermon delivery.

The gospel record also reveals that Jesus not only used story when he preached; he used props. Props allowed Jesus to draw upon the mental and visible images of his day. As
Boda notes, “Jesus had amazing ability to make use of both physical and mental props in his teaching style” (76). In wanting to explain who can enter the kingdom of God, Jesus used a child to get his point across: “Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 18:3). The use of a child enhanced what Jesus was trying to say. Mark records that Jesus used the prop of a denarius when asked a question from the religious leaders of the day about the subject of paying taxes to Caesar (Mark 12:13-17). However, the most important prop used by Jesus is still used today by his Church: The bread and wine that Jesus used for the Passover meal (Matt. 26: 26-29). Jesus used these elements as props to communicate the crucial truths about his death, and these props not only have a significant place in Church history, but also in the Church today.

Jesus’ magnificent preaching content and the fact that his use of story and prop were so effective often lead to the next factor in his preaching delivery: Jesus demanded a response to his preaching. This demand for a response was often seen as a natural result of Jesus’ preaching, which was so clearly relevant to the listening audience. The Gospels also record that the response Jesus asked of people often came in the form of a question, as is shown in Matthew 16:13-19. Jesus asked the disciples, “Who do people say that the son of man is?” Then he demanded a response from his disciples by asking them, “Who do you say that I am?”

Sometimes this demand for a response would come in the form of a statement as seen in his interaction with the rich young ruler. Jesus exhorts the young man to sell all he has and give his possessions to the poor (Luke 19:18-23). In Jesus’ dealing with the Pharisees, a desired response is clearly communicated, “bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance” (Matt. 3: 8). Jesus’ demanding of a response in his preaching is summarized
well by Boda: “Jesus constantly found ways to hold before people his demand for a specific response of obedience and interaction” (79).

In summary, the preaching method of Jesus is one that shows emphasis on the content and delivery. Jesus’ content was grounded in revealing God the Father, the kingdom of God, and the Old Testament Scriptures. Jesus’ delivery was supported by stories, props, and a demand for a response from his listeners. Because Jesus was the perfect embodiment of the mission of God, attention given to the preaching ministry of Jesus is well worth an examination.

**The Different Definitions of Preaching**

In preaching scholarship one will find many definitions and depictions of preaching. Most scholars agree that human personality is a key factor in effective preaching. Emphasizing that preaching is not void of the human element, Philips Brooks gives the classic definition of preaching, calling preaching “truth through personality” (Robinson 24). Also, preaching authorities state that preaching has as one of its goals the making of biblical truth relevant to the needs of daily life. Martin Lloyd-Jones points to the possibility of daily relevance when he defined preaching as, “the teaching of the scriptures to what is happening in our day” (109).

Preaching authorities also place an emphasis on the work and presence of Christ himself, through the Spirit, when the word of God is preached (Wardlaw 142). The manifestation of the person of Christ is not demonstrated in the preaching authorities who write placing a higher emphasis on the spiritual authority in preaching and spiritual nature of preaching, rather than those who write more on the technical aspect of preaching.

Another common thread of emphasis for the writers was the bridge building between two worlds, the biblical world and the current world, shown in Stott’s
explanation of preaching to be “an activity of bridge-building between the revealed Word and the contemporary World” (*Between Two Worlds* 178). Mounce states the following about preaching: “Preaching is that timeless link between God’s great redemptive Act and man’s apprehension of it” (153). Mounce’s work comes as a reflection on work of John Knox.

Each definition is, in its own way, an accurate depiction of preaching. This study, building on the previous definitions, defines preaching as the proclamation of God’s written word by an individual who, in turn, leads others to the person and the mission of Jesus in a way that is culturally sensitive, personally challenging, and applicable to life. Nevertheless, in light of the study, the words of John Wesley to Francis Asbury before sending Asbury to lead the Methodist movement in the United States, gives great clarity to preaching. Wesley simply stated, “Offer them Christ” (Pickard xi).

**The Basic Elements of Preaching**

A review of the literature also shows that authorities on preaching agree to four basic elements in the preaching event that make preaching, *preaching*.

Thomas Long in his work, *The Witness of Preaching*, asks the question, “What is preaching?” (22). The question sounds simple enough, but Long and others agree the answer is not easily found. A review of the literature reveals that authors often agree that the following factor must be included for biblical preaching: A preacher must take their place for biblical preaching to take place. Long, in his description of the crucial ingredients in preaching, “There is the preacher, who arises from the congregation but now stand to preach in front of the community” (22). Phillips Brooks, in giving his description of the elements of preaching, states that a prerequisite for the preaching event is not just the communication of truth but the communication of truth through human personality. “It
[preaching] must come not only through man but through men” (20). Brooks is not stating that it must come through people exclusively but that the human element must be in place for actual preaching to take place.

The apostle Paul, in his letter to the church at Rome, states the following about the necessity of a preacher: “And how can they believe in the one who they have not heard? And can they hear without someone preaching to them?” (Rom. 10:14). The subject can be summarized by Arthur Stephen Hoyt when he writes about the vital elements of preaching: “So, in the vital elements of preaching, the man comes first” (5).

Just having a preacher does not mean that preaching is happening; preachers are not an end in themselves. The literature shows that the next needed cultural factor for preaching to take place is a receiver of the preached message. If placed in a church congregation, or the unbelieving world, preaching takes place when the message preached is heard by people. Long writes regarding the crucial ingredients of preaching: “There is the congregation, who will, of course, be the hearer of the preaching” (22). In his work, Mounce writes, “Preaching is the immediate, powerful, personal-self-communication of the eternal Word to men. Preaching has a single purpose, that Christ might come to those who have assembled to listen” (154). The Apostle Paul in describing his own preaching states that his proclamation about God happened in the context of listeners, “When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God” (1 Cor. 2:1).

Clearly from the literature and the Scripture the first two conditions needed are a listener and a preacher if preaching is going to take place. The third element cited in the literature as needed is a message that is communicated between the preacher and the listener. This message is ideally the biblical story or what others have called “the gospel,”
which is the message of Christ and his redemption offered to the world. The Apostle Paul, in reference to his own preaching, states the content to be nothing other than Christ crucified:

Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. (1 Cor. 1:23)

Paul clearly preached Christ and him crucified, not because it was popular but because it was the message God had chosen to bring humanity to salvation.

John Killinger in his book states the following about the preacher’s love for the Bible and the biblical story as foundational to the preaching event, the preacher’s life, and the church’s health: “The Bible is the Community’s [the church] book, and the minister who would preach must come to love it, must live in its pages day by day and year by year, until it fairly saturates his or her being” (10).

Killinger draws on the words of Barth as he continues in the same vein.

The preacher who has abandoned talking about God has abandoned our reason, our calling to be proclaimers. When people come to us for help, said Barth, “they do not really want to learn more about living; they to learn more about what is on the father edge of living-God.” (12)

For Barth preaching had a central purpose—to take people to what he called, “on the further edge of living” (12). For him this was the world that included God, and his interaction with the human experience or the human drama. This statement by Barth reveals that he saw traditional preaching as anything but tame; rather, he saw it taking a person “to the edge of life” (Killinger 13). Statements such as Barth’s could point to the fact that in preaching, substance takes precedent over style, for it is the subject of preaching—God. In fact traditional preaching should find its place in the missional church, for no matter how relational the style of preaching, the subject of the message is central.
The final element of preaching is the presence of Christ as part of the preaching event. The presence of Christ as part of the preaching event is brought most clearly by Long:

Christ is present in and with the church, and all ministries, including preaching, are expressions of this presence. Preaching does not cause Christ to be present. It is possible only because Christ is already present, and to speak in Christ’s name is to claim Christ’s own promise, “The one who hears you, hears me” (Luke 10:16). (23)

The aspect of the presence of Christ as part of the reality of the preaching event is the unique factor in the preaching event. The presence of Christ makes preaching a type of sacramental event where people encounter Christ through the preaching of the word of God, by the preacher:

To proclaim the message of divine deliverance is the most solemn responsibility ever entrusted to mortal man. When the preacher mounts the pulpit steps he does so under obligation to mediate the presence of Almighty God… It is not even enough that he should speak about God; he must allow God to speak. (Mounce 158)

Allowing God to speak has always been the central aspect of preaching. In contrast, the missional church literature often does not hold to a high view of the presence of Christ in the preaching event.

At this point showing how the stated essential elements of preaching, a preacher, a listener, a message, and the presence of Christ have bearing on the missional church is important. A prime value in the missional church is making sure that the church is functioning in such a way that it has impact on the culture in which it is placed. Missional church proponents continue to seek influence among church leaders today, and essential in gaining influence will be the writers in the missional church showing how these essential elements fit into a church that is committed to living out the values as stated by the missional church. To divert from or to ignore these elements in preaching would put the
missional church in danger of being unbiblical or shallow in its view of the preaching ministry.

The Ecclesiastical Primacy of Preaching

The ecclesiastical primacy of preaching shows the biblical instruction and place of preaching within the New Testament church with regards to mission. Joseph R. Dongell, professor of biblical studies at Asbury Theological Seminary, discusses how an overview of the New Testament Scriptures reveals a message that those who are gifted in the word focused gifts have a hyper-essential element to them:

While all believers are in ministry, and all ministries are essential to the health, worship and mission of the church, ministries that mediate the word of God are hyper-essential, steering the whole people of God forward according to the will of God. (5)

Dongell in essence is saying that while all gifts are necessary and needed, the word gifts or the preaching gifts should receive special emphasis. To support his statements, Dongell chooses and explains five passages.

Using Acts 6:1-6, Dongell states that the point is not “problem solving through the division of labor” (5) but how the Word of God preached was placed in a position of primacy in the New Testament church. Plus, this act had significant effect on the growth of the church:

Here the apostles respond with creativity and flexibility to the challenges of ethnic tension and inequity within the community, and it is clear that interpretation doesn’t quite get to the heart of the matter according to the language of the story itself. It appears that the real focus of the incident is the central importance of “prayer and … the ministry of the word,” and that apostolic organizational ingenuity was effective precisely because it served to safeguard and advance that word-bearing ministry. In fact, the subsequent growth of the church is described in those very terms: “And the word of God increased.” (5-6)

No other passage in the New Testament is clearer in its imperative for all people in
the New Testament Church to have a sense of “belongingness” than 1 Cor. 12-14. Paul is clear regarding the implication of being part of the body of Christ which is the church. No one can say, “I have no need of you” since God has arranged the body just the way he desired for the sake of mutual edification. Dongell points out that even this passage that places such emphasis on the edification of all gifts for the sake of “building up the body” shows Paul placing an emphasis on the preaching ministry:

But the intrinsic value and reciprocal sharing of each part does not prevent the apostle from working out a complementary and somewhat paradoxical truth in chapter 14, where he urges his readers to “earnestly desire spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.” As he develops his appeal throughout this chapter, a picture of what he means by prophecy emerges. It is clear, intelligible speech that 1) addresses the whole community while remaining intelligible to outsiders, 2) employs the mind by moving it toward mature thinking, and 3) can be termed “instruction.” Somehow with its very delivery, insiders will be edified, while outsiders will sense the very presence of God and come to faith. Paul’s insistence on the value of all gifts (chapter 12) then, is complemented by his insistence that the gifts of prophetic/instructional/evangelistic address are at a premium. (6)

Dongell’s working of the biblical text clearly indicates that he sees the Apostle Paul acknowledging all gifts as being important in the church but the word-based gifts as being the ones worth “earnestly desiring.”

The Ephesians 4:1-16 passage is not a complete list of spiritual gifts. Dongell writes that the list given by Paul was not meant to be seen as exhaustive but as an intentional restriction of gifts for the sake of emphasizing a specific group, that group being the Word-based gifts:

Whatever differences may exist between them (apostles, prophets, evangelist and pastor/teachers), they are all tasked with speaking on behalf of God to the Church. We might say that a church without the full range of gifted persons of all sorts will be dysfunctional, but that a church crippled in the ranks of the word bearers will be downright disastrous, exposed in utter dissolution. (7)

Based on the statements of Dongell, the word-gifts or preaching-gifts have such
significance in his eyes that the church that lacks in these gifts will be downright disastrous, exposed in utter dissolution. These words by Dongell accentuate the primacy of preaching in the New Testament.

Some of Paul’s pastoral instructions to Timothy are found in 2 Timothy 3:10-4:5. “Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; Correct, rebuke and encourage—wit great patience and careful instruction” (2 Tim. 4:2). Regarding Paul’s instruction to Timothy about preaching and its role in the newly found church, Dongell writes the following:

Repeatedly he instructs his own appointees to engage in verbal, word-bearing ministry. In the first epistle, Timothy is urged to “put these instructions before the brethren” (4:6); to “command and teach these things” (4:11); to “attend to the public reading of scripture” and to “preaching” and “teaching” (4:13); and to take heed “to your teaching,” since such attention “will save both you and your hearers” (4:16). In the second epistle emphasis on the discursive continues: “remind them” (2:14), “charge them” (2:14), “preach the word” (2:2,9), “remind” (3:1), and “insist” (3:7). His upright character and fruitfulness in good deeds will serve to validate his “teaching” and “sound speech” which will, when so validated, prove unassailable to opponents. (8)

Dongell continues to show that with an examination of the New Testament and how gifts are prioritized, one can clearly see an emphasis on the Word-based gifts. Thus, Paul’s instruction to Timothy concerning the selection of elders/overseers, he focuses on family quality, ethical character, and spiritual maturity. Paul, when giving criteria for elders/overseers’ giftedness, which should be found in an elders/overseers life, states he must be “an apt teacher” (2 Tim. 3:2).

In Paul’s writing to Timothy regarding, as Dongell states, “the hyper-emphasis” the 1 Timothy 5 passage is key. In 1 Timothy 5:17, Paul states, “The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.” Paul sees not all elders in the role of directing the church through
their preaching and teaching, but those who do have that role, Paul instructs, “are worthy of double honor.” Dongell gives great clarification to this passage:

While one might suppose that the “double honor” to be awarded them stems simply from the double job description and its double workload, the entire atmosphere of the epistle should steer us toward a different conclusion: that the roles of preaching and teaching constitute a hyper-essential calling which wield power either to enliven or to destroy the community as others do not. (9)

Dongell’s statement is important because is clearly depicts all gifts as important in the church, but the statement reveals how the Word-based gifts have power that others do not.

Dongell’s seminal work shows that a scholarly reading of the New Testament reveals that preaching should always have a place of primacy in the Church for the purpose of achieving its mission. With regard to mission, appropriately this study’s review of literature turns to address specifically the current preaching environment, meaning the culture in which missional preaching will take place.

**The Current Preaching Environment**

Knowing the current cultural environment or mind-set, which has been titled postmodernism by authorities, is a must for effective preaching to take place in the missional church which is clear in its understanding as a sent community into culture. Because the subject of postmodernism is so vast, this study acknowledges that it will not be able to give a complete literature review of the subject. Thus, this literature review gives the relevant aspects of the possible eight aspects of postmodern thought. For a full literature engagement with subject of postmodernism, *Varieties of Postmodern Thought* by David Ray Griffin is recommended.

Postmodernism and its thinking are vastly different than what is commonly understood in the North American church. Daniel J. Huckins states regarding this reality,
“Never in our nation’s history have those who are a part of the Christian subculture experienced such a gulf in understanding of worldviews as exists now between them and those of the postmodern mindset” (47). This reality is undergirded by Doug Murren who writes the following with regards to postmodernism: “We are talking about a cultural phenomenon, a set of attitudes and assumptions, mentality distinctive to those born between 1946-1964” (23).

The term postmodernism is widely used but often not understood by the persons using it. In explaining postmodernism, Howard Snyder says, “Postmodernism is a vigorous reaction to the modernism. It is a flat rejection of the ‘Enlightenment Project’ to build a new world through reason, law, science” (215). He goes on to state, “The postmodern worldview represents the triumph of the subjective, the ephemeral, and the fragmentary over the unchanging and the universal” (218). Stanly J. Grenz, who is recognized as a leading thinker in this realm, states, “They [scholars] have reached a consensus on one point: this phenomenon marks the end of a single, universal world view, a celebration of the local and particular at the expense of the universal” (11-12). Gene Edwards Veith, Jr., a leading author on postmodern thought, calls postmodernism “Babel revisited” (119), while others simply stated that postmodernism is “nothing less than pastiche of thought, an intellectual mood, and a cultural expression” (Huckins 49).

Another point of view comes from Hunter where he embraces the negative realities of postmodernism and calls the church to embrace the opportunities that come with postmodernism:

The secularization of the West has placed the Church in a missionary role here at home, because our neighbors do not share our faith, our memory of our faith, our assumptions, or our vocabulary. The West once again is a vast mission field. (37)
Hunter’s statement gives clarity to the cultural context within which missional preaching will take place; being ignorant of this reality would not be a holistic look at missional preaching.

Gathering a profile of postmodernism is difficult, but some characteristics appear to be widely shared. First, postmodernism would assert that the nature of truth is relative. Relative truth might be the dominant factor in constructing an understanding of postmodern thought. Leighton Ford says, “No one truth is more valid than any other—and the postmodern mind sees no contradiction in such a viewpoint” (117). Thus, this principle has led to a hyper-relative view of truth, which holds to the belief that objective points of view govern in matters of morality and religion. This perceived objectivity is a particular challenge for preaching.

Another aspect of postmodernism is that truth is often community-based. Community is a high value in the postmodern mind-set, which is in direct opposition to the individualism that often accompanied the modern world. In postmodernism truth is often seen as a matter of social context. As Grenz points out, “Truth is relative to the community” (8). He goes on to say, “Individuals come to knowledge only by way of cognitive framework mediated by the community in which they participate” (168). Thus, preachers face a particular challenge because the motto in the church could be, “We have our truth, and you have yours.”

Scholars also agree that high pessimism regarding human progress is another distinctive mark of postmodernism. If the Enlightenment was about the belief in humanity’s goodness and progress, postmodernism, as reflected in pop culture, reflects a culture of despair and nihilism. “Confidence that humanity can solve the world’s problems no longer exists, or that the previous generation’s economic situation can be surpassed”
AIDS, the environment, government debt, and other issues lead many postmoderns to be skeptical about the future. Therefore, a particular problem for preaching exists: Getting people to believe in anything hopeful is increasingly difficult.

A final factor for discussion regarding the current preaching condition is that of pop culture and media reinforcing the values of postmodernism on a wide and consistent scale. The postmodern world is commercially driven and revolves around the subjects of clothing styles and music. “The media is the primary carrier of the postmodern ethos” (Grenz 31). This media factor might be the most dominant issue that contemporary preaching needs to overcome. As stated by Snyder, “Nothing epitomizes popular postmodernism better than MTV and the hand held remote controls which American adolescents nibble and dabble their way toward lostness, grazing at will in the flickering pastures of one greener channel after another” (220).

Postmodern culture, its mind-set, and worldview are the elements in which the missional preacher finds him or herself preaching. Not to pay attention to these things when studying the subject of missional preaching would be limiting scholarship and would not lead to a holistic understanding of what challenges face those who will undertake the task of missional preaching.

**Summary**

A quality understanding of preaching in the missional church cannot be accomplished without an examination of the biblical theology of mission, the literature of the missional church, and a biblical study of the preaching ministry of Jesus. Chapter 3 explores the common characteristics of preaching found in effective missional churches within the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance.
Research Design

A qualitative approach was required to evaluate the sermons in this project. The value of qualitative research for this study is affirmed by William Wiersma and Stephen G. Jurs who cite Krathwohl on a description of qualitative research: “Qualitative research: research that describes phenomena in words instead of numbers or measures” (13).

Qualitative research is further described by P. Maykurt and R. Morehouse who say, “The process of qualitative data analysis takes many forms, but it is fundamentally a nonmathematical analytical procedure that involves examining the meaning of people’s words and actions” (121). Data received will be the result of the participants’ own words rather than a fixed theory or hypothesis.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Problem and Purpose

Along with Boda and Reid, I am concerned with the gap of knowledge regarding preaching, specifically preaching in the missional church. The missional church writers have done a disservice to the missional church by leaving a dearth of knowledge on the subject of preaching. Thus, this study will be focused on the common characteristics of preaching found in effective missional churches, in order to understand how these characteristics are congruent with the values of the missional church for the purpose of enhancing preaching not only in missional churches but in all churches that preach the gospel.

The purpose of this study was to identify common characteristics of preaching in congregations identified as effective missional churches within the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance and evaluate these characteristics in light of the missional church’s stated values. The accomplishment of this purpose should result in the formulation of a model for preaching that will enhance the effectiveness of missional churches not only in Christian and Missionary Alliance denomination but in other churches in the United States.

Research Questions

This study employed the following three research questions. These questions guided the creation and use of the sermon evaluation tool, and the results of these questions are discussed in Chapter 4.

Research Question #1

What are common characteristics of preaching found in effective missional churches
within the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance? For this study, I examined three sermons from each of eight preachers, for a total of twenty-four studied sermons from the effective missional churches identified by a panel of experts on the churches within the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. These sermons were examined using a sermon evaluation tool (see Appendix B) for the purpose of closing the gap of knowledge regarding the common characteristics of preaching in effective missional churches.

Research Question #2

In what way are these characteristics of preaching congruent with the missional churches’ stated values? For this study, I examined how congruent the common characteristics of preaching found in effective missional church were with the stated values of the missional church as identified in this study’s review of literature. This examination served the purpose of identifying preaching characteristics that enhance missional church effectiveness.

Research Question #3

Where is there a disconnect between preaching characteristics found in missional churches and missional church values? For this study, I examined the disconnect between the common characteristics of preaching found in effective missional churches and the stated values of the missional church as identified in this study’s review of literature. This examination served the purpose of identifying preaching characteristics that deter missional church effectiveness.

Participants

The participants for this study are preachers who have been identified as pastoring effective missional churches within the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and
Missionary Alliance (see Appendix A). These preachers were identified by a panel of experts. The criterion used by the panel for selecting the participants included the following. First, the participants had to preach to the same audience on a weekly basis; this venue would be considered the participants’ ministry setting. Second, the sermons collected were from a normal Sunday in the life of the church and were selected by the participant or by the researcher when asked by the participant. (For a definition of normal see Appendix E). Third, the sermons had to be preached in churches that the developed panel of experts recognized as having characteristics that embodied the values of the missional church.

Panel of Experts

As indicated previously, the panel of experts selected the most effective missional churches in the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance as qualified by the effective missional church characteristics and values list given in this study. Each panelist had demonstrated knowledge of the Pacific Northwest District by meeting the following criteria: First, they had been in the Pacific Northwest District for longer than ten years, and second, they had an official position of leadership within the Pacific Northwest District. Both of these standards ensured a depth and breadth of knowledge regarding the churches in the district.

The panel did not meet together but through their individually answered questionnaires provided their individual expert opinions on which churches within the Pacific Northwest District most embodied the characteristics and values of effective missional churches as given in this study.

Each member of the panel was first contacted by phone for the purpose of asking about his or her interest and willingness to participate in this study. Second, the
participating panel of experts each received a follow-up e-mail thanking him or her for future participation and giving further instructions regarding responsibilities as participants and the criteria for selecting effective missional churches (see Appendix C). Third, each member of the panel of experts was sent the effective missional church questionnaire as an attachment through an e-mail to complete, and this questionnaire was returned to the author (see Appendix D).

Each member of the panel of experts was asked to list ten churches within the district that embodied at least four of the effective missional church characteristics and values as presented in this study and rate the strength or weakness (1 being weak, 5 being strong) of each characteristic in the church they identified as an effective missional church (see Appendix D). The implication of the rated strengths and weaknesses of each church are discussed in Chapter 5.

Each participant in the panel of experts was given two weeks to complete the questionnaire and to return it as an attachment in an e-mail for the sake of project completion.

The five panelist members were as follows:

1. Dr. Matt Boda—Dr. Boda is the current district superintendent of the Pacific Northwest District of the C&MA. Dr. Boda has more than ten years of pastoral experience in the district, plus four years as assistant district superintendent. Also, he is a former Beeson Pastor.

2. Rev. Kelvin Gardner—Rev. Gardner is the former district superintendent of the Pacific Northwest District of the C&MA. Rev. Gardner has more than fifteen years of ministry in the district, a little more than half as district superintendent of the Pacific Northwest District and the other half as a senior pastor.
3. Dr. Andre (Andy) Snodgrass—Dr. Snodgrass serves as the president of the District Executive Committee. He has pastored Fox Island Alliance Church for more than twenty-four years. He is a former Asbury Beeson Pastor from the class of 1998-99.

4. Rev. Randy Shaw—Director of Church Planting for the Pacific Northwest District. Rev. Shaw has more than fifteen years of experience in pastoring and church planting.

5. Dr. Gary Higbee—Dr. Higbee has been a member of the Pacific Northwest District for more than forty years. His roles have included pastoring, interim pastoring, and consulting. He currently serves as the assistant director of church revitalization for the district.

The selection of the eight pastors whose sermons were studied was based on the responses from the panel of experts to the questionnaire in the following ways: (1) the pastor’s church showed up on at least two of the questionnaires returned, and (2) the church exhibited at least four of the six values of the missional church as stated in this study’s review of literature.

**Design of Study**

This study sought to discover the common characteristics found in the preaching of those identified as leaders of effective missional churches. It then examined whether those characteristics of preaching are congruent with the missional church’s stated values. This study was accomplished by analyzing the sermons of practitioners who preach in identified missional churches. Specifically, three sermons were delivered by each of the ten practitioners who preach in identified missional churches on a regular basis. These sermons were evaluated and common characteristics identified. The goal of this descriptive/evaluative analysis was the development of a model for preaching in the
missional church that is congruent with its stated values.

**Instrumentation**

To that end, a sermon evaluation tool (see Appendix B) was used to analyze and appraise the content of the delivered sermons. The sermon evaluation tool was modeled after the methodologies of Boda and Reid who both completed qualitative research in the area of preaching. Boda studied preaching in a postmodern context, and Reid studied preaching and its adherence to the Apostles’ Creed. For this study the sermon evaluation tool was modified so the values of the missional church could be delineated and identified in the participants sermons.

**The Sermon Evaluation Tool and Research Question #1**

The sermon evaluation tool (see Appendix B) related to research question 1 in the following way: The tool represented the common characteristics of preaching in effective missional churches. The grid or lens through which these sermons were evaluated was the stated characteristics and values of the missional church as indicated in Chapter 2. The six statements of characteristic and value of the missional church were the following: (1) having a high Christology, (2) seeing the West as a mission field, (3) seeing the local church as a sent community, (4) displaying incarnational ministry to the marginalized, (5) seeing discipleship as a distinctive contrast to society, and (6) preaching the gospel.

**The Sermon Evaluation Tool and Research Question #2**

Based on the documented common characteristics of preaching in identified effective missional churches within the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, this study deducted how the documented common characteristics of preaching in the identified effective missional churches were congruent with the stated values of the missional church. This knowledge was later evaluated in light of the natural
question, “Could these common characteristics of preaching as identified in this study be possible causes for missional effectiveness in a local church?”

The Sermon Evaluation Tool and Research Question #3

Based on the documented common characteristics of preaching in identified effective missional churches within the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, this study deducted how the documented common characteristics of preaching in the identified effective missional churches were not congruent with the stated values of the missional church.

Data Collection

The data sources for this study were audio recordings of the three sermons from each of the eight panel-recognized effective missional churches within the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. The collecting of the data occurred in the following sequence. First, each pastor of the panel-identified effective missional churches was called for the purpose of invitation to participate in this study. Second, based on the affirmation of the pastor’s willingness to be part of this study, each pastor was sent an e-mail with an attachment thanking them for their participation in this study and giving clear guidelines regarding the purpose of this study, the confidentiality of the study, and the criteria for selecting the three sermons evaluated in this study (see Appendix E).

Validity Measure

In order for this study to possess validity, this study pointed to the previous Doctor of Ministry work done in the area of preaching by Boda and Reid. Boda and Reid have each delivered accepted qualitative research in the area of preaching using similar sermon evaluation tools. Furthermore, the sermon evaluation tool was evaluated and affirmed by
Dr. Stacy Minger, Assistant Professor of Preaching at Asbury Theological Seminary.

**Data Analysis**

Following the models of Boda and Reid, several stages of analysis took place in the course of this study. First came the listening and documented evaluation stage of each of the twenty-four sermons according to the sermon evaluation tool given in Appendix B. Each sermon was heard at least twice, so the first stage of research resulted in roughly sixty-five listening hours. Second, each sermon was given individual attention, with a focused attention given to the identification of common characteristics of preaching among them. The second step in data analysis resulted in eighty-six pages of documentation. Third, each sermon was given focused attention on how the content was congruent with the stated values of the missional church. Fourth, each sermon received focused attention on how the content was not congruent with the stated values of the missional church. After the completion of these steps the finding were organized and documented.

**Ethical Consideration**

Throughout this entire research project, an ethical approach was taken. In the methodology section specifically, documented consent has been obtained through e-mail by all panel members and all participants (see Appendixes C and E). Clear instruction was given to the panel of experts regarding the confidentiality of the answers given in their identification of the ten effective missional churches in the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (see Appendix D). Furthermore, informed consent has been obtained from each participating pastor regarding the ability to cite his or her name, the church name, and the results of this study in the final document.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Problem and Purpose

Because of the dearth of knowledge about missional church preaching, the purpose of this study was to discover common characteristics of preaching in effective missional churches within the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. More precisely, I studied the preaching of eight participants who have been identified as pastoring effective missional churches within the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. The motivation for the study was twofold. First, I desired to discover any common characteristics of preaching within these churches, in relation to the stated values of the missional church literature. Second, I wanted to develop a model of preaching rooted in the preaching that is currently taking place in effective missional churches. The preaching characteristics and their congruence with the stated values of the missional church were identified using the qualitative research method of documented observation through attentive listening that recorded relevant aspects of the participant’s sermons for this study.

After the presentation of the demographic makeup of the participants, the remainder of the chapter presents the findings to the research questions: (1) What are common characteristics of preaching found in effective missional churches within the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance? (2) In what way are these characteristics of preaching congruent with the missional churches’ stated values? (3) Where is there a disconnect between the preaching characteristics found in missional churches and missional church values? This chapter concludes with the key finding of the study which become the basis for the discussion in Chapter 5.
Participants

The participants for this study were preachers who pastor effective missional churches within the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (see Table 4.1). These preachers were identified by a panel of experts (see Appendix B). The participants had to preach to the same audience on a weekly basis. The sermons came from average Sundays in the life of the church and were selected by the participants themselves (see Appendix E). All the churches met the criteria of being missional churches (see Appendix B).

Table 4.1. Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Participant</th>
<th>Age of Participant</th>
<th>Years of Ministry at Identified Church</th>
<th>Degree Held by Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grant Brewster</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>7 years at Island Church, Bambridge Island, WA</td>
<td>BCNZ Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Hunt, founding pastor</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>18 years at Lighthouse Church, Puyallup, WA</td>
<td>Master of Arts Doctor of Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tommy Martin</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>7 years at Mercer Creek Alliance Church, Ellensburg, WA</td>
<td>Master of Religious Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byron O’Neal, founding pastor</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>5 years at Journey Church, Tacoma, WA</td>
<td>Bachelor of Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randy Shaw, founding pastor</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6 years at Mosaic Church, Portland, OR</td>
<td>Master of Divinity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Stumbo</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>7 years at Salem Alliance Church, Salem, OR</td>
<td>Master of Divinity Doctor of Ministry (ABD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andy Snodgrass, founding pastor</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>25 years at Fox Island Alliance Church, Fox Island, WA</td>
<td>Master of Divinity Doctor of Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monty Wright, founding pastor</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>10 years at Snoqualmie Valley Alliance Church, Snoqualmie Valley, WA</td>
<td>Master of Theology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Age of Participants

The ages of the participants ranged from thirty-seven to fifty-six years, with the average age of the participant studied being fifty years. Byron O’Neal is documented as
the youngest participant while Andy Snodgrass is documented as the oldest.

**Tenure of the Participants**

The average tenure for the participants was ten years. Andy Snodgrass has been in his church the longest amount of time, twenty-five years, while Byron O’Neal displayed the shortest tenure at five years.

**Academic Degrees Held by Participants**

Two of the six participants had academic degrees limited to a bachelor’s degree; six of the eight participants had done academic work beyond a bachelor’s degree. Three participants had participated in Doctor of Ministry work, while two completed their Doctor of Ministry degrees. John Stumbo was on track to complete his degree until significant health issues hindered the completion.

**Gender of the Participants**

All of the participants for this study were male. This study did not intentionally overlook women and/or is not implying that women are not serving and preaching in missionally effective churches. Rather, the Christian and Missionary Alliance does not ordain women; thus, women are forbidden to hold the position of primary preaching pastor or senior pastor in any Christian and Missionary Alliance Church.

**Church Planters and the Participants**

Five of the eight participants were church planters. Because of the unique challenges that church planters face and how those challenges can affect the preaching ministry of the local church and the style, substance, and content of the preaching, the history of these church plants is an important factor to this study.
Summary of Participants

The tenure average of ten years revealed a significant amount of commonality between the participants. The participants display a possible connectedness between staying in a particular church context for a significant amount of time and that church being missionally effective. Also, the participants’ average age was 50. The dynamics of tenure and average age of the participants hint to the possibility that the participants might be at a point in their ministry life where they are starting to peak with regards to ministry effectiveness. Furthermore, this study explores in Chapter 5 the ramifications of all of the participants being male and that five of the eight participants have a church planting background.

Research Question #1

Research question one asks, “What are common characteristics of preaching in effective missional churches within the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance?” Five clear common characteristics of preaching were displayed by the participants. They are (1) establishing relational affinity through moments of self-disclosure, (2) using corporate application of a biblical text, (3) achieving clarification through the use of original languages, (4) embracing a degree of pain is essential for the disciple of Jesus Christ, and (5) having a knowledge of secular culture, but an understanding that a disciple’s life is often contrary to secular culture.

Self-Disclosure

The participants studied displayed the common characteristic of incorporating self-disclosure into the sermon. Self-disclosure is understood as a moment of vulnerability that served the purpose of establishing relational affinity between the preacher and
congregation members. Five of the eight participants studied used self-disclosure in their message to show how the passage they were teaching, or the truth they were seeking to convey, had been integrated first in their own lives (Table 4.2). For accurate understanding of the tables, the numbers given are based on the number of participants (eight), not on how many sermons were studied (twenty-four).

Table 4.2. Self-Disclosure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Participant</th>
<th>Times Characteristic Stated</th>
<th>Name of Participant</th>
<th>Times Characteristic Stated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grant Brewster</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Randy Shaw</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Hunt</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>John Stumbo</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tommy Martin</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Andy Snodgrass</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byron O’Neal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Monty Wright</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Self-disclosure took a variety of forms: ministry frustration, relational shortcomings, spiritual shortcomings, life turning points, and ministry desires. Self-disclosure by the participants varied in content and focus. Two of the participants described ministry frustrations with which they were currently dealing:

> I received an e-mail from a man in our church this week and it got me really angry. And I just kept justifying my anger; I kept telling myself I deserved to be angry. (Martin, “Are you a Murderer”)

> It is no secret that we have made some personnel changes in the area of worship. These changes have taken a greater relational toll on me than I had expected. The past few months have been some of the hardest that I have experienced at Salem Alliance. (Stumbo, “Every Generation, Culture and Opportunity”)

Tommy Martin used the moment of self-disclosure to illustrate how sin attacked him when he least expected it, and the attack was quickly complicated by his ability to justify the sin.
Thus, Martin used the self-disclosure of a ministry frustration to add to the sermonic point he was trying to make. John Stumbo disclosed ministry frustration, not as a sermon illustration, but as a means of empathy. Stumbo used self-disclosure to communicate how he, too, was going through a hard time as a result of the releasing of a staff person. Stumbo used self-disclosure to help lead his congregation through a tough relational loss by stating the loss of a relationship was painful for him, also.

A second type of self-disclosure that the participants used was admission of their shortcomings. These shortcomings were primarily relational and spiritual. Regarding relational shortcomings, Martin told of his shortcomings to reaffirm the difficulty of being a father:

I confess to you today that I missed the mark many times as a father. I know how hard it is to be a dad. I am a fellow struggler with you and seek the grace of Christ with you in this journey of being a Godly father. (“Be a Role Model”)

Martin in no way wanted to communicate that he believes that just because you have Christian principles for parenting, that parenting will be easy.

Along the same lines of wanting to identify with the struggles of men and manhood, Randy Shaw self-disclosed how in his desire to be admired by others, especially his father, he became a workaholic, had no time for people, and was operating in his life from impure motives. “In my desire to be admired by others and not be excluded I worked by myself to exhaustion leaving me with no time or energy for people” (“Disappointment”).

Both participants used the communication of their relational shortcomings in an illustrative way, skillfully using them to add to and clarify a sermonic point. In no way did the participants use relational self-disclosure in a manner that overwhelmed or distracted
The participants also used self-disclosure in a way that communicated past spiritual shortcomings. No participant communicated a current spiritual struggle; rather, they used a spiritual shortcoming from the past that they had overcome and were now using to illustrate either a lost opportunity (Shaw) or a theological confusion that needed to be worked out (Wright):

In my desire not to experience rejection from my brother or my wife, I had to reject the truth, and in doing so I rejected the will of God for my life. (Shaw, “Disappointment”)

For the longest time I believed God wanted me to be better, and his way to accomplish this was by making me feel rotten about my present life with all of its shortcomings. This was my bad theology, and I needed to learn grace. (Wright, “Uncertain”)

The participants self-disclosed in two other key areas of their lives: life turning points and ministry desires. Life turning points revolved around the subjects of disappointment, fear, and second chances. Shaw disclosed a life turning point and used it as the introduction to his sermon:

When my father chose not to take me to the swimming pool that day something inside me died as a child. What died in me was the belief that my father wanted the best for me, and what was birthed in me that day was a consistent search, a search for someone or something to stop the pain I was feeling. (“Living by Faith”)

Shaw followed up this life-turning disclosure by asking his congregation, “What are you searching for to stop the pain?” Shaw never came back to his own story but from this point in his message sought to integrate the life of Sarah, Abraham, and God into the lives of his listeners.

The participants also self-disclosed their personal ministry desires. However, this specific disclosure was only done when its focus was forward looking. (The previous
examples disclose past or present experiences.) Andy Snodgrass stated how his own preaching about Jesus’ ministry to the poor affected him, “I want to be a pastor that has connection with the poor. I need that in my life. My life is richer in God’s love when I am reaching those who need God’s love shown to them in practical ways” (“Ministry to the Poor”). Snodgrass stated a want in his life, implying that at the moment he was not connecting with the poor, but had a desire to because of the spiritual benefits that come to his life as a result.

In summary, the participants displayed the common preaching characteristic of seeking to establish relational affinity with their congregation through personal self-disclosure. The participants used varying types of self-disclosure. The self-disclosure ranged from ministry frustration to personal and spiritual frustration and concluded with life turning points and ministry desires. The participants used moments of self-disclosure to support the sermonic point they desired to make. In no way did the self-disclosure detract from or overshadow the biblical truths central to their proclamation.

Corporate Application of a Biblical Text

The participants sought to apply the truth of the text on which they were preaching in a corporate (meaning entire church) manner. The corporate nature of proclamation comes into focus with a question such as, “What does this text mean for us as a church?” Sermon application was illustrated and clarified through the use of the words such as us and we. They would use word combinations such as together we could and imagine if God used us in that way, and then they would give examples of these statements. Five of the eight participants demonstrated corporate application of a biblical text (see Table 4.3).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Participant</th>
<th>Times Characteristic Stated</th>
<th>Name of Participant</th>
<th>Times Characteristic Stated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grant Brewster</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Randy Shaw</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Hunt</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>John Stumbo</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tommy Martin</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Andy Snodgrass</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byron O’Neal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Monty Wright</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Corporate application had three subcategories: church outreach/evangelism, church health, and new church venture. These subcategories are discussed in detail in the following paragraphs.

When discussing the subject of church outreach and evangelism, the participants crafted statements that frequently used words such as *our church* and *we*. Andy Snodgrass, speaking on the missionary passion of the Apostle Paul, sought to answer the question in a corporate manner:

Paul the Apostle had as a singular passion of his life to win as many as possible. Today I would like to talk about what it will take as a church for us to have that same singular passion as Paul: to win as many as possible. (“An Unswerving Passion”)

Snodgrass illustrated corporate application by reminding his congregation that Jesus sent his disciples out in pairs to preach. Furthermore, Snodgrass used language that is plural in nature, and his preaching style, based on listening to three of his messages, was meek and subtle.

Contrary to Snodgrass is Martin who in his message “Excuses, Excuses, Excuses” was firm and direct regarding his church’s apparent apathy toward evangelism and outreach to the community. Martin, preaching from Luke 9:51-62, showed how the three
men in the text all had the desire to follow Jesus but were not able to because of the various excuses they each gave. Martin applied the text corporately to his church. He was very direct: “I had to ask myself, do we have a burning passion to reaching the Valley with gospel? And I had to answer no! People all around us are going to hell and it’s like we don’t even care.” In the same spirit of communicating directly, John Stumbo gave a list of all the people groups of the world that are still not reached with the message of the gospel of Jesus. Stumbo was direct in stating that every Christian should have a role in the sending of missionaries around the world, and being missionaries in their own backyards:

Why must every Christ follower be involved in Christ’s mission? Because unless someone reaches them they will not know about Jesus. That is why we send missionaries, and that is why we will continue to send missionaries out from Salem Alliance. That is why we do acts of compassion around the world. Why? People will not know about Jesus unless someone sends them. (Stumbo, “Why Every Christian Must Be Involved in Missions”)

When the participants communicated to their congregations regarding the subject of evangelism and outreach they did so in contrasting styles. It ranged from meek and indirect, as demonstrated by Snodgrass, to more direct methods such as those used by Martin and Stumbo.

Church health was another area where the participants infused corporate application. This cluster of ideas relates to church health specifically as understood in the pastoral context of the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. In these sermons church health is being understood as (1) people who share the love of God with those struggling with sexual sin, (2) people involved in the local church, (3) people in ministry inward to each other, outward to the world, and upward to God, and (4) individuals living in community. Stumbo, who pastors in the Portland, Oregon, area, would see Salem Alliance Church as healthy if it developed a culture that welcomed and shared
the love of God with those who were struggling with sexuality issues and where those struggling with sexuality issues were welcomed. However, he reaffirmed that no one can flaunt their sin:

One of questions that I am asked most often is this: “Is it OK if homosexuals or a lesbians attend Salem Alliance Church?” And I say, “yes!” I want this to be a place for all who are struggling. But none of us can flaunt or parade our sin, and none of us can condemn a person for their sin. Gay bashing will never be a part of Salem Alliance Church. (“Holiness in an Unzipped World”)

Stumbo’s statement reveals that he desires two things in the relational culture of Salem Alliance Church: first, the establishment of a church culture that welcomes those who are struggling with issues of sexual sin and, second, the reminder to all in the congregation that no one can be condemning in their attitude toward those struggling with sexual sin.

The participants also valued corporate application when speaking about the subject of church involvement. Martin was the clearest in presenting this value in his message:

It’s very clear to all that we are going through a season of entropy; we have lost our focus. We focus more on internal consumer things. We are a typical church: 20% of the people do 80% of the work. (“Excuses, Excuses, Excuses”)

Martin asserted that being typical is not sufficient. He used this moment to get his listeners to think of the overall health of the church and how it impacts the individual’s life.

Byron O’Neal communicated what he saw as a healthy church as the balanced application and focus of three ministry emphases in his church; ministry inward to each other, outward to the world, and upward to God:

Why does the church exist? We exist to reach up in worship of God, we reach inward to grow our faith, and we reach outward to share our faith. If we as a church don’t do the third, we will be like many churches in America; we will be a spiritually dead church, and others will know it long before we will. (“Go Fish”)

O’Neal, who is a church planter, used such statements to establish the foundational values
Snodgrass revealed how the majority of the Apostle Paul’s teachings require an individual to be living in deep community if they are going to apply his teachings, “Paul’s teaching about being living sacrifices is all about community application. You cannot apply this text in isolation. Paul’s teaching and our application of it go cross grain to western individualism” (“Wanted: A Heart for Missions”). Snodgrass, like the other participants, used corporate application of a biblical text for the purpose of advancing church health. Thus, this study concluded that the participants have a working knowledge of their congregation’s health, and more importantly, they knew where their congregations were unhealthy and used a biblical text to speak into it.

The third area where the participants used corporate application of a biblical text was when they were communicating a new church venture, meaning that often a participant would remind the congregation that their church was taking on a significant project that required a significant amount of faith from the whole congregation. The participants would link this venture into the bigger picture of what God was doing in the story of redemption. Grant Brewster, when talking about a church plant that his church, Island Church of Bambridge Island, Washington, was launching, stated the following:

> God knew that there needed to be a church on Bambridge Island. Why a church? Because he knew that there would be people who needed to see the love of Jesus in practical ways. And that is why we exist: to show the love of Jesus to those here on Bambridge Island. (“God’s Master Plan”)

Grant showed that his church plant is linked in the reality of God’s sacrificial love for people. Also, with the same theological focus, God’s love for people, Stumbo revealed how he was asking his leadership team to make “risky prayers to God,” prayers calling
upon God’s blessing to them as a church, so they can bless the greater Salem community and the world:

I have asked the leadership team to pray for God’s blessing on our church, and today I stand here asking you [congregation] to pray a risky prayer for our church. Would you pray God’s blessing up our church? And we will pray this prayer not so we can make the blessing all about ourselves, but so we can bless the many nations that God has called us to reach with his love and the message of his Son. My hope is that we can be a strong church, so we can bless others. (“Every Generation, Culture and Opportunity”)

John Stumbo, who pastors Salem Alliance Church, a church community of almost six thousand, used a moment in his sermon to remind his congregation that all of the blessings that they have been given have a purpose, and that purpose is to bless others.

In summary, the participants displayed the common preaching characteristic of corporate application of a biblical text for the purpose of evangelism and outreach. Their styles were contrasting: subtle as illustrated in Snodgrass and direct as illustrated in Martin. Furthermore, corporate application of a biblical text was used for the purpose of communicating the importance of church health. Lastly, the participants used corporate application of a biblical text for the purpose of encouraging a new church venture revealing that they linked the new work their church was doing, such as a new church plant, and greater impact on the community and missions around the world, to the message of redemption found in the Scriptures.

**Achieving Clarification through Original Languages**

The participants used biblical languages for the purpose of clarifying a sermonic point. Often the participants would have the listener focus his or her attention on one word of the biblical text that they were preaching from and talk about the original meaning of that word. The participants used original languages in their messages to reveal the deeper
meaning of the spiritual truth they were trying to make. Four out of the eight participants used or eluded to original languages (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4 Original Languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Participant</th>
<th>Times Characteristic Stated</th>
<th>Name of Participant</th>
<th>Times Characteristic Stated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grant Brewster</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Randy Shaw</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Hunt</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>John Stumbo</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tommy Martin</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Andy Snodgrass</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byron O’Neal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Monty Wright</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participants used biblical languages the following ways. They used the Greek text first by stating it directly and also referring to the Greek text. Also, participants explicitly used the Hebrew text but sparingly. Examples of these distinct uses of the original languages along with comments are detailed below.

The participants used the original languages to expound on familiar Christian concept or terms, thus allowing the listener to know the history behind the concept or term.

Art Hunt’s comments function in this manner:

Many of you have heard the Christian term *good news*, but in this series we will ask, “What’s the news and why is it good?” Well the Greek word, ἔαγγέλιον or *euangelion*, means “good news” and that is the word that Paul the Apostle used in the biblical text to announce the message and the work of Jesus Christ. (“Why a Relationship with Jesus Is So Great”)

Hunt took the familiar Christian term “good news” and linked it with the historical missionary work of the Apostle Paul. By directly stating the Greek word, Hunt took time to illustrate a familiar Christian concept with original languages. Hunt used the original language of the text, but in contrast to his first use, he took the unfamiliar concept of the
hypostatic union, Christ being fully man and Christ being fully God, and clarified it using references to the original Greek text. Thus, in this example Hunt contrasted his first use:

“The word begotten or monogenes means, one of a kind, meaning Jesus is the same kind and the very nature as God the Father” (“The Truth about Jesus”). Both examples revealed the participants’ use of original languages for the purpose of clarifying a sermonic point.

Art Hunt stated the Greek word directly. The other participants referred to insights gleaned from the study of a Greek word. This preaching characteristic is demonstrated by the following statements.

Paul in the original language focuses on the word “power” and it is not a simple word, but a complex word that communicates, ‘grand power’ or “ultimate power” Paul in essence is saying, “No power is greater than God’s power.” (Brewster, “Standing Strong”)

Most Christians don’t want to be light; they will settle for grey. The problem is this: In the Greek language, there is no word for grey, no concept of it, meaning, you have two choices, light or dark, and if you are not light, the implication is, you’re being spiritually dark. (Wright, “Getting Salty”)

Thus, the research reveals that the participants used original languages to illustrate theological concepts and to aid in sermon application.

**Embracing a Degree of Pain for the Disciple of Jesus Christ is Essential**

Focusing on the area of content, a common preaching characteristic was the concept that embracing a degree of pain is essential for disciples of Jesus Christ. Not only did the participants emphasize spiritual conversion to Jesus Christ, they emphasized a lifestyle in which painful choices would need to be made or events one would experience because they were disciples of Jesus. The purpose for communicating this content is twofold. First, embracing pain is the litmus test of a person’s discipleship to Jesus. Second, embracing pain brought about spiritual fruit. Six of the eight participants had the preaching
characteristic that embracing a degree of pain is essential for the disciple of Jesus Christ, thus making it the most communicated of the stated preaching characteristics by the participants (see Table 4.5).

**Table 4.5. Pain Embraced**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Participant</th>
<th>Times Characteristic Stated</th>
<th>Name of Participant</th>
<th>Times Characteristic Stated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grant Brewster</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Randy Shaw</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Hunt</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>John Stumbo</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tommy Martin</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Andy Snodgrass</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byron O’Neal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Monty Wright</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This characteristic has four subcategories of pain or struggle: social, relational, spiritual, and physical.

When communicating about the first subcomponent, social pain, the participants drew attention to the possibility that the listener may have some preconceived ideas about the life of a disciple of Jesus. Martin and Wright addressed the matter of preconceived ideas. They taught that the life of a disciple is often different than what the culture communicates:

Somehow in our society we have developed the idea that we are to never bear pain or hardship. We have lost the belief that certain types of spiritual growth can only be known through struggle. (Martin, “Be a Role Model”)

Many people have been sold on a non-biblical Jesus; they see him as the cherry on top of our American Pie. But Jesus is saying, “I want first place in all things.” (Wright, “Uncertain Certainty”)

In addition to Martin and Wright, the participants revealed a willingness to communicate to their churches that often the church culture itself will communicate that comfort and ease
are the God’s greatest desire for the life of the disciple. Snodgrass is the clearest example of how a participant communicated this reality to his congregation: “We cannot just keep sitting in here in our comfortable seats in our comfortable church, with our comfortable lives. We must keep reaching out, outside of these walls, into the lives of those who Jesus died for” (“Unswerving Passion”). Snodgrass linked the social pain of individuals being out of their social comforts zones to the purpose of evangelism.

A distinct aspect to the theme of social pain was found in Martin. Martin was unique among the participants in that he talked about how being a disciple of Jesus impacted one’s financial life. Martin stated the following: “Do you have a lower standard of living because you are a Christian? Does it show in how you spend your money that you prioritize God’s church?” (“Excuses, Excuses, Excuses”). Martin was clear that to be a disciple of Jesus means that one might have to have a lower standard of living economically. All four of the examples above show how the participants communicated that experiencing a degree of social pain is to be expected in the life of a disciple of Jesus.

In the second subcomponent, the participants also communicated that a degree of relational pain, such as marriage struggles or parental struggles, needed to be embraced if one wanted to continue to grow as a disciple of Jesus. O’Neal linked relational pain to the spiritual battles that are reality in the life of a disciple: “Because you are a disciple of Jesus, his [Satan] intent is to destroy you, your marriage, your life. You are on spiritual battle ground; this spiritual battle will be proof that you are a disciple of Jesus” (“The Invisible War”). O’Neal stated that the proof of being a disciple of Jesus was that of struggle in a spiritual battle that is impacting relationships. For O’Neal, relational struggle is a key thematic aspect and value of his preaching, as observed in the three sermons studied.
Wright continued this same theme when he expounded on the teachings of Jesus regarding the value of a disciple’s human relationships in the light of being Jesus disciple: “Jesus makes this dramatic statement to capture his listeners attention, for nothing is more valuable in our lives than relationship. Jesus is saying, ‘to be my disciple I must be more valuable than any human relationship’” (“Getting Salty”). Martin addressed this same theme when stating how being a disciple of Jesus and the pain it involves will get into one’s family life. Speaking to parents, Martin asked the question if being a disciple of Jesus is such a solid value in their life that their children know they will tell the truth even if it hurts them or bruises their ego: “Dad, your children need to know you are going to tell the truth even if it hurts you, if it embarrasses you. You’re a disciple of Jesus. We tell the truth even if it costs us a bruised ego” (“Be a Role Model”). The participants were willing to communicate to their congregation that a disciple of Jesus must be willing to endure some relational pain. Often this truth was communicated very passionately and was often placed at the heart or center of the message.

The third subcomponent was the willingness to embrace a degree of spiritual pain for the sake of being a disciple. The participants communicated that spiritual growth is the result of a period of time when spiritual suffering was present in the life of a disciple. The participants communicated that the realities of sin and its effects on a life are conquered not by trying harder but through embracing a form of spiritual death for the sake of spiritual life being known. An example of this subcomponent is participant Wright: “The hardest thing for me to communicate this morning is this: The potential God has for you can only be known through death, and I am talking about spiritual death, the death of the sin nature” (“Uncertain Certainty”).
The participants were often unclear when preaching about spiritual death; only Wright clarified spiritual death as death to the sin nature. Furthermore, the participants did not directly define its meaning, nor was it illustrated. It was only taught in a way that clarified that spiritual suffering will result eventually in spiritual fruit. Shaw illustrated embracing spiritual pain when he stated the following about trials and suffering in the life of a disciple: “Like Abraham, we will receive trials from God to test us, to develop our faith” (“Living by Faith”). The participants gave to their congregations an honest account of the struggle of the Christian faith, providing a clear depiction that being a disciple of Jesus means facing struggles.

Demonstrating the fourth component, Shaw told how physical pain and suffering will need to be embraced for Christian growth and maturity to become a reality. A disciple’s physical suffering, according to Shaw, is not pointless as suffering and pain actually serve as a vital part of the disciple’s growth and maturity in the faith:

> Often the Christian life is presented as a pathway to life fulfillment. If you trust Jesus you will escape a life of suffering, and in a moment everything will take care of itself. The reality is, we live in a broken world. Find Jesus in the brokenness, and being molded to be like Him by brokenness is the life fulfillment he offers. (“Disappointment”)

Shaw’s statement encouraged the congregation to find meaning in their pain rather than to avoid it.

In summary, a common theme communicated was that pain must be embraced for the sake of discipleship to Jesus Christ. This preaching characteristic had four different subcategories: social pain, relational pain, spiritual pain and physical pain. The participants desire the individuals in their congregation to realize that comfort and ease are not the greatest purpose of the disciple’s existence and/or the reason for one’s salvation. The participants were not negative when they communicated, just realistic. The participants
talked about subjects such as life fulfillment, as did Shaw, but they always linked it with reality that life fulfillment is known through some degree of suffering. Furthermore, the participants drew attention to or illustrated the reality of suffering even when the biblical text did not call for it.

**Knowledge of Secular Culture but a Life Contrary to That Culture**

The participants’ demonstrated their knowledge of culture and current events and with ease worked these events into their messages. The purpose of the participants’ discussing culture and current events was to demonstrate how the disciple of Jesus Christ does not leave secular culture, but in fact he or she is very much in touch with the surrounding culture while living a life contrary to this culture. Five of the eight participants communicated this preaching characteristic (see Table 4.6).

**Table 4.6. Knowledge of Culture**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Participant</th>
<th>Times Characteristic Stated</th>
<th>Name of Participant</th>
<th>Times Characteristic Stated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grant Brewster</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Randy Shaw</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Hunt</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>John Stumbo</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tommy Martin</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Andy Snodgrass</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byron O’Neal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Monty Wright</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The common theme of knowing current culture came through in the participants’ messages in several different ways: technology, leadership studies, worldview, entertainment, political issues, and religious statistics. Examples of all seven of these subcategories will be given in this section, and they are clearly illustrated in Appendix F. The participants did not state these aspects of culture aimlessly; they communicated these
seven characteristics for the expressed purpose of drawing out the distinction between secular life and a life of discipleship.

The aspect of culture that was most used by the participants to show their congregations how the disciples of Jesus are in touch with culture but live lives counter to culture was that of entertainment. Entertainment was singled out when the participants contrasted entertainment examples with the Christian life to demonstrate spiritual, relational and sexual holiness as well as provide guidance for Christian parenting. The participants pointed out what was biblically right by drawing attention to that which was contrary to an aspect of biblical teaching. Stumbo and Snodgrass are the clearest examples:

You don’t need look hard to see that our culture’s view of sex and sexuality is casual. From magazine racks to beer commercials, much of our cultures take on the issue is just that, take, and in doing so makes sex empty of its purpose. But for a disciple the Bible says, there should not be a hint of sexual immorality. (Stumbo, “Holiness in an Unzipped World”)

I would be concerned if you are not concerned about how we and our children are so influenced by our cultures depiction of sexuality. No matter what culture communicates, the Holy Spirit is still holy, and if we are living on a steady diet of T.V. and movies, how can sanctification continue its work in our hearts? (Snodgrass, “Wanted: A Heart for Missions”)

Participants Stumbo and Snodgrass displayed how they as preachers did not have to prove to their congregations they live in a world that communicates sexuality in a way that is not in accordance with the will of God. The participants did communicate that disciples of Jesus should care about not integrating the culture’s views of sexuality into their lives; they should be different.

In the same subcategory of entertainment, Martin, talking to parents about how they need to be aware of how the world of entertainment will seek to communicate reality to children in a way that is wrong and distorted, used this moment to encourage parents to be
on the offensive in how they view role models for their children on television. Martin gave
the example of Charles Barkley, stating that he is not a role model for children:

We need to remember that our young people are living in a culture that will
allow a man like Charles Barkley to say, “I am not a role model for your
child and I don’t want to be.” Well dad, that might be okay for Charles
Barkley, but you don’t get that privilege of ducking your role model
responsibilities. (Martin, “Be a Role Model”)

Martin used Barkley’s statement as a counter example. Parents are not exempt from the
responsibility of being a role model for their children.

Monty Wright, in discussing technology, integrated technology not only into his
message, but integrated its influence on a life and its meaning into his message. Wright,
who talked about the subject of God’s love, creatively pointed to technology and how
many in culture are communicating they are desiring to be loved via YouTube. Wright
called this need “finding your voice.” Wright pointed out that the popularity of YouTube is
rooted in the human need to be known and loved by one’s Creator.

YouTube is a virtual voice. YouTube is helping people feel they matter. We
are a culture that wants others to be stuck on us. Today, I want to ask the
question, “How can I find my voice in an authentic way not a virtual way,
in a way that is filled with God and his love?” (“YouTube, Finding Your
Voice”)

Wright sought to have his listeners understand the emotional and spiritual dynamics related
to the growth of YouTube. In this way Wright demonstrated how the disciple lives counter
to the culture, and the disciples of Jesus finds their “authentic voice” in relationship with
their God.

The participants communicated as pastors or preachers who had a knowledge of
culture but live lives contrary to the values of culture around him or her. The participants
gave examples found in forums such as entertainment, leadership studies, technology, and
politics (see Appendix F). The participants’ communication about culture was often in a
negative light and something that needed to be avoided. None of the participants communicated anything that placed culture in a positive light.

**Summary of Research Question #1**

The research identified five common preaching characteristics among the participants who preach in the identified churches.

First, they seek to build relational affinity through self-disclosure. The participants were willing to be vulnerable for the purpose of seeking a relational connection with those in their congregation. These moments of self-disclosure revolved around subjects of pain, frustration, or shortcomings. The participants did not disclose positive accomplishments or successes.

Second, they use corporate application of a biblical text. The participants did not just focus their application section on the individual; they sought to ground their application in the plural using pronouns such as *we* and *us*. This preaching characteristic focused church outreach and evangelism, church health, and new church venture. The common thread among the participants was the use of corporate application grounded in the biblical text from which they were preaching.

Third, the participants clarified a sermonic point with the help of original languages. Greek and Hebrew were used for the purpose of assisting their listeners in gaining a greater understanding of what they were hoping to communicate. As previously stated, original languages supported preaching about theological or doctrinal aspects of Scriptures.

Fourth, the participants all stated that some degree of pain must be embraced by disciples of Jesus. Each clearly communicated that disciples of Jesus should not expect
pain-free lives; in fact, they should expect struggle and pain in this life. As one participant communicated, struggle and pain are the mark of being a disciple of Jesus.

Fifth, disciples of Jesus have knowledge of culture but live contrary to it. The participants had a grasp of what was going on in culture and often placed culture in a negative light, using culture in contrast to the biblical truth or principle about which they were preaching.

**Research Question #2**

Research question 2 asks, “In what way are these characteristics of preaching congruent with the missional churches’ stated values?”

The review of literature identified six values of the missional church: (1) effective missional churches have a high Christology, (2) effective missional churches see the West as a mission field, (3) effective missional churches see the local church as a *sent* community, (4) effective missional churches display incarnational ministry to the marginalized, (5) effective missional churches see disciples of Jesus as a contrast to society, and (6) effective missional churches preach the gospel.

A varying congruence is found between the preaching characteristics and the missional church’s stated values. The degrees of congruence are presented in Table 4.7.
Table 4.7. Preaching Congruence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Participant</th>
<th>Value # 1 Christology</th>
<th>Value # 2 West as Mission</th>
<th>Value # 3 Sent Community</th>
<th>Value # 4 Ministry to Marginalized</th>
<th>Value # 5 Contrast to Society</th>
<th>Value # 6 Preach the Gospel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grant Brewster</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Hunt</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tommy Martin</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byron O’Neal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randy Shaw</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Stumbo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andy Snodgrass</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monty Wright</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The preaching characteristics with *high congruence* with the stated values of the missional church were

#5 Effective missional churches see disciples of Jesus as a contrast to society, and

#1 Effective missional churches have a high Christology.

The preaching characteristics that demonstrated *medium congruence* were

#2 Effective missional churches see the West as a mission field;

#3 Effective missional churches see the local church as a *sent* community; and,

#4 Effective missional churches display incarnational ministry to the marginalized.

The preaching characteristic that demonstrated *low congruence* was

#6 Effective missional churches preach the gospel.

**High Congruence—Disciples of Jesus as a Contrast to Society**

The participants communicated that disciples of Jesus live lives that are contrary to society in many ways. The multiple themes that the participants addressed regarding how a disciple of Jesus contrasts society varied from sexual orientation and Western
individualism to expectations of Christianity to technology. A specific example of how
the participants had preaching statements that were congruent with the missional churches
stated values of a disciple in contrast to society is represented by Snodgrass: “Paul’s
teaching about being living sacrifices is all about community application. You cannot
apply this text in isolation. Paul’s teaching and our application of it go cross grain to
Western Individualism” (“Wanted: A Heart for Missions”). Snodgrass draws attention to
the fact that the apostle Paul’s teaching in Romans chapter twelve is community oriented in
its application. The key aspect to Snodgrass’ statement is that he points out that the
teaching of Paul is cross grain to Western Individualism.

The participants communicated that the disciples of Jesus have views toward sexual
orientation and sexual practices different than those communicated to them by the culture
around them. Stumbo gives an example discipleship as a contrast to society:

One of the questions that I am asked most often is this: “Is it OK if homosexuals or a lesbians attend Salem Alliance Church?” And I say,
“Yes!” I want this to be a place for all who are struggling. But none of us
can flaunt or parade our sin, and none of us can condemn a person for their
sin. Gay bashing will never be a part of Salem Alliance Church. (“Holiness
in an Unzipped World”)

Stumbo desires for Salem Alliance Church to be a safe place for all people who are
struggling with sin. By calling homosexuality and lesbianism sin, Stumbo contrasts the
disciple’s view of sexuality and the culture’s, but does so in a way that communicates
Salem Alliance’s willingness to help all people who are struggling with sin.

The participants communicated the possibility that the Christian church culture
would be contrary to the life of a disciple of Jesus. Shaw communicated often that the
Christian culture or the church culture communicates life expectations which are contrary
to that which Jesus taught:
Often the Christian life is presented as a pathway to life fulfillment. If you trust Jesus you will escape a life of suffering, and in a moment everything will take care of its self. The reality is, we live in a broken world. Find Jesus in the brokenness, and being molded to be like Him by brokenness is the life fulfillment he offers. (“Disappointment”)

Shaw makes an important statement: Not only are the disciples of Jesus contrary to secular culture but to any culture contradictory to the values of Jesus.

In summary, contrast to society is the most congruent missional church value with the preaching characteristics of the participants. This value is very similar to the stated preaching characteristic that a disciple of Jesus has knowledge of secular culture but lives a life contrary to it.

High Congruence—High Christology

The participants displayed high congruence with the missional church stated value of a high Christology. As discussed in the review of literature, the missonal church sees the authoritative divinity of Jesus as the source of all mission and the church’s theological foundation.

Regarding mission, Brewster linked the work of a new church plant done by his church to the mission of Jesus. He connected people’s need to know Jesus’ love in practical ways to the mission of the church:

God knew that there needed to be a church on Bambridge Island. Why a church? Because he knew that there would be people who needed to see the love of Jesus in practical ways. And that is why we exist, to show the love of Jesus to those here on Bambridge Island. (“God’s Master Plan”)

Brewster intentionally connected the church work with regard to mission, to the person and work of Jesus. This statement by Brewster is congruent with the missional church literature, as stated by missional theologian Harris, “It is clear from the Gospels that Jesus’ own mission is the starting point for the mission of the Church later on” (x-xi).
The participants communicate a high Christology of Jesus doctrinally. Participant Hunt was the clearest in his ability to communicate key doctrines with regard to the person of Jesus. Hunt communicated high Christology while drawing attention to the original languages to help clarify the doctrines:

Many of you have heard the Christian term “good news” but in this series we will ask, “What the news and why is it good?” Well the Greek word, ευαγγέλιον or euangelion, means “good news” and that is the word that Paul the Apostle used in the biblical text to announce the message and the work of Jesus Christ. (“Why a Relationship with Jesus is So Great”)

This phrase in the original language means “exact representation of his being.” In the Greek it means, “God’s exact likeness.” (“The Truth about Jesus”)

The preaching characteristics of the participants had high congruence with the stated values of the missional church of high Christology. The participants linked high Christology with church mission and doctrinal and theological instruction.

Medium Congruence—The West as a Mission Field

The missional church literature states that the Western church must come to grips with the fact that it no longer holds a place of prominence in culture; thus, the missional church writers communicate that church leaders need to address this new cultural reality with their people. The participants demonstrated medium congruence in an apologetic approach, as communicated by Hunt:

Why is the truth about Jesus important? Oprah Winfrey states the following, “All religious faiths are like a path leading up a mountain, different paths but they all get to the top, they all get you to heaven.” Why is the truth about Jesus important? Because America’s most popular entertainment personality is communicating five days a week that Jesus is just like other gods. (“The Truth about Jesus”)

In Hunt drawing attention to the fact that Winfrey is America’s most popular entertainer, and that she has a worldview that consists of believing that all religions are the same, he is
resonating with the Western culture being a mission field and the church viewing the West through that spiritual lens.

Martin keeps the focus on the West as a mission field when he points out that every day in his church’s town of Ellensburg, Washington, people die without placing saving faith in Jesus Christ, but Martin’s true emphasis identifies that Mercer Creek Church has no burning passion to reach people who have not yet placed saving faith in Christ. “I had to ask myself, ‘Do we have a burning passion to reach the Valley with the Gospel?’ And I had to answer ‘No!’ People all around us are going to hell and it’s like we don’t even care” (“Excuses, Excuses, Excuses”). Martin’s statement is implied by the missional church literature, which emphasizes that most churches care very little about reaching out to their communities.

**Medium Congruence—The Church as a Sent Community**

The missional church literature views the West as a mission field, and it views the church as a community sent by God into the mission field. Missional churches have moved from just talking about missions as something that the church sends money to in third world countries, to the doing of missions in their own neighborhoods and towns. Two participants communicated the value of seeing the church as a sent community.

In preaching through his church’s values, Snodgrass communicated clearly that his church needs to have a burning passion to reach all people, even those in their surrounding communities:

Paul the Apostle had as a singular passion of his life to win as many as possible. Today I would like to talk about what it will take as a church for us to have that same singular passion as Paul, to win as many as possible. (“An Unswerving Passion”)
Stumbo draws attention to the fact that Salem Alliance Church should never stop sending or being missionaries to the nations:

> Why must every Christ follower be involved in Christ’s mission? Because unless someone reaches them they will not know about Jesus. That is why we send missionaries, and that is why we will continue to send missionaries out from Salem Alliance. That is why we do acts of compassion here and around the world. Why? People will not know about Jesus unless someone sends them. (“Why Every Christian Must Be Involved in Missions”)

The participants have a cohesive understanding of how the church is sent into the culture it is called to reach.

**Medium Congruence—Incarnational Ministry to the Marginalized**

The missional church literature states that missional churches will value ministry to the poor and those who are socially on the fringe of society. This value is grounded in the person and work of Jesus. Jesus did not relationally ground his ministry among the socially affluent of culture but stated that he was called to the poor and trusted his ministry to his twelve disciples. The participants communicated this value in a way that was congruent with the values of the missional church literature. Snodgrass showed how this value of incarnational ministry to the marginalized enriches his life as a pastor:

> I want to be a pastor that has connection with the poor. I need that in my life. My life is richer in God’s love when I am reaching those who need God’s love shown to them in practical ways. (“Ministry to the Poor”)

Snodgrass sets up this statement by referring to the life of Jesus and how his ministry valued meeting the needs of those who followed him, and often those who followed him were the poor and the marginalized in society.

> John Stumbo shares an illustration of how his church (Salem Alliance) kept a man alive who was homeless and living under a bridge for a year. In telling this story, Stumbo
reveals to his congregation that they are practically meeting the needs of those who are economically marginalized in the city of Salem, Oregon:

I was in the bank line on Wednesday and a man behind me tapped me on the shoulder and asked if I was Rev. Stumbo. I said, “Yes.” Then he said the following: “I need to thank you and your church. Because of your community food ministry, you kept me alive for a whole year while I was homeless and living under a bridge. Someone from your church visited me and brought me a meal every day for a year.” (“Every Generation, Nation and Opportunity”)

This event clearly communicated to the congregation that John and the leadership of Salem Alliance Church value ministry to the marginalized in their community.

The missional church literature communicates that a value of the missional church is ministry to the marginalized in the community, and this value had medium congruence with the preaching of the participants.

**Low Congruence—Missional Churches Preaching the Gospel**

The finding reveals that C&MA pastors are not preaching gospel vision as defined and understood by the missional church. The Christian and Missionary Alliance theologically emphasizes the individual’s need for forgiveness of sin and forgiveness brought about through faith in Jesus Christ, thus, placing the individual in a right relationship with God through faith. This emphasis of positional and personal salvation would be the primary way the Christian and Missionary Alliance would define gospel (“What Do We Believe?”). Because each defines the term gospel differently, low congruence exists between the preaching characteristics and stated values. Hunt was the only participant who made a statement in his message that was congruent with the missional church’s definition of gospel:

The gospel is all about a new heart, not about trusting Jesus and getting a new car. We want it to be about the new car because Jesus transforming your heart is a lifetime of struggle that is the only path to freedom. The
gospel work is about a new heart. (“Why a Relationship with Jesus Is So Great!”)

Because the missional church literature views the Bible as a grand narrative, it defines the gospel as “the breaking in of the kingdom of God, redemption through Christ and an eschatological hope” (Guder, Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America 86). It continues by stating, “[T]he church is defined by its origins in a gospel cast vision that always draws it forward” (86). This definition is vastly different than the definition of gospel as understood and defined by the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

Research Question #3

Research Question #3 asks, “Where is there a disconnect between preaching characteristics found in missional churches and missional church values?” A partial disconnect exists between the stated values of the missional church and the preaching characteristics of the participants. The only significant disconnect between the stated values of the missional church and the preaching characteristics was how each defined preaching the gospel.

Summary of Major Findings

The purpose of this study was to discover the common preaching characteristics found in effective missional churches and their congruence with the values as communicated by the missional church’s stated values. Based on an overview of the participants, the identified preaching characteristics of the participants, and their congruence with the stated values of the missional church literature, these are the major findings of this study:
1. Self-deprecating self-disclosure by the participants helped established relational affinity.

2. The congregation’s missional activity was grounded in biblical instruction.

3. Embracing pain is a necessary part of being a disciple of Jesus.

4. The participants placed culture in a negative light.

5. The participants had varying degrees of congruence with the stated values of the missional church.

These findings and my reflections on their relevance serve as the foundation for the model for preaching in the missional church and is the focus of Chapter 5.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Major Findings

The purpose of this study was to identify common characteristics of preaching in congregations identified as effective missional churches within the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance and evaluate these characteristics in light of missional church stated values. Upon examination of the research, the common characteristics of preaching within effective missional churches were identified and their congruence with the stated values of the missional church was discovered. These facts allow for the development of a model of preaching that could serve the missional church and all churches that preach the gospel of Christ Jesus.

Based on an overview of the participants, the identified preaching characteristics of the participants, and their congruence with the stated values of the missional church literature, the major findings of this study, their implications, and my recommendations are presented below.

Self-Deprecating Self-Disclosure for the Purpose of Establishing Relational Affinity

Five of the eight participants’ sermons displayed self-disclosure for the purpose of establishing relational affinity. The thematic content of the participants’ self-disclosure overwhelmingly included self-deprecation or self-deprecating negativity. A common pattern among the participants was disclosing aspects of their lives that revealed a current or former shortcoming or struggle that was either spiritually, relationally, or ministry related. As shown in Chapter 1, the missional church writers state that this relational event would look like relational progressive dialogue between the pastor and the congregation (Pagitt, Frost).
My findings suggest that such a radical departure from the classical or traditional form of preaching would not be necessary. While preaching that lends itself to the enhancement of the missional effectiveness of a church needs to be relational, the self-deprecating relational disclosure of the pastor appears to lead to relational connectedness with the congregation. This self-disclosure was never the center of the message but created a sense of relationship between the pastor and congregation without the use of progressive dialogue.

This verbal tool of self-deprecation could be the relational substance in preaching for which the missional church writers are calling. Use of this tool would retain a sense of traditional style in the preaching, and the use of progressive dialogue may no longer be necessary.

The preaching literature that deals with the subject of self-disclosure acknowledges the needed skill to use it in a constructive manner, not in a form that is distracting. Joe Stowell reveals how self-disclosure is a want of the listener, and a danger to the preacher: “Students want to know if the preacher is a fellow struggler or someone who lives on a different planet. Self-disclosure is tricky; some kinds of confessional preaching will erode respect” (143). As demonstrated by Shaw and Martin in Chapter 4, the participants have developed, either intentionally or unintentionally, the skill of using the self-disclosure of their shortcomings in a constructive and beneficial manner.

Corporate Application of a Biblical Text Grounds Congregational Mission

Those who have written about preaching in the missional church have an unclear and, at times, conflicting message about the value of biblical instruction grounding congregational mission (Stutzman; Searcy; Cardoza-Orlandi; Dally). Without devaluing the research and preaching theories constructed by these authors, this research clearly
demonstrates that a commonly observed practice by those who are preaching in missionally effective churches is the corporate application of a biblical text grounding the congregation’s mission. This practice does not exclude all use of individual application in preaching but coexists with it.

This practiced characteristic leads to two additional thoughts. First, a disconnect exists between the currently constructed preaching theories about preaching in the missional church and the actual practice. The disconnect begins when the theories fail to mention that the Bible must be the source of what is preached. Often, the missional church places emphasis on preaching about felt needs and cultural change instead of appropriate use of God’s Word as the basis for congregational mission. The theories must begin to state specifically that the Bible, and corporate application of biblical texts, is essential for missional practice. Second, with all the rapid changes that are taking place in people, relational structures, ideologies, culture, and the institution of the church, the simple yet powerful practice of grounding a congregation’s mission in biblical instruction, has proven to be effective, relevant, and of great value to the participants. My findings support the fact that churches that ground mission in God’s Word are missionally effective.

**Embracing Pain as a Disciple of Jesus**

Six of the eight participants communicated in their messages that embracing a degree of social, physical, or relational pain is necessary if one desires to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Participants’ preaching indicated that a life of ease was not to be expected. In missional church literature, such a focus is rare. Thus, this finding suggests that the missional church writers have not gone far enough in citing the importance of communicating to congregants the full meaning and depth of discipleship to Jesus.
Current missional church literature sees disciples in contrast to society. The contrast is most often depicted in how a person’s time is spent, what values are held, and how money is invested; in short, the expression of discipleship would be the rejection of living out the American dream. However, my research suggests that the missional church writers do not go far enough when communicating the ramifications of living discipleship when characterizing it as such. They need to bridge the gap from simply citing discipleship as a being a contrast to society to include also the willingness to embrace pain and suffering for the sake of Jesus, if necessary.

I see two ramifications of preaching regarding this shift in content. First, preaching that is honest and does not avoid the subject of pain and suffering can be of significant value in making stronger disciples. Second, just as the participants communicated that God’s plan for individuals can only be known through the embracing of a degree of pain, it would serve a congregation well to remind them that God’s plan or missional purpose for them as a congregation can only be known through a corporate embracing of a degree of pain.

The connection between these two ramifications is that both individuals and the body, must be willing to embrace pain for the completion of mission. People who understand the need to embrace pain will be stronger disciples, and these stronger disciples together will make up the corporate body that will be better able to deal with enduring the often painful realities that come with making the possible theological, organizational, and/or relational changes necessary for a congregation to become missionally effective.
Culture Placed in a Negative Light

When aspects of culture such as technology, entertainment, and political issues became subject matter in the studied message, they were often placed in a negative light. Placing culture in a negative light contradicts the missional church literature that seeks to place an emphasis on the redemption of culture. In direct reference to redemption of culture, missional church authority Guder states, “In his resurrection Jesus is demonstrating that God is acting incarnationally to redeem and renew creation” (Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America 185). Contrary to this missional church value, the preaching done by the participants in this study showed no evidence of redemption of culture as important; but rather the participants placed culture in a negative light. They did not say that cultural influence should be avoided but instead that an inattentiveness to negative or excessive integration of cultural values can ruin the spiritual life of a disciple of Jesus. The participants often communicated about culture and cultural issues as an illustrative element in their sermons.

I am not suggesting that the participants do not personally believe in the value of seeking, praying for and working towards the redemption of culture; I am simply pointing out the fact that it was not a preaching characteristic of these participants. This lack leads me to wonder if the participants in the study would be more effective as preachers if they integrated the idea of cultural redemption in their preaching. Perhaps a constructive balance could be struck in the preaching ministry of the participants that communicates honestly about the dangerous effects of being inattentive to possible integration of cultural values in one’s life, while at the same time communicating the exciting possibility of knowing cultural redemption through a missionally effective church.
In summary, my research indicates that when preaching about culture, communicating either a rejection of culture or redemption of culture may not be best. Instead with wisdom, pastors would serve better by preaching the necessity of the one choice (rejection) with the exciting possibility of the other (redemption).

**Varying Congruence**

Through my research, I wanted to discover the congruence between the stated values of the missional church and the preaching characteristics found in effective missional churches in the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. My research findings affirm congruence, but it varies in degree. Stated missional church values which were found high in congruence were disciples of Jesus as a contrast to society and a high Christology. Stated missional church values found in medium congruence were seeing the West as a mission field, seeing the church as a sent community, and having incarnational ministry to the poor. The value of the missional church with the lowest congruence was preaching the gospel.

Because the findings reveal the high congruence of disciples of Jesus as a contrast to society and high Christology, one must note that both center on Jesus. When the participants communicated Jesus, the aspects they drew attention to were his teachings on money, sexual purity, loving others in practical ways, and the doctrinal validity of him being the son of God. This finding points to the possibility that when preaching reveals the relevance of Jesus and his teachings, in light of the modern problems and challenges that individuals face, the result is greater missional effectiveness in the life of a congregation.
Implications of the Findings

As stated in Chapter 1, my study was built on the observation that a gap exists in knowledge regarding the missional church’s stated values by the literature and their congruence with a study of actual common preaching characteristics happening in identified effective missional churches. The study was conducted with the hopes that an actual model for preaching could be developed that was based on the integration of the stated values of the missional church and the actual common characteristics of preaching happening in identified missional churches.

The study concludes that based on the evidence given by the research, a preaching model for the missional church can be developed. This model is built on four factors: (1) the stated values of the missional church, (2) preaching characteristics of the participants who are actually pastoring identified missionally effective churches, (3) documented varying congruence between the stated values and the preaching characteristics, (4) and, the significant findings of this study. The combination of these four factors makes the model below a unique contribution to the missional church literature. This model has three aspects.

Self-Disclosure That Illustrates Discipleship to Jesus

Foundational to the model is a preaching style of self-disclosure that illustrates discipleship to Jesus. This aspect of the model in practice seeks to build relational affinity through self-disclosure (see Table 4.2, p. 91). It also seeks to highlight the need for a willingness to embrace pain for the sake of discipleship to Jesus (see Table 4.5, p. 102) and that a disciple of Jesus has knowledge of secular culture but lives a life that is often contrary to culture (see Table 4.6, p.106). This portion of the model is drawn from both
the relevant literature regarding preaching in the missional church (Pagitt; Frost) and the observed practice of the study’s participants.

A majority of the participants demonstrated a pattern of self-disclosure. This model recommends that self-disclosure be done in preaching for the purpose of illustrating discipleship to Jesus. As such this model places a high premium on the preachers themselves living the life of discipleship to Jesus. This aspect of the model will not allow the preaching to only give biblical information; discipleship will need to be fleshed out by the preacher’s own discipleship journey first, and then the realities of their discipleship journey serve the message they need to communicate. Also, this aspect of the model will stress the relational component to preaching that missional writers are saying is a must, while not making such a radical departure (i.e., progressive dialogue) from traditional preaching.

Corporate Application of a Biblical Text That Values Denominational Heritage

The second aspect of the preaching model is the corporate application of a biblical text that values denominational heritage. This portion of the model highlights the use of corporate application of a biblical text.

This preaching characteristic was modeled by a majority of the participants. In their preaching, the participants revealed a theological consistency with the denomination of which they are a part, the Christian and Missionary Alliance; however, the participants’ denominational affiliation was never explicitly mentioned.

When the missional church’s stated values were similar to the values of the Christians and Missionary Alliance in both theology and denominational emphasis, a high congruence between the participant’s preaching characteristics and the missional church’s stated values existed. Additionally, when the stated values of the missional church were
not similar to the theological and denominational emphasis of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, the congruence was low. Taken a step further, this finding may indicate that a denomination’s definitions and practices will directly affect congruence with missional church values whether they are explicitly stated or not. Thus, this model proposes that preaching should call a church to the corporate application of a biblical text and do so in a way that values that church’s particular denominational heritage.

The model does not propose that individuals abandon their denomination’s theological traditions and emphasis in the hopes of developing a preaching ministry that would lend to the missional effectiveness of their church. Rather, the model calls the preacher to the hard work of integrating the stated values of the missional church with the strengths and distinctive history of their denomination. This practice runs parallel to the missional church literature which states that the missional church in practice is not the starting of something new but the refocusing of churches and denominations.

**Equipping Disciples of Jesus for Participation in the Everyday Mission of Jesus**

The third part of the preaching model places a high emphasis on the mission of Jesus being a part of the everyday lives of those who claim to be his disciples. This aspect of the model builds on the missional church values of seeing the West as a mission field, incarnational ministry to the marginalized, and the preaching characteristic of knowing secular culture but living a life contrary to that culture.

With focus on the person of Jesus, his sufficiency, grace, and forgiveness, the content of the model extends to include the communication of his mission to the Church, and the commissioning of the Church for the mission: “As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you” (John 21:21). The model shows how disciples of Jesus have a role in the
advancement of the kingdom of God specifically in the areas of their current relational influence, such as coworkers, family members, neighbors, and friends.

For this preaching factor to make a significant impact on the lives of the listener, sermonic content must highlight, explain, and expand on how the everyday realities of life can serve the mission of Jesus, not just the individual. Content must also include examples of living a life contrary to culture as a means of demonstrating knowledge of culture without assimilation to it. This content was effectively demonstrated in the preaching of a majority of the participants.

This preaching model in three parts cannot be seen as a quick fix for ministry. Additionally, instant results should not expected if it is integrated into one’s preaching ministry. The model acknowledges that while preaching is an important part of a church being missionally effective, it certainly is not the only factor in a church being missionally effective.

**Limitations of the Study**

In reflection, the limitations to this study were the following. First, it included a gender limitation as the participants were all male. Because the participants were all from a Christian and Missionary Alliance Church, and the Christian and Missionary Alliance only allows men to serve in the role of primary preaching pastor or senior pastor, this study was limited in that it was not able to integrate a female perspective from the pulpit as a contributing factor. Because of the distinct and different perspectives that females can bring to an issue, this study would have been greatly enriched by not having gender limitations.

Second, all of the pastors were from the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. This district is comprised only of churches in Oregon,
Washington, Alaska, and Northern Idaho, bringing up two issues. First, all participants are from one area of the country, distinct from all others in its religious context, as mentioned in chapter 1. Second, this district is made up of only 107 churches. Together, these two factors have created a pool of participants that is both geographically exclusive and small in number. Therefore, while the participants did not lack in their ability to give expansive and appropriate data for this research, the smaller scale and geographical locale limited the number and type of participants from which to draw.

Third, the sermon listening tool used by Boda and Reid was sufficient for research question two but was inadequate for research question one. The listening tool developed and used by Boda and Reid allows a researcher to document negative and positive congruence, the emphasis of research question two, but it is limited in its ability to help the researcher find common characteristics in preaching, the emphasis of research question one. This limitation is due to the fact that the tool is designed to achieve delineation, not to clarify commonality. This study overcame this limitation by examining in great detail the documented content of each sermon given by the participants, which allowed the achievement of research question one (i.e., finding the common characteristics).

Fourth, the studied sermons were limited to audio recordings; therefore, I was not able to observe key components of nonverbal communication. Because so much of communication is nonverbal and visual, video recording of data would have enriched the study.

Fifth, the participants were able to pick the sermons that they wanted to submit as data for this study. Because the participants were made aware of the subject matter of the study, the sermon data chosen by the participants may actually have been sermons that fit
the subject matter that this study was addressing. This factor does not negate the validity of the findings because the sermon data was always a partial representation of the participants’ preaching, not a holistic representation. In hindsight, though, I would not have disclosed the study’s subject matter when asking for the three sermons from each of the participants to attempt to ensure a more accurate baseline of preaching for each participant.

Sixth, after the data was completed, the following literature was brought to my attention: “The Baptismal Lens for Missional Preaching” by Catherine Gunsalus Gonzalez, “Missional Theology for a Missionary Church” and “The Missional Voice and Posture of Public Theologizing” by Guder, *Telling God’s Story: Narrative Preaching for Christian Formation* by John W. Wright, and “Speaking Christianly as a Missional Activity in the Midst of Babel: Christian Living as the Exegesis of the Gospel Proclamation after the End of History” by Daniel Oudshoorn. These works, therefore, should be included in further research on the subject of preaching in missional churches.

**Unexpected Observations**

The unexpected observations of this study were the following. First, the depth of self-deprecating self-disclosure coming from the pulpit was surprising. None of the missional church preaching literature had any content that focused on self-deprecation or self-disclosure. As documented, participants displayed a wide range of self-disclosure. Their vulnerability was skillfully done. It was never overwhelming or distracting from the biblical text or the main point of the message, yet the participants disclosed personal information such as deep personal pain, ministry frustration, life turning points, and ministry desires. The participants used these moments of self-disclosure for the purpose of
building relational affinity with their listeners, thus pointing to the possibility that the participants know what connects them with their listeners.

Second, the low amount of positive content regarding discipleship was surprising. None of the missional church literature had insinuated or suggested that a more costly focus regarding discipleship was necessary in preaching. The majority of the participants’ messages regarding discipleship focused on enduring pain and living contrary to culture. Only participant Hunt in his message “Why a Relationship with Jesus Is So Great” had content that was clearly positive in its focus.

Third, a significant pastoral tenure is part of developing into a missionally effective congregation. The average tenure of the participants in this study was ten years, with twenty-five years being the longest, five being the shortest. This data is significant because the missional church literature does not make any links between pastoral longevity in a specific congregation and the missional effectiveness of that congregation.

The missional church writers in seeking to address the North American churches’ waning influence on the culture have sought to address the theological issues that are foundational to any church. The review of literature shows that the missional church writers do not ask, “Will it work?” but, “Is it theologically correct?” with the assumption being a renewal in theology could lead to a positive effect on the North American church. The results of this study lead one to believe that theological renewal might be only part of the equation, however. Concerning pastoral longevity, George Barna states, “The average tenure of a pastor in Protestant churches has declined to just 4 years—even though studies consistently show that pastors experience their most productive and influential ministry in years 5 through 14 of their pastorate” (5). These results point to the possibility that being missionally effective as a congregation cannot be limited to exclusively holding to
missional church theology but point to factors such as congregational trust in the pastor, shared positive experiences over a significant amount of time, and pastoral stability. Also, these findings reveal the possibility that no one factor, such as theological renewal, will be the contributing element to the North American church regaining influence. Missional effectiveness might be a culmination of multiple factors, factors as simple as pastoral longevity.

Fourth, the church planting experience could have had a significant impact on preaching. Five of the eight participants were the founding pastors of the churches in this study. The ministry needs that church planters face, such as establishing an urgent sense of church identity, community, and church outreach, create a preaching context that is perfectly suited to develop preaching characteristics such as the corporate application of a biblical text and living a life contrary to culture. These preaching characteristics are closely aligned with stated values of seeing the West as a mission field, seeing the church as a sent community, and providing incarnational ministry to the marginalized.

The high amount of church planting pastors in this study point to the following possibilities. First, contextual factors of a ministry experienced over a period of time could play a significant role in developing a preacher’s preaching characteristics. Second, the contextual factors of church planting might be the most conducive for developing preaching characteristics that are congruent with the stated values of the missional church. Third, church planting could be a primary way the Christian and Missionary Alliance understands its missional calling as a denomination or district.

An examination of the core convictions of the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Mission Alliance shows how they link their understanding of mission with church planting. It defines its mission on the district Web site under core convictions:
“Mission: A healthy church is actively and relationally engaged in establishing new churches both regionally and internationally” (“Who We Are”). Either intentionally or unintentionally this study could point to the possibility that church planting is how the Christian and Missionary Alliance, or at least the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, understands and practices mission in a local church.

Fifth, denominational and theological influence had a significant impact on the preaching characteristics of the participants and their congruence with the stated values of the missional church. This finding reveals that where theological harmony between exists the Christian and Missionary Alliance and the stated values of the missional church, congruence between preaching characteristic and stated values was achieved. Where disharmony exists, congruence was not achieved. The participants studied were all pastors within the Christian and Missionary Alliance denomination. As stated in Chapter 1, the Christian and Missionary Alliance holds the theological conviction of the Fourfold Gospel, which states that Christ is Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King. This theological foundation of the Christian and Missionary Alliance is in harmony with the first missional church stated value of high Christology. This value was found to be of high congruence with the preaching characteristic of the participants. Also, as stated in Chapter 1, the Christian and Missionary Alliance is founded on a rich history of churches that called their people to live radically sacrificial lives for the sake of advancing the cause of missions. As stated by former C&MA president L. L. King: “The Alliance is a unique missionary denomination—a maverick movement into those whose soul the Head of the church breathed ‘Go!’ from the very start” (Alliance: Living the Call Together). This denominational history is harmonious with the fifth and third stated values of the missional church: disciples of Jesus as a contrast to society and the local church as a sent
community. These stated values scored high and medium with regard to their congruence with the preaching characteristic of the participants. Thus, these findings point to the very real possibility that theological and denominational heritage play a significant role in preaching characteristics of the participants being congruent with the stated values of the missional church. This finding is clarified the most when examining the stated value that had the least congruence with the preaching characteristic in identified missional churches, “preaches the gospel.”

Missional church literature sees a major aspect of the gospel as the church being “an eschatological community of salvation” (Guder, Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America 86). More specifically, Guder, a key missional church thinker and former president of Princeton Theological Seminary, states the following about the gospel: “As such, it [the gospel] comes from preaching the reign of God—the reign of God is its beginning and its foundation. And it moves toward the revealed consummation of the reign of God” (86). The missional church literature makes clear that the gospel is not just personal salvation from sin but the possible current reigning of God in a community. The Christian and Missionary Alliance, the denomination of all of the participants in the study, does not theologically place a high emphasis on the current reign of God in a community, and nowhere do they call “an eschatological community of salvation” the gospel. (“What Do We Believe?”) Contrary to the missional church’s definition of the gospel, the Christian and Missionary Alliance places an emphasis on personal salvation from sin (Christ as Savior) and the second coming of Christ (Christ the Coming King), thus pointing to the high possibility that low theological and denominational harmony with the stated values is the cause for the low congruence.
The study showed that theological similarities and differences, specifically the definition of gospel, was the key factor that led to congruence between the stated values and preaching characteristics. The study is not implying that the participants did not preach the gospel or do not preach the gospel but it concludes that the participants’ understanding of the gospel and the missional church’s understanding is different; the Christian and Missionary Alliance highlights more of a personal salvation, the missional church highlights more a holistic salvation.

**Recommendations**

The study has generated a great deal of information that could be helpful both to the missional church movement and to the Christian and Missionary Alliance. In order to maximize the positive potential of the study, a number of recommendations may be appropriate.

The first recommendation would be that the missional church scholars, such as those associated with the Gospel and Culture Network would begin to see the value of observing and writing about pastors who are actually accomplishing the hopes and desires of the missional church. The great value of the missional church movement is that it is so theologically grounded; the glaring drawback as Hunter states is that “it doesn’t have a lot to show for itself” (Personal interview). This lack of evidence in the missional church’s ability to transcend the theological, and make a significant impact in the realm of the practical could be brought about by missional scholarship taking one further step in its research and studying the practices of the individuals that are accomplishing the heartbeat of the *missio Dei*.

Second, I would like to construct a condensed report based on the findings of this study and present it to the Board of Managers of the Christian and Missionary Alliance.
The Christian and Missionary Alliance is a denomination that as of recently has struggled in two areas: numerical growth of its churches and its financial ability to support missionaries. This study focused on common characteristics in the area of preaching of those who have been identified by their peers as effective. Sharing this information with the Board of Managers could possibly help them as the leadership of the Christian and Missionary Alliance by revealing to them common practices of those who are being effective in ministry and by encouraging reflection and observation of other ministry practitioners of those with the same theological and denominational heritage. In-turn this research might begin to positively affect the numerical and financial challenges of the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

The third recommendation is that this study be presented as an optional workshop for pastors at the 2011 district gathering of the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. Because this study is based on cultural factors to which each pastor of this district is subject, a unique workshop would be studying the peers of those who are part of this district.

The fourth recommendation is to all who are entrusted with the preaching ministry of a local church. This study has revealed the great value that is gained when studying the preaching of others. Because the preaching ministry of a local church has such a great impact on the life and health of any local congregation, all ministry of a local church would be served well if the preaching ministry of that local church is strong. Listening to the preaching of effective pastors and gleaning and applying one or two new aspects of preaching would benefit the entire church.
Postscript

I went into this study expecting to find a new preaching style or technique, or a new missional hermeneutic, that would serve as the hidden key that would unlock the missional effectiveness of the Church and local church that I pastor. What I came to find from studying the preaching of the participants is the following: Doing the basics in preaching, such as teaching and explaining a biblical text faithfully, knowing the lives and heart issues of the people, and connecting the current work of the church to a significant heritage serves the work of preaching and connects preaching to the missional effectiveness to which God is calling each church.

The study has been the culmination of three years of reflecting on how a pastor who is entrusted with the preaching ministry of a local church should appropriately and strategically use personal giftedness in such a way that the entire church is strengthened. I have learned that preaching is at its best when it is relevant enough to reach the masses yet never loses biblical muscle, thus enabling it to call the people of the church beyond its walls and equip them for effective mission in the world. Furthermore, I have learned the value of persevering in study. The years I took to complete this project have been the most taxing and blessed that I have ever experienced.

My deep hope is that this study will spur other pastors and preachers to integrate theological studies with practical reflection that focuses on ministry effectiveness. I have come to see that these three realities do not need to be held exclusive from each other in life and ministry but are at their best when they are integrated with each other.
# APPENDIX A

## PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Pastors Name</th>
<th>Church or Ministry Name</th>
<th>Title of Sermons 1, 2 &amp; 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tommy Martin</td>
<td>Ellensburg Alliance Church</td>
<td>1. Be a Role Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Excuses, Excuses, Excuses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Are You a Murderer?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Randy Shaw</td>
<td>Mosaic Church</td>
<td>1. Disappointment with God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Living by Faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Overcoming Our Inner Hurts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Monty Wright</td>
<td>Snoqualmie Valley Alliance Church</td>
<td>1. Uncertain Certainty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Getting Salty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. YouTube “Finding Your Voice”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Grant Brewster</td>
<td>Island Church</td>
<td>1. Grace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Standing Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. God’s Master Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Byron O’Neal</td>
<td>Journey Church</td>
<td>1. Why a Relationship with Jesus is so Great</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. The Invisible War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Go fish!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Art Hunt</td>
<td>Light House Church</td>
<td>1. Ministry to the Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. The Truth about Jesus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. God’s Template for Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Andy Snodgrass</td>
<td>Fox Island Alliance</td>
<td>1. Why Every Christian Must Be Involved in Missions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. An Unswerving Passion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Wanted: A Heart for Missions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>John Stumbo</td>
<td>Salem Alliance Church</td>
<td>1. Why Every Christian Must Be Involved in Missions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Holiness in an Unzipped World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Every Generation, Culture and Opportunity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B
SERMON EVALUATION TOOL

Speaker:                                      Church:

Sermon Title (with Date):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Missional Value 1: The sermon had evidence of a high Christology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Congruence Evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Missional Value 2: The sermon communicated the West as a mission field.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Congruence Evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Missional Value 3: The sermon communicated the local church as a “sent” community.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Congruence Evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Missional Value 4: The sermon communicated incarnational ministry to the marginalized.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Congruence Evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missional Value 5: The sermon communicated discipleship as distinctive to society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive Congruence Evidence</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Missional Value 6: The sermon had evidence of preaching the gospel.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive Congruence Evidence</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C

PANEL OF EXPERTS FOLLOW-UP LETTER

Dear Participant,

I want to thank you for your willingness to be part of this Doctor of Ministry project entitled, “Model for Preaching in the Missional Church: Common Characteristics of Preaching Found in Effective Missional Churches within the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance.” This study will seek to explore the existence of common characteristics found in the preaching of recognized effective missional churches within the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

The end result of this study should be the formulation of a model for preaching which will enhance the effectiveness of missional churches not only in our District and denomination but other churches in the United States as well.

In three days you will receive via e-mail a questionnaire from me with clear instructions regarding your input for the study as well as the process this study will take in the identification of effective missional churches within the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

Thank you so much for your participation. I am grateful. Paul Smith
APPENDIX D

EFFECTIVE MISSIONAL CHURCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Participant:

Thank you once again for your participation in this Doctor of Ministry project called “A Model for Preaching in the Missional Church.” This study will seek to explore the existence of common characteristics found in the preaching of recognized effective missional churches within the Pacific Northwest District, resulting in a suggested model for preaching which will enhance the effectiveness of missional churches not only in our district and denomination but other churches in the United States as well.

To this end, you have agreed to take part in this study. You were sought out for this study because of your recognized influence on and the history and your knowledge of the churches that exist within our district.

For the effective missional churches to be identified, a simple questionnaire has been developed which will serve you in identifying the effective missional churches within our district.

The questionnaire works as follows:

1st. You will see ten blanks after the word “Church” on the following pages.

2nd. You will see six statements under each of the blanks.

These six statements are the identified characteristics of effective missional churches as determined in the literature review completed by this study.

3rd. If you believe a church in our district exhibits at least four of the six characteristics please type the name of the church in the designated blank. You do not need to fill in all ten blanks, just name as many churches you believe fit the given criteria.

4th. After you have typed in the name of a church, next rate the church by highlighting a number from 1 to 5 (1 being low, 5 being strong) regarding how effectively you believe this church embodies this missional church characteristic. Do this for each characteristic.

Your responses will not be shared with others who are on the panel of experts, the identified churches, or the studied pastor, and in this study, your identity will not be linked to the answers.

Thanks so much again for your time and input.

Paul Smith
P.S. Because time is of the essence, please return the questionnaire in two weeks.
Panel of Experts Questionnaire for the Identification of Effective Missional Churches in the Pacific Northwest District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance

1. Church: ____________________________ .

Effective Missional Church Characteristics

1st. A high Christology (seeks to exalt Christ in worship and preaching). (Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

2nd. Sees the West as a mission field (has recognized and adjusted to the changing culture). (Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

3rd. Sees the local church as a “sent” community (equips the people in the church for ministry in their world). (Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

4th. Displays incarnational ministry to the marginalized of society (the church gets physically involved in helping the poor). (Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

5th. Teaches discipleship as a distinct contrast to society (emphasizes and teaches biblical values and priorities not just life enhancement). (Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

6th. Preaches the gospel (holds to salvation through faith alone in Jesus Christ). (Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

2. Church: ____________________________ .

1st. A high Christology (seeks to exalt Christ in worship and preaching). (Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

2nd. Sees the West as a mission field (has recognized and adjusted to the changing culture). (Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

3rd. Sees the local church as a “sent” community (equips the people in the church for
ministry in their world). (Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

4th. Displays incarnational ministry to the marginalized of society (the church gets physically involved in helping the poor). (Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

5th. Teaches discipleship as a distinct contrast to society (emphasizes and teaches biblical values and priorities not just life enhancement).

(Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

6th. Preaches the gospel (holds to salvation through faith alone in Jesus Christ).

(Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

3. Church: ________________________________ .

1st. A high Christology (seeks to exalt Christ in worship and preaching).

(Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

2nd. Sees the West as a mission field (has recognized and adjusted to the changing culture). (Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

3rd. Sees the local church as a “sent” community (equips the people in the church for ministry in their world). (Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

4th. Displays incarnational ministry to the marginalized of society (the church gets physically involved in helping the poor). (Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

5th. Teaches discipleship as a distinct contrast to society (emphasizes and teaches biblical values and priorities not just life enhancement).

(Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

6th. Preaches the gospel (holds to salvation through faith alone in Jesus Christ).

(Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

1<sup>st</sup>. A high Christology (seeks to exalt Christ in worship and preaching).

(Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

2<sup>nd</sup>. Sees the West as a mission field (has recognized and adjusted to the changing culture). (Low... 1...2...3...4...5...High)

3<sup>rd</sup>. Sees the local church as a “sent” community (equips the people in the church for ministry in their world). (Low... 1 ...2.. .3...4...5... .High)

4<sup>th</sup>. Displays incarnational ministry to the marginalized of society (the church gets physically involved in helping the poor). (Low... 1 ...2.. .3...4...5... .High)

5<sup>th</sup>. Teaches discipleship as a distinct contrast to society (emphasizes and teaches biblical values and priorities not just life enhancement).

(Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

6<sup>th</sup>. Preaches the gospel (holds to salvation through faith alone in Jesus Christ).

(Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

5. Church: ____________________________ .

1<sup>st</sup>. A high Christology (seeks to exalt Christ in worship and preaching).

(Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

2<sup>nd</sup>. Sees the West as a mission field (has recognized and adjusted to the changing culture). (Low... 1...2...3...4...5...High)

3<sup>rd</sup>. Sees the local church as a “sent” community (equips the people in the church for ministry in their world). (Low... 1 ...2.. .3...4...5... .High)

4<sup>th</sup>. Displays incarnational ministry to the marginalized of society (the church gets physically involved in helping the poor). (Low... 1 ...2.. .3...4...5... .High)
5th. Teaches discipleship as a distinct contrast to society (emphasizes and teaches biblical values and priorities not just life enhancement).

(Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

6th. Preaches the gospel (holds to salvation through faith alone in Jesus Christ).

(Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

6. Church: ____________________________ .

1st. A high Christology (seeks to exalt Christ in worship and preaching).

(Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

2nd. Sees the West as a mission field (has recognized and adjusted to the changing culture). (Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

3rd. Sees the local church as a “sent” community (equips the people in the church for ministry in their world). (Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

4th. Displays incarnational ministry to the marginalized of society (the church gets physically involved in helping the poor). (Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

5th. Teaches discipleship as a distinct contrast to society (emphasizes and teaches biblical values and priorities not just life enhancement). (Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

6th. Preaches the gospel (holds to salvation through faith alone in Jesus Christ).

(Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

7. Church: ____________________________ .

1st. A high Christology (seeks to exalt Christ in worship and preaching).

(Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

2nd. Sees the West as a mission field (has recognized and adjusted to the changing
culture). (Low... 1...2...3...4...5...High)

3rd. Sees the local church as a “sent” community (equips the people in the church for ministry in their world). (Low... 1...2...3...4...5...High)

4th. Displays incarnational ministry to the marginalized of society (the church gets physically involved in helping the poor). (Low... 1...2...3...4...5...High)

5th. Teaches discipleship as a distinct contrast to society (emphasizes and teaches biblical values and priorities not just life enhancement). (Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

6th. Preaches the gospel (holds to salvation through faith alone in Jesus Christ). (Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

8. Church: ____________________________ .

1st. A high Christology (seeks to exalt Christ in worship and preaching). (Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

2nd. Sees the West as a mission field (has recognized and adjusted to the changing culture). (Low... 1...2...3...4...5...High)

3rd. Sees the local church as a “sent” community (equips the people in the church for ministry in their world). (Low... 1...2...3...4...5...High)

4th. Displays incarnational ministry to the marginalized of society (the church gets physically involved in helping the poor). (Low... 1...2...3...4...5...High)

5th. Teaches discipleship as a distinct contrast to society (emphasizes and teaches biblical values and priorities not just life enhancement). (Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

6th. Preaches the gospel (holds to salvation through faith alone in Jesus Christ).
1. A high Christology (seeks to exalt Christ in worship and preaching). (Low... 1... 2... 3... 4... 5... High)

2. Sees the West as a mission field (has recognized and adjusted to the changing culture). (Low... 1... 2... 3... 4... 5... High)

3. Sees the local church as a “sent” community (equips the people in the church for ministry in their world). (Low... 1... 2... 3... 4... 5... High)

4. Displays incarnational ministry to the marginalized of society (the church gets physically involved in helping the poor). (Low... 1... 2... 3... 4... 5... High)

5. Teaches discipleship as a distinct contrast to society (emphasizes and teaches biblical values and priorities not just life enhancement). (Low... 1... 2... 3... 4... 5... High)

6. Preaches the gospel (holds to salvation through faith alone in Jesus Christ). (Low... 1... 2... 3... 4... 5... High)
5th. Teaches discipleship as a distinct contrast to society (emphasizes and teaches biblical values and priorities not just life enhancement). (Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)

6th. Preaches the gospel (holds to salvation through faith alone in Jesus Christ). (Low...1...2...3...4...5...High)
APPENDIX E

LETTER OF FOLLOW-UP TO PARTICIPATING PASTORS

Dear Participant:

I wanted to write and thank you for your participation in this Doctor of Ministry project. The project name is “A Model for Preaching in the Missional Church.” This study will seek to explore the existence of common characteristics found in the preaching of recognized effective missional churches within the Pacific Northwest District, resulting in a suggested model for preaching which will enhance the effectiveness of missional churches not only in our district and denomination but other churches in the United States as well.

To this end, you have agreed to take part in this study. You were sought out for this study because your church has been recognized by a panel of experts as an “effective missional church” in our district.

As you know, I need to listen to and examine three sermons which have been preached within the last two years. These sermons can be of your choice, and each sermon should resemble a “normal” weekend service/sermon in the life of the church. By “normal” the sermon should not be a Christmas, Easter, Great Commission Sunday, church launch Capital Campaign, Father’s Day, or Mother’s Day sermon. It should resemble the average content of your preaching.

You can send the three sermons in any audio version you prefer except video; I am just studying the audio content of your messages. If you prefer for me to access the sermons via your church website, simply send me the necessary information to access them.

Also, when sending your sermons, please indicate in a written sentence your willingness (or lack thereof) for this study to use your name, the name of your church and the name of the sermon preached when presenting its findings.

Thanks so much again for your time and participation.

Paul Smith
APPENDIX F

DOCUMENTED PREACHING CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS

Characteristic #1  Seek to build relationship through personal self-disclosure

Types of self-disclosure with examples:

Ministry Frustration
I received an e-mail from a man in our church this week and it got me really angry. And I just keep justifying my anger, I kept telling myself if deserved to be angry.
Tommy Martin, “Are You a Murderer”

It is no secret that we have made some personnel changes in the area of worship. These changes have taken a greater relational toll on me than I had expected. The past few months have been some of the hardest that I have experienced at Salem Alliance.
John Stumbo, “Every Generation, Culture and Opportunity”

Relational Shortcomings
I confess to you today that I missed the mark many times as a father. I know how hard it is to be a dad. I am a fellow struggler with you and seek the grace of Christ with you in this journey of being a Godly father.
Tommy Martin, “Be a Role Model”

In my desire to be admired by others and not be excluded, I worked by myself to exhaustion leaving me with no time or energy for people.
Randy Shaw, “Disappointment”

Spiritual Shortcomings
In my desire not to experience rejection from by brother or my wife, I had to reject the truth, and in doing so I rejected the will of God for my life.
Randy Shaw, “Disappointment”

For the longest time I believed that God wanted me to be better, and his way to accomplish this was making feel rotten for my past life with all of its shortcomings, this was my bad theology, and I needed to learn Grace.
Monty Wright, “Uncertain Certainty”
Life Turning Points

When my father chose not to take me to the swimming pool that day, something inside me died as a child. What died in me was the belief that my father wanted the best for me, and what was birthed in me that day was a consistent search, a search for someone or something to stop the pain I was feeling.

Randy Shaw, “Living by Faith”

Tears rolled down my face as I feared death as nightfall came, for I was lost in a place were he didn’t know the language.

John Stumbo, “Why Every Christian Must Be Involved in Mission”

I was not going to step into a church. I knew my life and my lifestyle during those years was not congruent with theirs, but God had a plan. And even though I was deep into drugs, God’s love as demonstrated by those who stepped out of the church and into my world changed my life.

Andy Snodgrass, “Ministry to the Poor”

Ministry Desires

I want to be a pastor that has connection with the poor. I need that in my life. My life is richer in God’s love when I’m reaching those who need Gods love shown to them in practical ways.

Andy Snodgrass, “Ministry to the Poor”

---

Characteristic #2     Corporate application of a biblical text

---

Types of corporate application with examples:

Church Outreach and Evangelism

Paul the apostle had as a singular passion of his life to win as many as possible. Today I would like to talk about what it will take as a church for us to have that same singular passion as Paul, to win as many as possible.

Andy Snodgrass, “An Unswerving Passion”

I had to ask myself, “Do we have a burning passion to reaching Valley with gospel? And I had to answer, No!” People all around us are going to hell, and it’s like we don’t even care.

Tommy Martin, “Excuses, Excuses, Excuses”

Why must every Christ follower be involved in Christ mission, because unless someone reaches them they will not know about Jesus. That is why we send missionaries; that is
why we will continue to send missionaries out from Salem Alliance. That is why we do acts of compassion around the world, why people will not know about Jesus unless someone sends them.
John Stumbo, “Why Every Christian Must be Involved in Missions”

**Church Health**

Paul’s teaching about being living sacrifices is all about community application. You cannot apply this text in isolation. Paul’s teaching and our application of it go cross grain to Western individualism.
Andy Snodgrass, “Wanted: A Heart for Missions”

It’s very clear to all that we are going through a season of entropy. We have lost our focus. We focus more on internal consumer things. We are a typical church, 20% of the people do 80% of the work.
Tommy Martin, “Excuses, Excuses, Excuses”

Why does the church exist?” We exist to reach up in worship of God. We reach inward to grow our faith, and we reach outward to grow our faith. If we as a church don’t do the third, we will be like many churches in America. We will be a spiritually dead church, and others will know it long before we will.
Byron O’Neal, “Go Fish”

One of questions that I am asked most often is this: “Is it OK if a homosexual or a lesbian attends Salem Alliance church?” And I say, “Yes!” I want this to be a place for all who are struggling, but none of us can flaunt or parade our sin, and none of us can condemn a person for their sin. Gay bashing will never be a part of Salem Alliance church.
John Stumbo, “Holiness in an Unzipped World”

**New Church Venture**

I want to remind all of us, we are being called to be a risk-taking church. This means we will have challenges, but the God who was on David’s side is on our side. And the courage and confidence that David had he is asking us to have.
Byron O’Neal, “The Journey”

I have asked the leadership to team to pray for God’s blessing on our church, and today I stand here asking you (congregation) to pray a risky prayer for our church. Would you pray God’s blessing upon our church. And we will pray this prayer not so we make the blessing all about ourselves, but so we can bless the many nations that God has called us to reach with his love and message of his son. My hope is that we can be a strong church, so we can bless other.
John Stumbo, “Every Generation, Culture and Opportunity”
God knew that there needed to be a church on Bambridge Island. Why a church? Because he knew that there would be people who needed to see the love of Jesus in practical ways, and that is why we exist, to show the love of Jesus to those here on Bambridge Island.
Grant Brewster, “God’s Master Plan”

Characteristic #3 The uses of Biblical languages and their aid in clarifying a sermonic point

Types of biblical languages used with examples:

Greek text explicitly stated

Many of you have heard the Christian term, good news, but in this series we will ask, “what the news and why is it good?” Well the Greek word, εαγγέλιον or euangelion, means good news and that is the word that Paul the Apostle used in the biblical text to announce the message and the work of Jesus Christ.
Art Hunt, “Why a Relationship with Jesus Is So Great”

The word begotten or monogenes means one of a kind, meaning Jesus is the same kind and the very nature as God the Father.
Art Hunt, “The Truth about Jesus”

Greek text referred to

The Greek word for young was the word that was used for the age requirements that was needed to serve in the Roman army. In essence Paul is saying, “If people think you are too young, remind them, Timothy, you meet the age requirements to serve in the Roman army.”
Tommy Martin, “Be a Role Model”

Do you know what words in the original language mean for the phrase, “exact representation of his being” in the Greek word means, “God’s exact likeness.”
Art Hunt, “The Truth about Jesus”

Paul in the original language focuses on the word power and it is not a simple word but a complex word that communicates grand power or ultimate power Paul in essence is saying, “No power is greater than God’s power.”
Grant Brewster, “Standing Strong”
Most Christians don’t want to be light; they will settle for gray. The problem in this, in the Greek languages, there is no word for gray, no concept of it, meaning, you have two choices, light or dark, and if you are not light, implications, you’re being spiritually dark. Monty Wright, “Getting Salty”

**Hebrew text referred to**

The word *servant* in this text is *ebed* meaning, *bondman* or *bondservant*. Monty Wright, “Getting Salty”

---

**Characteristic #4 Some degree of pain must be embraced by the disciple of Jesus Christ**

**Types of pain embraced used with examples:**

**Social Pain**

Somehow in our society we have developed the idea that we are to never bear pain or hardship. We have lost the belief that certain types of spiritual growth can only be known through struggle.

Tommy Martin, “Be a Role Model”

Do you have a lower standard of living because you are a Christian? Does it show in how you spend your money that you priorities God church?

Tommy Martin, “Excuses, Excuses, Excuses”

We cannot just keep sitting in here in our comfortable seats in our comfortable church, with our comfortable lives. We must keep reaching out, outside of these walls, into the lives of those whom Jesus died for.

Andy Snodgrass, “Unswerving Passion”

Many people have been sold on a non-biblical Jesus. They see him as the cherry on top of our American pie, but Jesus is saying I want first place in all things.

Monty Wright, “Uncertain Certainty”
Relational Pain

Dad, your children need to know you are going to tell the truth even if it hurts you, if it embarrasses you. You’re a disciple of Jesus. We tell the truth even if it cost us a bruised ego.
Tommy Martin, “Be a Role Model”

Jesus makes this dramatic statement to capture his listener’s attention, for nothing is more valuable in our lives than relationship. Jesus is saying, “To be my disciple I be more valuable than any human relationship.”
Monty Wright, “Getting Salty”

Because you are a disciple of Jesus his intent is to destroy you, your marriage, your life. You are in a spiritual battle, and this spiritual battle will be proof that you are a disciple of Jesus.
Byron O’Neal, “The Invisible War”

Spiritual Pain

The gospel is all about a new heart, not about trusting Jesus and getting a new car. We want it to be about the new car because Jesus transforming your heart is a lifetime of struggle. That is the only path to freedom. The gospel work is about a new heart.
Art Hunt, “Why a Relationship with Jesus Is So Great”

The hardest thing for me to communicate this morning is this: The potential God has for you can only be known through death, and I am talking about spiritual death, the death of the sin nature.
Monty Wright, “Uncertain Certainty”

Like Abraham, we will receive trials form God to test us, to develop our faith.
Randy Shaw, “Living by Faith”

Physical Pain

Often the Christian life is presented as a pathway to life fulfillment. If you trust Jesus, you will escape a life of suffering, and in a moment everything will take care of itself. The reality is, we live in a broken world, find Jesus in the brokenness, and being molded to be like Jesus by brokenness is the life fulfillment he offers.
Randy Shaw, “Disappointment”

Are their things in your life that you are going through right now that you can say are a direct result of you following Jesus, or are the difficulties just life?
Tommy Martin, “Excuses, Excuses, Excuses”
Characteristic #5  The life of a disciple of Jesus is in touch with culture but lives a life that is often contrary to culture

Types of in touch with but contrary to examples:

Technology

YouTube is a virtual voice, YouTube is helping people feel they matter. We are a culture that wants others to be stuck on them. Today, I want to ask the question, “How can I find my voice in an authentic way not a virtual way, in a way that is filled with God and his love?”
Monty Wright, “YouTube, Finding Your Voice”

Leadership studies

Let me ask those of you who are in leadership and read up on leadership, how many leadership books have you read lately where the author had as his key to greatness being that of humility and serving others? Probably not many, if any, but Jesus says my disciples lead differently. They are marked by humility expressing itself in service to others. This is Jesus teaching on greatness.
Monty Wright, “Uncertain Certainty”

Worldview

Why is the truth about Jesus important? Oprah Winfrey states the following, “All religious faiths are like a path leading up a mountain, different paths but they all get to the top. They all get you to heaven.” Why is the truth about Jesus important? Because America’s biggest entertainment personality is communicating five days a week that Jesus is just like other gods.
Art Hunt, “The Truth about Jesus”

Entertainment

You don’t need look to hard to see that our culture’s view of sex and sexuality is casual. From magazine racks, to beer commercials, much of our culture’s “take” on the issue is just that, ‘take’ and in doing so makes sex empty of its purpose. But for a disciple, the Bible says there should be a hint of sexual immorality.
John Stumbo, “Holiness in an Unzipped World”

I would be concerned if you are not concerned about how we and our children are so influenced by our culture’s depiction of sexuality. No matter what culture communicates,
the Holy Spirit is still holy, and if we are living on a steady diet of T.V. and movies, how can sanctification continue its work in our hearts?
Andy Snodgrass, “Wanted: A Heart for Missions”

We need to remember that our young people are living in a culture that will allow a man like Charles Barkley say, “I am not a role model for your child and I don’t want to be.” Well Dad, that might be O.K. for Charles Barkley, but you don’t get that privilege of ducking your role model responsibilities.
Tommy Martin, “Be a Role Model”

**Political issues**

As we all know, Oregon takes a very liberal view regarding sexuality and its recent rulings in the courts. Because of this we shouldn’t be surprised when it feels like were swimming against the culture when we say we believe the bible on such matters.
John Stumbo, “Holiness in an Unzipped World”

**Religious statistics**

In Salem Oregon you only need to talk to five people before someone can tell you about Jesus, but it is not that easy for everyone, and that is why we send missionaries. In Uruguay you need to talk to 700 people, and in Iraq you need to talk to 30,000 people before you would meet someone who could tell you about Jesus. It is not equal, and the Scriptures say, “to whom much is given, much is required,” That is why we send missionaries.
John Stumbo, “Why Every Christian Needs to Be Involved in Mission”
WORKS CITED


---. Personal interview. 21 Nov. 2007.


Killen, Patricia. and Silk, Mark., eds. “Religion and Public Life in the Pacific Northwest.”


---. Personal interview. Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Ky. 23 Nov. 2007


Searcy, Edwin. “Seven Working Assumptions for Preaching in a Missional Church.” *The


