ABSTRACT

TOWARDS AN "ORTHO-DOXOLOGICAL" MISSIONAL MINISTRY

by

John R. Guerre

The purpose of this research project was to discover the correlation between missional identity and missional behavior. To this end I preached a series of eight messages over a two-month period and designed a questionnaire that probed Big Bend United Methodist Church's current missional identity and missional behavior before and after the series was implemented.

A positive relationship between growing in missional identity and doing missional behavior was discovered in the Boomer generation (those born between 1946 and 1964).

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled

TOWARDS AN "ORTHO-DOXOLOGICAL"

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CHAPTER 1

UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

Since entering full-time, post-seminary ministry in the United Methodist

denomination in 1990, I have thought that the churches for which I have provided

pastoral leadership lacked a singular defining dynamic: the sense of being involved in the

missio Dei as defined by Jesus in Scriptures such as Luke 19:10, "I have come to seek

and save the lost" and John 20:21, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." All of

these churches were plateaued or in decline, and, not surprisingly, my efforts to have

them participate in the *missio Dei* were not widely received.

Being a Christian leader who has passion to help the local church execute the

Great Commission as stated in Matthew 28:18-20, I believe strongly that the Church

exists to be a missional community whose primary task is to carry out this command.

Unfortunately, in spite of leadership ability, theological preference, pastoral

personality style, shared vision, strategy, mission, and church growth techniques, the

churches with which I had been associated still did not embrace the Great Commission,

even after having the biblical/theological dimensions of the *missio Dei* thoroughly and

passionately promulgated to them.

These churches did not become missional churches because they had not adopted

nor developed a missional identity. Because congregations generally act consistently with

who and what they think they are, the foundational issue confronting the North American

Church is one of biblical identity, not leadership or church growth technique.

Undoubtedly these are significant factors, but ultimately they are secondary. Because

"identity is fundamental" (Ford 11), churches must attempt to recapture a biblical identity or they will never become missional churches.

When I transferred to the Florida Annual Conference in February 2001, I encountered a conference-wide movement called Celebrate Jesus. The strategy of Celebrate Jesus is to mobilize local churches, with the help of visiting missionaries, to reach out to their communities with missional deeds of love, prayer, kindness, and service. Celebrate Jesus is designed as a pre-evangelistic move in which a church seeks to create a relationship with its community in a no-strings-attached way. Becoming involved with Celebrate Jesus as both a visiting missionary and a local church pastor, I have found it to be a catalyzing event that, better than most, converges missional identity and missional activity. I have also found Celebrate Jesus to be more compatible with my theological understanding of the Church as described in Chapter 2 of this project.

In June 2003 I was appointed to Big Bend UMC in Riverview, Florida. The leadership of Big Bend UMC is vociferous about and cherishes its congregational vision, "To Know Christ and to Make Christ Known"; however, when I assumed pastoral leadership, Big Bend UMC had no active evangelistic point person, no evangelistic strategy, and no evangelistic budget. During the fifteen congregational meetings that I conducted during the summer of my arrival, the participants and I explored three questions:

1. How did you get to Big Bend?

2. Why do you stay at Big Bend?

3. Where do you see Big Bend going in the future?

Out of the plethora of responses, not one contained missional reasons why people come

to, stay at, and hope for Big Bend UMC.

The participants lack of missional responses to these three questions are indicative of why Big Bend UMC was not fulfilling the second half of its vision, "To Make Christ Known," nor one of its expressed core values, "Reaching the lost in our local and world communities is accomplished by showing and sharing Christ's love."

To help reverse this lack of missional spirit, a newly founded evangelistic team started to do monthly outreaches. These outreaches, patterned after the Celebrate Jesus model, propelled Big Bend UMC into its community. After several outreaches, Big Bend UMC has seen some encouraging signs that point to the formation of missional identity, but, these outreaches have been executed mostly through the efforts of the evangelistic team and this team constitutes only a minority of the overall Big Bend UMC population. I envision not just a missional team but also a missional congregation, and this vision provides the impetus for this project.

Unfortunately Big Bend UMC is not unique in its missional malaise. Christian pollster George Barna laments, "The vast majority of Christian churches in America are either stagnate or declining" (15). If his diagnosis is correct, then the church in North America, not dissimilar to its Western European counterpart, is in appreciable decline.[1] The Gallup Poll Index of Leading Religious Indicators documents this decline. Gallup demonstrates that, in 1952, 75 percent of Americans claimed that religion was very important in their lives. In 1996, however, that number diminished to 55 percent (par. 1). The NES Guide to Public Opinion and Electoral Behavior demonstrates similar findings

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[1]Regarding church decline in Europe, Philip Jenkins comments, "Over the past century or so massive secularization has seriously reduced the population of European Christians. Rates of church membership and religious participation have been declining precipitously in a long-term trend that shows no signs of slowing" (94).

in a comparative analysis of church attendance from 1970-2002 (Table 1.B. 5b.). What is even more ignominious, at least for the UMC, is that since 1968 the population of America has grown by approximately ninety-two million while the UMC has declined by approximately three million.

This decline has been precipitated by the loss of the missional identity of the Church in North America. The loss of missional identity has caused a crisis, that is being exacerbated by the eroding influence of the church as an authoritative, influential, and cherished institution in North America. Furthermore, with this loss of identity, a precedent has been set where ministry has largely become a placation of the prevailing narcissism rather than a mobilization to mission. Much has been written on this subject; however, Darrell L. Guder et al. attributes the decline of the North American Church to a loss of missional identity: "The real issues in the current crisis of the Christian church are spiritual and theological. It has to do with who we are and what we are for" (3). George Hunsberger and Craig Van Gelder buttress this assertion:

> With the shift in the church social location in recent decades and the radical change in the culture itself, we are faced with a crisis of mission identity and direction. We sense the malaise in our churches born of the loss of our former identity as the moral support and spiritual caregiver to the social order. We notice in our loss how little identity remains. (290)

In order for the Church to rediscover what it truly is, it must not retrench and insist upon an identity built mainly from the fading experiment of modernity and propped up by Christendom presuppositions. Such presuppositions originated in the fourth century when the church moved, primarily under the emperorship of Constantine, from a marginal status into an influential force within the Roman Empire. Michael Goheen tells how this shift has adversely affected the identity of the church:

> During the early years of its life, the church understood her identity as resident aliens. There was a redemptive tension between the church and her culture. The church understood itself to be an alternative community that was nourished by an alternative story. However, with the Constantinian shift, the redemptive tension was lost, as the church became part of the constellation of powers within the empire. Her identity was shaped by her place in culture rather than by the story of the kingdom of God. The end result was cultural captivity. (2)

The Church's place of power and prominence persisted until the mid-twentieth century when its status in the Western world began to diminish.

As stated earlier, congregations naturally act according to, and consistently with, who or what they think they are (e.g., Prov. 23:7a; Matt. 15:18a); therefore, the church in North America needs to recover an identity forged from a biblical/theological paradigm and then formulate its mission from that basis.

Congregational Context

The Big Bend UMC started as a conference plant in Riverview, Florida, in 1987. It first assembled as a congregation of twenty-seven people in a local Seventh Day Adventist church. In December of the same year, it was officially chartered as a church. Easter of 1992, the congregation moved into its new building.

Growth of Membership and Worship Attendance

Table 1.1 reveals the growth of membership and average worship attendance for Big Bend UMC. The table begins in 1992, the first year the congregation worshiped in its own building and on its own land. It reveals that overall membership in the years indicated has grown 46.7 percent while worship attendance has grown only 9.3 percent. Worship attendance is more important because it better measures people's loyalty to the present ministry of the church. The disparity between these figures could mean that Big Bend UMC's strategy for assimilation is not effective or that it resides in a highly

unstable and transient community. The two years (1993 and 2003) that signify noticeable

drops in worship attendance are primarily due to the transitioning of pastoral leadership.

Transitions years are generally traumatic times for congregations, and a decrease in

worship attendance is to be anticipated.

Table 1.1. Growth of Membership and Worship Attendance

Year	Membership	Worship Attendance
1992	262	259
1993	267	217
1994	288	202
1995	330	205
1996	338	234
1997	408	270
1998	437	278
1999	463	248
2000	487	265
2001	492	273
2002	549	299
2003	561	277

Source: Florida Annual Conference.

Overall membership and worship attendance may be hindered slightly because of

geography. The church is semi-secluded behind a massive subdivision; nevertheless, it

still has experienced slight numerical growth primarily because of the massive influx of

residential homes in southern Hillsborough County, Florida. The projection of growth for

the next five years is expected to yield approximately 125,000 more residential units.

As mentioned previously, the generalized thinking at Big Bend UMC is that church primarily exists to take care of personal and familial needs. This mindset, which feeds the maintenance model of church and, more so than anything else, subverts the missional spirit of the church.

The Purpose of the Project

The purpose of the research project was to evaluate the cognitive and behavioral changes in the worship participants of the Big Bend UMC as a result of an eight-week theological/biblical sermon series on missional identity and missional activity. It was presented over a two-month period, 2 January 2005-20 February 2005.

Defining the Project

The project consisted of eight missional messages delivered on consecutive Sunday morning services ranging over a two-month period (see Table 1.2). The worship times were conducted at 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., and 11:00 a.m. The messages were theologically sound and scripturally based and were on average twenty-five minutes in length.

Table 1.2. The Sermon Series

Title	Text(s)	Time
"Who Are You?, Part I: An Ortho-doxological Race"	John 4:23	January 2, 2005
"Who Are You?, Part II: Chosen Generation, Royal Priesthood, Holy Nation, God's Treasured Possession"	I Peter 2:9	January 9, 2005
"Who Are You Part III: Mission Accomplished?"	John 20:21	January 16, 2005
"Maintaining or on Mission"	Philippians 2:21, Mark 12:33	January 23, 2005
"Towards a Missional Ministry"	John 4:29, Matthew 5:19, Mark 2:12, John 9:12	January 30, 2005
"Mission Priority 1: To Make Disciples"	Matthew 28:18-20	February 6, 2005
"Rescuing the Perishing"	John 8:24	February 13, 2005
"Legendary Missionaries"	Matthew 5:16, 1Peter 2:12	February 20, 2005

Research Questions

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

1. What changes occurred in the congregation's understanding of missional identity as a result of the sermon series?

2. What changes occurred in the congregation's missional behavior as a result of the sermon series?

Definition of Terms

In this study the principle terms are defined as follows.

Ortho-doxological is a hybrid adjective of which the first part "ortho" is derived from the Greek *orthos*. This word denotes something that is set right or straight. Biblically it is partially derived from the text of John 4:23, which declares the Father's missional intention of seeking people who will worship him "in spirit and in truth." The second part, "doxological" is rooted in the *doxa* (praise) language of Scripture. In this project the term doxological is nuanced to mean the praising of God in order to enlarge his reputation in this world. Chapter 2 demonstrates from a biblical theological basis that doxology is also descriptive of humanity's fundamental creational and redemptive identity, thus the term, "ortho-doxological" or more simply people who praise-in-the-right-direction.

Missio Dei is Latin for "mission of God." This term signifies the purpose of the Church in terms of the mission of the Trinity in the world.

Missional church is a church engaged in *missio Dei*. The missional church attempts, through the animation and creativity of the Holy Spirit, to persuade all people to experience the love and glory of God, through Jesus Christ, in order that they might also become his "ortho-doxological" missionaries.

Anti-missional church is a church that sees itself fundamentally as a receiver of ministry rather than involved in the *missio Dei.* The nature of the anti-missional church is inherently self-placative, and its primary focus of concern is inward, not outward.

Pneumatic Pentecost, in contrast to the Old Testament Pentecost festival, is the day described in Acts 2 that Jesus sent his promised Spirit to the disciples in order to empower them for the Great Commission.

Methodology

This project was an evaluative study in the experimental mode that utilized the one group pretest/posttest design with no comparison group. The pretest questionnaire sought to explore the congregation's cognitive understanding of the congregation's missional identity. The posttest questionnaire sought to evaluate the congregation's missional behavioral as a result of the sermon series.

Population and Subjects

The subjects of this study were those who were 18 years of age or older and who consistently attended (at least once a month) the 8:00 a.m. and/or 9:30 a.m. and/or 11:00 a.m. Sunday worship services at Big Bend UMC in Riverview, Florida. For this study the sample and population were the same; every person who fulfilled the worship criteria was asked to complete and return the pre- and post-sermon series questionnaire via the mail service. The number of candidates who fulfilled the criteria was 221.

Variables

The independent variable of this research project was the sermon series. Eight sermons were preached consecutively over a two-month period. The sermon series was theologically sound and scripturally based.

The dependent variables of this project were the cognitive and behavioral changes in missional identity and missional activity.

The intervening variables that might have influenced and helped explain the cognitive and behavioral outcomes but were outside of the controls of this study were age (including both chronological and relationship tenure to the church), Big Bend UMC's monthly outreaches into the community, the theological background of the participants, and emphasis on and implementation of the Celebrate Jesus Mission.

Instrumentation

A researcher-designed questionnaire, based on the Linkert model, was the primary instrument used to evaluate the cognitive and behavioral responses of the population in regards to its missional identity and behavior. The questionnaire was implemented prior to the sermon series and again at the conclusion of it. Nine questions were autobiographical; sixteen questions sought to diagnose missional identity; eleven questions sought to diagnose missional behavior. The complete questionnaire is found in Appendix C.

Data Collection

The pretested, researcher-designed questionnaire provided the primary source of data for measuring missional identity formation and missional behavior of the population. The data was collected in two ways: (1) by means of a self-addressed, stamped envelope returned to the church office due no later than seven days after the final message in the series and (2) a designated collection box placed in the back of the sanctuary where the population brought their responses during worship and fellowship opportunities.

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Delimitations and Generalizability

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The project was delimited to include the population of Big Bend UMC located in Riverview, Florida. The purpose of the research project was to evaluate the cognitive and behavioral changes in the worship participants of the church as a result of an eight-week sermon series on missional identity and missional activity. It was presented over a two-month period. A positive relationship was found between a growing missional identity and resultant missional behavior. These findings clearly demonstrate that any Christian

church that embarks upon a serious study to discover its core biblical identity as an

"ortho-doxological" missionary will receive similar results.

Overview of the Study

Chapter 2 establishes the biblical and theological foundations for the main thesis

of this project. The research design is presented in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 reports the

findings of the study. Chapter 5 provides a summary and interpretation of the research

findings. Other insights are added with suggestions for further study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

As discussed in the preceding chapter, the decline of the church in North America can be traced to a loss of missional identity and, therefore, a loss of missional activity. This loss of missional identity has caused the ministry of the local church to become largely a placation of the prevailing cultural narcissism rather than a mobilization for the Christian mission. Although the quintessential missional question, "How does God want to serve and save the world through the Church?" is one with which all churches must grapple, a qualification must be given.

The purpose of this project was to create missional identity from a biblical/theological basis and then discover how this identity translates into missional activity. This discovery includes measuring cognition (identity) and behavior (activity). At the same time, as a Christian leader, I understand that, although right thinking (orthodoxy) and right behavior (orthopraxis) are essential and correlative, they alone cannot discern the depths of one's heart. This truth is illustrated in God's choosing of David to be king instead of one of his more qualified brothers (1 Sam. 16:7-12) and is validated in God's fundamental worship problem with Israel as specified in Isaiah 29:13, "These people draw near with their mouths and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their worship of me is a human commandment learned by rote." Jesus, moreover, debunked pharisaical righteousness, which ironically was replete with missional activity. However, these activities never pleased God because they did not

emanate from love nor were there transcendent motivations to glorify God (Mark 7:6; 1 Cor. 10:31). Therefore, this study is not attempting to absolutize a spiritual standard by the virtues of right activity. However, Jesus expects spiritual and missional fruit (e.g., John 15:5) and for Christians, this fruit is initially realized by a correct understanding of who they are.

The Church's Core Identity

Christian identity is inextricably bound to the *missio Dei*, which can be understood in three phases. In phase one God created a doxological universe and humanity. In phase two God sent Jesus Christ to rescue and recreate humanity as an ortho-doxological race. In phase three God sent the Holy Spirit to empower the church to be his missional community in the world.

Missio Dei, Part I: To Create a Doxological Universe

Mission history[2] begins with the glory of God publicly displayed through the physical cosmos he had created out of nothing (*ex nihilo*). The purpose and design of the physical cosmos is to communicate the splendor of the infinite, triune Deity. Scriptures such as Numbers 14:21, Habakkuk 2:14, Psalm 8:1, and Psalm 19:3 establish God's glory as the point and goal of creation. The purpose of this project, however, was not to determine if God created the universe with either/or intentions: to glorify himself or to bestow love on his creation. The position of this paper is that God created the universe for doxological purposes in order to bestow love upon it. One of the most loving things God could do is create a universe that he loves and is glorified. James F. Engel and William A. Dyrness support this position, "God has created out of love so that the

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[2] More formally called, "Theology of Mission." I start with Simon Chan's assertion that "true theology is always doxological" (17).

creature might worship him" (37).

The revelation of the glory of God is the reason for creation and is manifested through creation. To support this supposition, Jonathan Edwards's comments, "It is evident … that the glory of God is the last end for which he created the world" (109).

Although a full treatment of the concept of God's glory is beyond the scope of this project, definitions of the Old Testament term *kabod* and New Testament *doxa* are needed. G. W. Bromily's definition helps this study: "When glory was used of persons it reflected noteworthy elements such as dignity of character, position,… wealth,… or power" (2: 478). Daniel Fuller elaborates on the sense of the glory of God as "synonymous with goodness or the quality that makes a person … beneficial for meeting a need" (116). Millard Erickson sees the glory of God as "the central motif" of theology (78).

When God freely and lovingly displayed his glory in the creation of the physical universe, his own opinion of it was "good" (e.g., Gen. 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, and 25). The physical cosmos received this divine affirmation because it reflected God's glory back to himself and perfectly existed and functioned in its original design. Only after God completed the creation of the *adam* (M∂dDa: the ones formed from the earth) did he pronounce the culmination of all of his creative acts as "very good" (kala» li÷an; Gen. 1:31). Humanity is distinct from the other good creative acts because it, and it alone, bears God's image/likeness. In other words, the *adam*, created as the culmination of the good, is the chief glory-bearing agent of God. Walther Eichrodt confirms this special distinction of humanity: "it was clearly the narrator's intention to mark Man out from the other creatures, since only in his case does he relate a divine transfer of the divine breath

(121). C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch further demonstrate the special distinction of humanity

by virtue of the difference between how God formed creation and how he formed

humanity:

> The creation of man does not take place through a word addressed by God
> to the earth, but as a result of divine decree, "We will make man in Our
> image, after our likeness" which proclaims at the very outset the
> distinction and pre-eminence of a man above all the other creatures of the
> earth. (161-62)

Connoted in the design and function of the *imago Dei*, of these very good

creations, is the capacity and responsibility to reflect and extend the glory of their Creator

back to him and to one another. Metaphorically speaking, humanity was created to be a

prism refracting the light of God's glory into all of life. This function keeps the humanity

in harmony with the rest of the physical creation. This design signifies that humans were

created for doxological purposes and were given a doxological mandate. Therefore,

doxology is not only something humans do; it is what they are—a doxological race.

Howard A. Snyder strengthens this theological construct:

> The whole universe … reflects God's glory and creative energy. The
> universe is made to radiate and reveal God's majestic beauty. Human
> beings find their purpose in praising God, mirroring his glory, enjoying
> the earth, and pursuing God's purposes in the world. All creation reflects
> God's glory—God's "image." All creation is gifted with a spiritual DNA
> that reflects who God is. (130-31)

Edwards speaks of the primary affection of a doxological creature: "There are

some things in the Word of God which lead us to suppose, that it requires of men that

they should desire and seek God's glory, as their highest and last end in what they do"

(109). According to God's original design, praise is what all of the created order did by

nature (e.g., Ps. 150:1; Eph. 1:12; 1 Cor. 10:31; Rev. 15:4).

Sin: Praise in the Wrong Direction

In the prologue of the book of Romans, the Apostle Paul, speaking from his background in religious and cultural Judaism, articulates a theological: [3]

> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse; for though they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools; and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles.
>
>   Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the degrading of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.
>
>   For this reason God gave them up to degrading passions. Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error.
>
>   And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind and to things that should not be done. (Rom. 1:18-28)

Before sin entered into the universe, humanity naturally lived as a doxological race. In other words, before the Fall, humanity formally praised in the right direction, namely upwards to its loving Creator. Sin is, among other things, rebellion against God and his purposes.[4] It causes humanity to praise in the wrong direction, namely towards

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[3] Paul does this with the following terms: *suppress* (`kateco/ntwn`), *exchange* (`h¡llaxan`), *without excuse* (`aónapologh/touß`), and *refusal to glorify or thank* (`oujc w ß qeo\n e˙do/xasan h· hujcari÷sthsan`). On this passage Paul Achtemeier states, "Inevitably, one comes to resemble that to which one gives oneself in devotion. If therefore, instead of giving our devotion to a benevolent God and his gracious Son we give our devotion to lords of a bestial nature. Is it to be wondered that we ourselves finally become bestial?" (38).

[4] Brian D. McLaren, reflecting on the Eastern Orthodox doctrine of *perichoresis* (eternal dance of the Trinity) refers to sin as an action whereby, "people are stepping out of the dance, corrupting its beauty

the created things that by design are not ultimately praiseworthy. By nature, sin deflects

praise away from its vertical plane, from the "One who is blessed forever, Amen" (Rom.

1:25)*,* and flattens it horizontally towards the created order. James D. G. Dunn sheds light

on the underlying problem of sin in his comment about Romans 1:21:

> To "glorify" God, is to render the appropriate response due to his doxa …
> which becomes the visible manifestation of God in theophany and vision.
> The failure to give God his due … is Paul's way of expressing the primal
> sin of humankind. (59)

Despite sin, humanity continues to be doxological in nature, but this identity is

fading as evidenced by the myriad acts of idolatry Paul describes in Romans 1:23.

Idolatry is the epitome of praise in the wrong direction. Idolatry is doxological betrayal.

Paul demonstrates that sin is contrary to the *missio Dei* in creation, thereby

incurring the wrath of God of verse 18 (ojrgh\ qeouv). Later in the book of Romans,

Paul proclaims both the universality and ultimate ramification of sin (e.g., 3:10; 3:23 and

6:23). As a biblical writer, Paul is not alone in his pronouncement against the doxological

failure of humanity. Psalmist and prophet, both employed by Paul in Romans 3, also

indict humanity for its doxological impropriety (e.g., Ps. 53:2-3; Isa. 53:6). These

passages define the nature of sin as humanity's failure to portray God's glory adequately.

Sin results in a loss of doxological identity and behavior. This loss causes

humanity to oppose diametrically what all people, especially Christ followers, should do

regarding the glory of God and that is seek and desire it "above all" (Edwards 109).

A vivid example of this opposition can be found in Jesus' parable, "The Rich Man

and the Barns":

> The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself,

---

and rhythm, crashing and tackling and stomping on feet instead of moving with grace, rhythm, and
reverence" (56).

> "What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?" Then he said, "I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods." And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry." But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?"

The rich man takes his security, pride, and pleasure in the prospering of his business, in other words, the created order and his ability to manipulate it for his own ends. "Relax, eat, drink, and be merry" become the code words for his praise-in-the-wrong-direction trajectory and his opposition to God's created purposes for his life.

For the rich man, God is nowhere in the picture, and is not being praised. The sheer number of personal pronouns in this parable demonstrates that no one else, not even God, resides within the radius of the rich man's concern. Verse 20 indicates that the man will be held accountable for praising in the wrong direction. On the other hand, praise-in-the-right-direction people, as was shown previously, order their lives "living for the praise of God's glory" (Eph. 1:12) and "doing all for the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31). The entire world is polarized over this doxological issue. Everyone by nature will do praise; the only issue is which direction: towards the Creator or towards the created? Martin Luther explains this praise-in-the-wrong-direction syndrome in his commentary on Romans 1:

> The sin of omitting that which is good leads to the sin of committing what is positively evil. For this reason, the Apostle, after having shown how the heathen sinned by neglecting the worship of the true God, now demonstrates how they sinned (*positively*) [original emphasis] by establishing the worship of false gods, or idolatry. The human mind is so inclined by nature that as it turns from the one, it of necessity becomes addicted to the other. He who rejects the Creator needs must worship the creature. (44-45)

To make matters worse, fallen humanity's inability to be a doxological people is aided and abetted by demonic forces. Both Jesus and Paul speak of the primary mission

of the devil as eradicating humanity's doxological identity by blinding it to the glory of God: "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy" (John 10:10); "In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Cor. 4:4).

If credence is given to the traditional interpretation that the angel Lucifer had chief doxological responsibilities before the rebellion in heaven after which he and one-third of the angelic hosts were exorcised from the presence of God (Isa. 14:12-20), then not surprisingly his mission on earth is to hinder people from seeing the glory of God in Christ, for seeing this glory is imperative for humanity to realize its true doxological potential.

This mission of Satan may explain why idolatry, his oldest, most persistent, and most lethal temptation, has been the prevailing problem of the people of God throughout salvation/mission history (i.e., forbidden fruit, golden calf, the gods of Israel's neighbors, and most of all, the temptation of Jesus culminating in Matthew 4:8-9: "all the kingdoms of the world I will give you if you bow down and worship me").

Severe ramifications are reserved for those who choose not to praise in the right direction. Fuller argues persuasively from a legal perspective that criminal acts must be met with equal and corresponding punishments. These punishments must be based on the amount of freedom that has been taken away from the victim (i.e., take a life; a life is required); thus, the ultimate punishment for people who fall short of God's glory is an eternal hell where the doxological criminal is separated from God (19).

Eternal punishment for doxological crimes may sound severe; however, modern and postmodern people may have lost the view that worship is the chief purpose of

humanity and, therefore, carries utmost moral and eternal consequences. Justice, modeled after Sinaitic covenantal legislation (e.g., Exod. 21:14; Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19:21), for praise-in-the-wrong-direction sinners is an eternity without any opportunity to experience God's glory again. This type of divine penal activity is necessary in order to sustain or uphold ultimate righteousness in the universe.

In phase I of the *missio Dei* God created a doxological cosmos; however, with demonic inspiration, praise-in-the-wrong-direction humanity lives contrary to this ontological purpose. Not living out its doxological identity incurs God's wrath because God must always maintain the value of his glory lest cosmic justice be perverted and chaos occur.

This doxological catastrophe creates the need for the second phase of the *missio Dei*: rescuing humanity and recreating it as an ortho-doxological race. As Lesslie Newbigin teaches, "Mission is concerned with nothing less than the completion of all that God has begun to do in the creation of the world and humankind" (56). That completion is never less than the doxological restoration of humanity.

Missio Dei, Part II: To Rescue and Recreate an Ortho-Doxological People

Because God will not allow de-glorification, which results in sin, death, and wrath, to prevail in his universe, he takes the initiative in order to rescue praise-in-the-wrong-direction sinners and recreate them as an ortho-doxological people. The second phase of the *missio Dei* includes the sending of the second person of the Godhead: the Son.

Guder et al. articulate a comprehensiveness to the idea of biblical mission that is far deeper than the common idea of the local church sending a few missionaries abroad:

> 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.
> God's mission began with the call of Israel to receive God's blessings in
> order to be a blessing to the nations. God's mission unfolded in the history
> of God's people across the centuries recorded in Scripture, and reached its
> revelatory climax in the incarnation of God's work of salvation in Jesus
> ministering, crucified, and resurrected. God's mission then continued in
> the sending of the Spirit to call forth and empower the church as a witness
> to God's good news in Jesus Christ. It continues today in the worldwide
> witness of churches in every culture to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and it
> moves toward the promised consummation of God's salvation in the
> *eschaton.* [original emphasis] (4)

The *missio Dei* phase of rescue and recovery comes primarily out of Jesus' self-directing pronouncement, "For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10), and his address to the Samaritan woman, "The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him" (John 4:23). Out of the ground clause of this text emerges the objective of the second phase: "The Father seeks" a people who desire to worship him "in spirit and truth" (John 4:23).

The phrase "in spirit and truth" (e˙n pneu/mati kai« aÓlhqei÷aˆ) has been given numerous interpretations.[5] It is better; however, to ground "in spirit" (e˙n pneu/mati) in the Great Commandment, the ultimate doxological text of loving God primarily and comprehensively (Matt. 22:36-38). The phrase "and truth" (kai« aÓlhqei÷a) is conditioned upon orthodox understandings of God based upon his

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[5] Colin Brown interprets "the spirit" as being the Holy Spirit who must "animate the worship that replaces the worship at the Temple" (180). William Barclay defines this passage: "True worship is when the spirit, the immortal and invisible part of man, speaks to and meets with God, himself immortal and invisible" (161). Merrill C. Tenney believes that Jesus' intent here was to teach that God, as Spirit, could not be contained to a place and neither could the worship of him (9:56). Geerhardus Vos interprets John 4:23 as "worship no longer bound by typical forms as to place and time and ceremony. In the place of these will come a worship directly corresponding in an unshadowy form to the heavenly original of God, who is Spirit" (357).

revelation primarily through his written word.

As stated previously, fallen humanity praises in the wrong direction but has not lost its doxological nature; therefore, the Christological mission, in the second phase of the *missio Dei*, is to rescue, for the sake of his Father, those lost praise-in-the-wrong-direction people and recreate their ortho-doxological identities. Jesus' mission was to fulfill not only the Great Commandment and Great Commission but also the Creation Commandment: the loving extension of the glory of God throughout the earth.

Jesus Christ: The Incarnated Ortho-Doxological Missionary

In sketching the Christological mission, this paper focuses only on its doxological nature and apostolicity. Although these two foci are necessary in order to stay within the parameters of this project, it is not disparaging "that in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself" (2 Cor. 5:20) and revealing the character of his Father through myriad acts of missional love, all of which are positioned under the John 3:16 and kingdom of God rubric. To this end, even a prepubescent Jesus was doing "his Father's business" (Luke 2:49). Afterward, he preached, taught, healed, and continually demonstrated supernatural vanquishing power over all elements hostile to God, his people, and his creation. Being full of "grace and truth" (John 1:14), Jesus went everywhere doing good, primarily for the Jews, his stated locus of mission.[6] In his earthly ministry, Jesus perfectly functioned in *kenosis* by emptying himself of his divine prerogatives in order to save and serve humanity (e.g., Phil. 2:5-8). This saving and serving focus primarily targeted the marginalized and oppressed.

Moreover, Jesus perfectly executed his three primary purpose statements "to seek

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[6] Matthew 10:26, 15:24. The mission to the Gentiles does find a hint in John 10:16: "I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd."

and save the lost" (Luke 19:10); to call sinners and not the righteous" (Mark 2:17); "to

serve, not to be served, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). These

purpose statements clearly reveal that "Jesus understood the purpose of his task to be

salvific" (Larkin and Williams 34). This "salvific" mission was outlined in Jesus'

pronouncement in Luke 4:18-19:

> The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring
> good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
> and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim
> the year of the Lord's favor.

Nevertheless, the concern in this section is with the glorification and apostolicity

of the Christological mission because, as will be delineated later, these two motifs are

paradigmatic for the Church's universal mission.

In John 17 Jesus evaluates his missional effectiveness in terms of bringing glory

to his Father (v. 4). The glorification theme dominates his prayer (vv. 1, 4, 5, 10, 22, 24,

and 26) as it does in the model prayer of Luke 11:2-4. Ultimately, the reciprocating

glorification of the Father and Son will be epitomized in the crucifixion and resurrection.

On this key point, Edward Schillbeeckx elaborates:

> The whole of Jesus' life is a process of "being glorified": the cross is the
> climax of the glorification through the whole earthly life of Jesus and at
> the same time the beginning of the glorification through the resurrection.
> John sees this whole earthly life as a dynamic and progressive
> glorification. (418)

The glorification of his Father was always Jesus' most transcendent motivation

and quintessential value. It was the focus of his life and ministry, his meta-narrative, his

macro-vision. Thus, he perfectly lived out his own teaching in Matthew 5:16: "In the

same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and

give glory to your Father in heaven" (cf. 1 Peter 2:12). On Jesus' life, Eddie Gibbs

concludes, "To bring glory to his Father was the consuming passion" (58). William J.

Larkin Jr. and Joel F. Williams provide an accurate summary of the gospel of John: "John's gospel … emphasizes the glory of God as the ultimate objective of Jesus' mission" (240-41). A primary theological point arises from John's gospel: the Father sent the Son into the world for glorification purposes, which in the context of John 17 will be realized in the giving of eternal life through the Son.

The second important idea in John 17 is Jesus' apostolicity. Along with glorification, it is the dominant motif of the prayer. Being a sent one was chief in Jesus' fundamental self-understanding particularly in John's gospel (e.g., 3:17; 8:42; 9:4; 13:34).[7] "Being an envoy for God was the most fundamental aspect of Jesus' identity" (Larkin and Williams 212) which led Jesus to live and work interdependently with and under the authority of his Father. The constant usage of apostolic language in relation to Jesus and by Jesus means that his fundamental identity, especially related to this second part of the *missio Dei* was primarily that of a missionary. Jesus came and was sent from above, not for his purposes, but for those of his Father.

James McPolin highlights the strong missionary identity of Jesus whom he calls "the mission centre, the source from which all missions derive" (114). In other words, out of this mission center (God) the Son proceeds as the primary missionary. This truth is accentuated in Hebrews 3:1: "Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession." This

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[7] The two primary root terms for Jesus' apostolicity are *apostello* and *pempo*. They are generally used interchangeably; however, *apostello* is more common. Joel B. Green and Scot McKnight in Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels state that the Septuagint translates the Hebrew *salah* over 709 times and conveys the sense of being an authorized agent or being sent with a commission, either by a human agent or by God (27).

passage contains the only reference in the New Testament where the noun form of

apostello (aÓpo/stolon) is a title for Jesus.

As noted previously, the foundational doxological/missional text, the pericope of

John 4:4-38, argued that the Father is seeking an ortho-doxological people. Now it must

be demonstrated that Jesus Christ is the unique doxological center of the universe and the

only possible way to become a praise-in-the-right-direction people is through him.

When Jesus told the Samaritan woman, "Believe me, the hour is coming when

you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem" (John 4:21), he

was redefining the locus of worship and replacing it. Because of the incarnation and the

subsequent death and resurrection of Jesus, the center of worship has shifted to him (John

4:26) and away from space-time geographic places like the temples and synagogues of

Jerusalem and Gerazim (John 4:21).

Often Jesus alluded to this shift. In Mark 11:17, Jesus was upset about the

commercialization of worship at the temple in Jerusalem. He got angry, overturned

tables, rebuked the temple profligates and proclaimed, "My Father's house shall be called

a house of prayer for all the nations!" In Matthew 12:26, Jesus taught, "I tell you,

something far greater than the temple is here," and in John 2:19 he promised, "Destroy

this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." In these examples, Jesus was teaching

that he was replacing the temple as the doxological center of worship. As the Son of God,

God the Son, the Lamb of God, the apostolate of God, and world Savior, Jesus Christ is

the unique doxological center of the universe. Jesus' own claim in John 10:6 verified his

uniqueness as the doxological center of the universe: "I am the way, and the truth, and the

life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Peter's made the same assertion of

Jesus in Acts 4:12: "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved."

These bold biblical claims assert that humanity cannot be rescued as a recreated ortho-doxological race outside of the God-sent doxological center, Jesus Christ.

More could be said about the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and his fulfillment of the second phase of the *missio Dei,* but the inference is clear in this section: the core nature of the Godhead is missional: The Father sends the Son, the Son sends the Spirit, and the Spirit sends the Church (i.e., John 20:21).

Missio Dei, Part III: The Mobilization of the Ortho-Doxological Community

Jesus' missional vision was not only for himself but also for the Church (see Matt. 16:18). After Jesus revealed who he was to the Samaritan woman, he returned to the theme of *missio Dei.* When his disciples returned and inquired of Jesus' breaking of standard social conventions (i.e., publicly conversing with a woman who is also a Samaritan), Jesus replied with a missional objective for Church:

> Do you not say, "Four months more, then comes the harvest?" But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, "One sows and another reaps." I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor. (John 4:35-38)

The agricultural metaphors in this text are significant first-century cultural ways to describe that as God sent the Son the Son sends his Church to complete the *missio Dei*. Because the fields are ripe for harvesting, the Church, a collection of ortho-doxological people, must now be mobilized by the Spirit to complete the mission. The mobilization of the Church will be a post-resurrection, Pentecost fulfillment.

Because the New Testament is the "premiere missionary document" (Bosch 17), it

characterizes the people of God as missional people. Jesus, while enumerating the costs of missional discipleship, brooked no excuses for deserting the mission. This desertion included not taking time to bury one's deceased family members, going without creature comforts, and abandoning friends and family (Luke 9:57-62). Jesus described his missional compatriots as workers and sowers of the fields, laborers in vineyards (Matt. 20:1-9), farmers working ploughs (Luke 9:62), investment entrepreneurs (Matt. 25:14-29), obedient sons (Matt. 21:28-31), and family members (Matt. 3:35). He also described the mission to find ortho-doxological people as a shepherd looking for a lost sheep (Luke 15:6), a woman searching for a lost coin (Luke 15:9), and a father looking for a lost son (Luke 15:21).

Metaphorically, Jesus described his missional community as the "salt of the earth," "a city set on a hill," "the light of the world" (Matt. 5:13-14), an offensive regime conquering the "gates of Hades" (Matt. 16:18), and "as fishers of people" (Matt. 4:19); and promised that after he departed and sent the Spirit, his Church would do greater missional work (John 14:12) and bear more missional fruit than he did (John 15:5).

The Apostle Paul employed missional metaphors in describing the Church's identity and activity: as a spiritual war requiring armor (Eph. 6:10-18), as an athlete running an Olympic race, a fighter preparing for gladiatorial games (1 Cor. 9:24-27), and as a soldier enlisted in the military (Phil. 2:25; 2 Tim. 2:3, 4; Philem. 2). If possible, Paul even recommended forsaking marital unions for missional purposes (1 Cor. 7:32-34). This preponderance of missional metaphors in the New Testament prompted Herbert J. Kane to assert that true followers of Jesus are involved in the universal Christian mission (57).

Jesus and other biblical writers have demonstrated that the people of God are always in some state of mission. Nevertheless, before probing the Pentecost event itself, the question is now raised why the Old Testament people of God were not mobilized into a similar mission.

Mission in the Old Testament

Although a systematic theology of divine mobilization into the *missio Dei* of the Old Testament people of God is hard to detect, sporadic teaching of mission can be found. From the beginning in Genesis 3:15, God is expressing his missional agenda: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel." God spoke this missional agenda in the context of three divine judgments against history's three original praise-in-the-wrong-direction sinners: Satan, Adam, and Eve. In this passage God promised that the destruction done to his glory will not be the final state of the universe and that he would restore it, at great cost to himself: the death of his only begotten son foreshadowed by the struck heel. Nevertheless, this preemptive strike will be fatal for the serpent foreshadowed by the struck head.

The next major allusion to universal mission from the Old Testament is found in the Abrahamic covenant of Genesis 12:1-3:

> Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

The threefold promise God made to Abraham enumerated a land, a people, and fame and culminated "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). God's

covenant to Abraham reinstated the promise of Genesis 3:15 and gave notice that God

will be doing something through Abraham's offspring that has global dimensions.[8]

Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. believes that this passage contains the "Great Commission

Mandate" of the Bible (11). Johannes Blauw sees something similar contending that "the

history of Israel is only to be understood from the unsolved problem of the relation of

God to the nations" (19).

Isaiah 42:6 reveals God's purpose for Israel as a missional people: "I am the

LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I

have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations." This passage is

significant in the discussion of the mission mandate of Israel because it immediately

precedes one of the great doxological texts of Scripture: "I am the LORD, that is my

name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols" (42:8). Israel, as "light to the

nations" was called to reveal and bear forth the glory of Lord. In this passage Gilbert

Bilezikian sees Israel's mission as consistent with that of the New Testament Church:

"The mandate to minister to the world as Christ's representatives is consistent with the

mission that God had entrusted to believers in the Old Covenant" (3).

Exodus 19:6 also alludes to the universal dimension of Israel's mission: "You

shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation." As God's priestly and holy people,

however, the Israelites should not have thought that their esteemed position in salvation

history was only for their own benefit but, unfortunately, they did and thus they failed in

their basic mission.

This failure, however, was due to an incorrect identity. Israel took great pride in

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[8] See p. 43 for the discussion of how the Abrahamic covenant is the ground for ministry in the local church.

its privileged position as God's chosen; however, her problem was one of not living consistently as a "light to the nations" (Isaiah 42:6) and as "a kingdom of priests" (Exod. 19:6). This incongruity prevented Israel from fulfilling its doxological mandate to extend God's glory unto the nations as the text of 1 Chronicles 6:23-24 commanded: "Sing to the LORD, all the earth. Tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples."

In spite of the evidence above, a divine program of a mobilization of Israel in any systematic sense is difficult to detect,[9] that is, unless one considers the call of Jonah to the Ninevites or the two major exiles of Israel to Assyria and Babylon to be programmatic. These examples may not be compelling enough to find a missional theology of mobilization. Hans K. LaRondelle believes God did indeed intend for Israel to be a missional community, but ultimately only Jesus Christ, as the true son of Israel, was able to fulfill this call (93).

This section concludes with a warning for the Church. Donald G. Miller, after reviewing the failure of Israel as a missionary community contends, "The church can only be the church as she realizes that her very life is mission" (57). Israel did not fulfill its missional call; thus, God "grafted" the Gentile church into the vine of his salvific and missional plan. If the Gentile church likewise neglects its missional calling, it, likewise, may be "cut off" (Rom. 11:13-24).

The Pneumatic Pentecost: The Mobilization of the Ortho-Doxological Community

The pneumatic Pentecost of Acts 2 was the historical fulfillment of Jesus' promise that the "Lord of the harvest" would send laborers into the ripe fields of the world (e.g.,

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[9] For an excellent treatment on this subject see chapters 4 and 5 of Donald Senior and Carroll Stuhlmueller's The Biblical Foundations for Mission.

Matt. 9:38; Luke 10:2).[10] In simpler terms the Holy Spirit came to empower Jesus'

workers to fulfill the mission as Jesus did.

The pneumatic Pentecost represents the fusion of the missional DNA and

doxological DNA within followers of Jesus. Their new identity now becomes that of an

ortho-doxological missionary. Guder refers to the Acts 2 pneumatic phenomenon as a

"divine event that turned the people of God into a missionary people" (50).[11]

If God is a missionary God and Christians are born again through the seed of God

(see 1 Pet. 1:23; 1 John 3:9) then part of their spiritual genetic make-up is missional.

Christians are missionaries sent out to do the mission of God, because "God is a

missionary God whose intent is to show his goodness to all mankind in all ages. The

expectation is that God's people will be willing participants" (Engel and Dyrness 21).

Because of the pneumatic Pentecost, the universal commandments of the

resurrected Lord to his ortho-doxological community (see Matt. 28:18; John 20:21-22;

Acts 1:8) can now be carried out with power just as Jesus' mission was. Jesus' earthly

life and mission can be characterized by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit: his

miraculous birth at Bethlehem, his baptism in the Jordan, his first recorded confrontation

with evil in the wilderness, and his public ministry beginning with his pronouncement,

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me" (Luke 4:18). Implicitly, these texts teach that the

Church's world mission must be accomplished with the power of the Holy Spirit as it was

for Jesus' mission. In other words, any missional initiative must be done as the prophet

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[10] Guder adds, "God's Holy Spirit has begun the implementation of the *missio Dei* in the calling and formation of particular people: Israel and from Pentecost onward, the ever widening church that Jesus Christ engrafted upon the root of Israel" (221). John Stott in The Message of Acts comments, "The risen Lord's mandated mission begins to be fulfilled in Acts" (43).

[11] Snyder sees Pentecost as the day the Church became "genetically missionary" (51) while Bosch teaches it was the day the Church became "intrinsically missionary" (9).

declared: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the LORD of hosts" (Zech. 4:6). On this point Newbigin is quite adamant, calling the Holy Spirit the "power" and the "active agent" of mission (56).

Karl Barth, in his usually effusive way, articulates the Church's absolute dependence on the Holy Spirit to carry out its world mission:

> The Holy Spirit is the enlightening power of the living Lord Jesus Christ in which He confesses the community called by Him as His body, i.e., as His own earthly-historical form of existence. He does this by sending it among the peoples as His own people, ordained for its part to confess Him before men, to call them to Him and thus to make known to the whole world that the covenant between God and man concluded in Him is the first and final meaning of its history. (681)

The indispensable ground of the Great Commission is the Great Condition, the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. However, this indispensable ground is generally missing, at least in the day-to-day operation of the churches in which I have been involved. A new dimension of the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit is imperative for the Church to reengage in the *missio Dei* in a global and powerful way.

Missional Ministry

The pneumatic Pentecost not only fused the ortho-doxological and missional DNA strands together within the follower of Christ, but it also demonstrated that worship is foundational for mission. Before his ascension the resurrected Lord instructed his ortho-doxological community to wait for the visitation of the Holy Spirit. This ten-day worship experience found the 120-member community "beholding God's power and glory" (Ps. 63:2) in a sanctuary called the Upper Room. What the community was doing during that span was worship oriented: waiting on God, praying, and praising. When the Holy Spirit came in theophanic drama (a phenomenon that recalls the Sinaitic visitation

of Exodus 19), the ortho-doxological community was divinely empowered to be Jesus'

"witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts

1:8). Immediately the community was mobilized into the ripe harvest field with the

divine enablement to perform praise in languages it did not know nor had previously

studied (Acts 2:5-11). Furthermore, Pentecost's Spirit phenomenon fulfills not only what

the prophet Joel (2:28) said would happen to the eschatological community and what

John the Baptist prophesied about the dimensions of Jesus' ministry (Luke 3:16) but it

also became the main advantage for the disciples (John 16:7). Jesus' departure now could

be seen as advantageous because the Holy Spirit would empower the entire doxological

community for world mission, something Jesus could not do while limited to

incarnational flesh. For the Upper Room disciples, "the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost …

marks the end of their apprenticeship and the beginning of their missionary task"

(Stronstad 59).

As the Church moves towards a missional ministry it must see that worship is

primary and is always the basis of mission. Furthermore, worship is also a mobilization to

mission. Stott believes that the greatest missionary motive is a "burning and passionate

zeal—for the glory of Jesus Christ" in worship (Authentic Christianity 318). John Piper

elaborates, "Mission is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Mission exists

because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, because God is ultimate, not man. Worship

therefore is the fuel and goal of missions" (11). Conversely, Piper shows how weak or

indifferent worship blunts motivation for mission: "Where passion for God is weak, zeal

for missions is weak" (12).

The call and commissioning narratives in Scripture support the centrality of

worship in the missional church. Abraham in Chaldea (Gen. 12:1), Moses at the burning

bush (Exod. 3:4), Ezekiel at the river Chebar (Ezek. 1:1), Isaiah at the temple (Isa. 6), and

Saul on the Damascus road (Acts 9) are examples of people who received a divine

commission in the context of worship, or even unexpected worship contexts.

After such encounters with the divine, the encountered found an intense passion

to see the glory of God extended among his creation. Even Jesus at his baptism, an

integral part of worship, is then commissioned to God's mission (Matt. 3:16). The point

made here is that "in spirit and truth" worship must compel the worshiper into the action

of God's mission.

Before discussing how the centrality of worship affects the ministry in the local

church, I reiterate my definition of mission: the activity of the church, through the

animation and creativity of the Holy Spirit, to persuade all people to experience the love

and glory of God, through Jesus Christ, in order that they might also become his ortho-

doxological missionaries.

This definition provides an indissoluble link between worship and mission and the

indispensable condition of the Holy Spirit in order to engage the mission and accomplish

it. Michael Green gives the historical precedent for this claim: "Every initiative of

evangelism in the book of Acts is the initiation of the Holy Spirit" (149). The definition is

stated as such because worship without mission becomes narcissistic, reduced to another

religious consumable or spiritual commodity. Mission, however, without worship

becomes humanitarianism, while worship and mission without the Holy Spirit is flat.

Gordon Fee buttresses this last thought when commenting on the worship habits of the

New Testament Church. Although Paul does not present any patternistic forms of

worship, "The key to their worship was the presence of the Holy Spirit" (884). After stating that Christian identity is bound to worship and mission, Craig L. Nessen shows the interrelation of worship and mission and contends that "both must be related in dynamic interaction" because "worship provides the basis for everything the church does" and mission "refers the purpose for which the church exists" (7).

Although worship is the end (e.g., Rev. 4-5) and never a means to an end, it does become the primal impetus for mission. Craig Van Gelder takes up this theme stating that worship forms the Christian community by telling a different story from that of culture. Once the community is formed, worship equips it for mission. Thus, "rather than being a vender of religious good and services, the church is called to be a body of people sent on mission" (279).

On the centrality of worship for the missional church the insights of Marva J. Dawn are helpful. She emphasizes what has been previously noted: that worship happens "because God is infinitely worthy of our praise" (140). Furthermore, if the ortho-doxological community is encountering God in worship the "results will be that all of us reach out to our neighbors in loving care, service and witness" (145). Dawn's thoughts here are close to that of William J. Abraham who sees worship as the place where the Church is made "aware that God is the primary agent in evangelism" (169).

Dawn asks the tough theological question regarding the depth of worship, one that deserves serious contemplation, primarily for those who postulate seeker sensitive or worship evangelism models (e.g., Sally Morgenthaler; Walt Kallestad). In his Letters to Malcolm, Chiefly on Prayer, C. S. Lewis maintained a healthy suspicion towards innovative worship, which he believed to be nothing more than entertainment: "The

perfect church service would be one we were almost unaware of; our attention would have been on God. Every novelty ... fixes our attention on the service itself; and thinking about worship is different from worshipping" (1). Similarly, Milfred Minatrea asserts, "Worship is not to entertain those present. … Worship is the experience of God's people entering His presence for His benefit" (67).

Dawn concludes that if worship is not empowering people to "lay down the follies of the world" and "shoulder the cross" then worship is providing just another "good time" (148-49).

As the paradigm for ministry is changing and confusion abounds about the proper nature and function of worship, Dawn stipulates three conditions that, if implemented, provide a strong foundation for worship in the ortho-doxological missional community: (1) that God be the center of worship, (2) that worship form believers as disciples, and (3) that worship form the congregation into a genuine Christian community (149).

Guder et al. teach that "the *ekklesia* is a public assembly and its worship is its first form of mission" (243) reflects a great irony. Ortho-doxological missionaries must worship in order to do mission; nevertheless, part of their mobilization for mission is to seek intensely the elusive God (e.g., Ps. 42). Perhaps the Church's mission to find God in worship provides the rationale as to why the ancient Church called the worship process liturgy or the worship work of the *laos*.[12]

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[12] William Willimon sees this work as the primary force in the "making of a Christian" and outlines how liturgy helps to accomplish this end: (1) Liturgy helps form Christian identity, (2) Liturgy creates a world for the Christian, (3) Liturgy is a primary source of the symbols and metaphors through which Christians talk about and make sense out of the world, (4) Liturgy aids in Christian imagination, (5) Liturgy is the primary source of Christian vision, and (6) Liturgy is a major source of the Christian tradition, which enables them to rise above the present and envision the future (48-72).

The Purpose of Ministry

Christians, by way of their spiritual DNA, are and become ortho-doxological missionaries. This primary identity construct carries a major implication for the day-to-day ministry of the local church: ministry must always be a mobilization towards mission. Properly structured, ministry bears the chief responsibility to inspire and teach people to become better ortho-doxological missionaries.

As stated previously, the Christological ministry was a practical and compassionate way to incarnate the love of God to both saint and sinner. Christian ministry, then, based on and continuing this Christological paradigm, is designed to demonstrate the love of God in practical ways to people in need. Often when people received the grace of God through Jesus' ministry, they brought glory to God through their verbal witness. In the rare instances where the verbal witness did not happen, it was Jesus himself who suppressed it because of negative political connotations (i.e., Mark 7:36; 9:9; Luke 5:14; 8:56).

Again, the story of the Samaritan woman is illustrative (John 4). After Jesus ministered to her by revealing himself as her Messiah, she immediately went out to be his chief evangelist: "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done" (John 4:29). Likewise, when the Gaderene demoniac was released from the Legion, he immediately desired to travel with Jesus, but Jesus directed "go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and what mercy he has shown you" (Matt. 5:19). After the paralytic person is lowered through a rooftop and healed by Jesus, he and his friends glorified God and told others (Mark 2:12). After the man born blind received sight from an unusual healing process, he became a witness, even under the

duress of a synagogal ban (John 9). These are a sampling of times when people received

the love of God in practical ways through Jesus' ministry and then went out on mission.

Consistently in the Gospels, the response to receiving the grace of God is twofold: praise

God and tell others. Methodist founder, John Wesley fused together this praise God and

tell others theme:

> By consequence, whatsoever he doeth, it is all to the glory of God. In all
> his employments of every kind, he not only aims at this, but actually
> attains it. His business and refreshments, as well as his prayers, all serve
> this great end…. As he has time, he does good unto all men; unto
> neighbours and strangers, friends and enemies. And that in every possible
> kind; not only to their bodies, by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked,
> visiting those that are sick or in prison; but much more does he labour to
> do good to their souls, as of the ability which God giveth; to awaken those
> that sleep in death; to bring those who are awakened to the atoning blood,
> that, being justified by faith, they may have peace with God; and to
> provoke those who have peace with God to abound more in love and in
> good works. (8: 340-47)

The quintessential New Testament command for this praise/tell action is, "You

are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you

may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous

light" (1 Pet. 2:9).

After identifying the Church's core identity as a "chosen race," "royal

priesthood," "holy nation," and "God's own people," Peter then stipulates its missional

core activity: "in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out

of darkness into his marvelous light."

The Anti-Missional Church

Much mention has been made recently of the maintenance or Christendom church

(e.g., Nessen, Payne and Beazley). For reasons listed below, these kinds of churches may

be called anti-missional. Generally nuanced, the anti-missional church has a focus of

concern that is inward and not outward. This inward focus of the anti-missional church is characterized by Paul in Philippians 2:21—"All of them are seeking their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ,"

In other words, most of the anti-missional church's stewardship (a.k.a. time, talent, and treasure) is dedicated to the care of its own membership and its own preservationist concerns. To simplify, anti-missional churches reconstitute the ministry primarily in three ways: (1) pastor as chaplain, (2) fellowship as religious club, and (3) church property as idol.

The anti-missional church views pastors as chaplains, paid employees whose main responsibilities include growing the church through their giftedness, personality, and energy, taking care of the sheep in terms of hospital and home visitation, and ensuring that the administration of the church is run smoothly (i.e., omni-competence). The pastor/chaplain is called, as Robert Warren states, "to create a church geared to comfort" and "keep things going" (1-2). As chaplains, pastors dispense religious commodities for the sake of their congregational spiritual consumerism. In other words, pastoral ministry in the anti-missional church becomes a placation of the prevailing cultural narcissism. Rodney Clapp and Stanley Hauerwas vividly describe the attitude anti-missional churches have of their pastor/chaplain:

> The pastor becomes nothing more than the court chaplain, presiding over ceremonies of the culture, a pleasing fixture for rites of passages like weddings and funerals, yet rites in which a pastor's presence becomes more and more absurd because the pastor is saying nothing that we do not already know. Or else the pastor feels like a cult prostitute, selling his or her love for the approval of an upwardly mobile, bored middle class, who more than anything else, want some relief from the anxiety brought on by their materialism. (123)

The epitome of the anti-missional church's disgruntled and narcissistic member

can be found in the enduring mantras: "The pastor does not visit me enough," and "The messages do not feed me."

The second core value of the maintenance church fellowship as religious club. The church as religious club is a cheap and unspiritual imitation of the biblical idea of fellowship formed by the myriad of "one another" commands in the New Testament (e.g., John 13:34; Rom. 12:10; Gal. 6:2). What distinguishes the religious club apart from the idea of biblical fellowship is, among other things, the lack of godly content in individual conversations, lack of prayer, lack of desire for the study of God's word, and, most conspicuously, lack of mission. Social belongingness is an important need for all humans; however, for the Christian community it cannot be just another "for us only" and "not them" activity as it has become in the anti-missional model. Many are the enriching benefits of belonging, but the overarching purpose of Christian community is to equip, empower, and encourage one another to introduce the world to what the Church has found—Jesus Christ and each other.

The third core value of the anti-missional church is church property as idol. Property idolatry sees the church grounds as sacrosanct rather than as a tool for ministry. Great pride is taken in the building, and any diminishment of it for any reason is generally disdained. Usually money is hoarded and put in some savings vehicle for future property renovations, where only the interest is to be spent for upkeep on the building itself. Far more money is raised, and raised easily, if it benefits "us and our church property." As John and Sylvia Ronsvalle state incredulously: "It is interesting that people will accept the disciplined organization required to construct a new sanctuary but are not willing to submit to the same discipline to carry out the mission of the church" (52).

The anti-missional model characterizes ministry, on the crumbling edges of Christendom, at least in mainline denominations. One explanation[13] for why the church has devolved into its current anti-missional state is that it has lost "common vision of being a missionary church" (Payne and Beazley 27). David F. Wells suggests that the "triumph of the therapeutic" has replaced God at the center of the church's life; therefore, God has become "weightless" or unimportant (88). With the doxological center of the church displaced by human-felt needs, mission is considered superfluous, even unpalatable, in the anti-missional church.

The anti-missional church has not only lost its missional identity but also its "sacrality" (Hoffmeyer 110) and risks losing its very existence. Barth claims that any church that loses its missional identity and behavior "ceases to be the Christian community" (800). Reggie McMeal is even more blunt asserting that anti-misisonal churches, "disqualify themselves from his true followers" (68).

Excellence in Ministry

Matters related to the discussion in this section are not intended to de-emphasize or minimize the importance of ministry in the local church. Without ministry, defined here as the practical demonstration of the love of God in meeting needs of saints and sinners, no mission is possible. Ministry must enable, empower, and equip towards the greater transcendent mission. Nevertheless, ministry must be viewed as a means to an

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[13] Eugene A. Nida lists the main reasons why movements "cool off": (1) the tendency towards the dissipation of energy, (2) the original information loses its power because it becomes old and common place, (3) information loses its distinctiveness by syncretism, (4) the original goal of the movement proves to be entirely too limited, (5) a failure to anticipate the rapid culture change that may follow the movement, (6) the tendency to treat people as though they are always to continue being isolated, (7) the discovery that the goal has disappeared or has been reached, (8) the tendency to backslide, and (9) groups excluded from the movement have an effect on the movement itself. To avoid any or all of these dynamics (entropies), Nida believes movements must always (1) supply new information and (2) apply this new information (263-71).

end, not an end in itself, and the end is always the *missio Dei.* The nature of ministry

must be understood in the Abrahamic covenant of Genesis 12:1-3: God blesses his

Church in order for it to become a blessing to the nations.

Ministry must be done with nurturing excellence in order to equip for mission. If

Christians are not careful, any "means of grace" (i.e., the spiritual disciplines) can

become merely more religious consumables unless seen as a mobilization for mission.

All church leaders should want to minister to people in the manifold ways of ministry so

that they are, among other things, strengthened, comforted, edified, healed, resourced,

instructed, exhorted, prayed for, preached to, and reconciled to God and one another. The

myriad forms and opportunities of ministry must be performed so that Christians can

better accomplish the mission.

The mission of filling this world with the Father's glory through his Son's Church

not only applies to the motivation of individual ministry but also to the broader concepts

of evangelism and outreach. These aspects of ministries may even be done in churches

that are in the anti-missional model; however, the rationale for growing the church may

be based on utilitarian and pragmatic concerns (i.e., so the church will not die, healthy

things grow, or help with financial issues). Even missional concepts motivated without

the meta-narrative of God's glory filling the earth easily fall prey to the American

idolatry of the next, new, and big. Van Gelder states the danger of this idolatry: "The

more we have lived by this mythology of the new and the next we have lost a sense of

our identity" (248). Church mission operating without the transcendence of God's glory

becomes human centered and narcissistic, and, corporately, it becomes institutionally

driven.

The need for the church to rediscover its true identity and to live it to the fullest is the urgent call of the day. Today the church finds itself removed from the center of culture. Van Gelder comments on the social dislocation of today's church saying that not dissimilar to the church of the first three centuries, "once again the Christian community is required to live outside the protective walls of power and privilege" (69).

Indeed the church's social dislocation is one it has not experienced since the pre-Constantinian era. This dislocation is not a time for angst, however, but for optimism and a great expectation of how God is creatively leading his church today. Kenneth Callahan encourages the church to no longer wish for the days of the churched culture because "the church is never at its best in a churched culture" (3).

Nevertheless, the church must convert, rather quickly, into an ortho-doxological missionary culture if it wants to harvest the rich fields of postmodernity. Unless converted, the typically inwardly-focused church will be unable to labor or reap the postmodern rewards unless it begins to transform itself into what Wells calls a "force of countercultural spirituality … expressed through … love, service, worship, understanding, and proclamation" (215). The first phase of this conversion is for the church to commit fully to the *missio Dei.*

Ortho-Doxological Missional Leaders

The local church is the hope of the world and if everything rises and falls on leadership, the most leadership intensive institution should be the church of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, insistence on missional thinking, missional preaching, missional activity and generating a missional culture will provide a lightning rod effect on the anti-missional and maintenance church. Mission has this effect because by nature it is

wholesale anti-consumer and consumerism has greatly and negatively skewed the worldview of Americans, even American Christians, especially, in regard to why they think the church exists.

In order for the church to transform into a missional culture, courageous ortho-doxological leaders must lead it. Biblically and historically, God has refined, revived, and reshaped his people primarily through visionary leadership that sought to transform the church and take it where the Spirit was leading. Changing thoughts, habits, and culture is a formidable task, especially in a Church that has been mired in the Christendom model for over 1,700 years. Therefore, ortho-doxological leaders must expect and prepare for conflict.

Personal interviews with the Florida UMC conference leaders have revealed that approximately two-thirds of the conference's seven hundred churches are on a plateau or in decline and mired in the anti-missional model. These churches can transition into missional cultures, only if they have ortho-doxological missionary leaders who boldly lead them through change. Such a leader is one who, with the power of the Holy Spirit, creates, shapes, influences, and installs kingdom culture (Rom. 12:8). Michael Slaughter underscores the primacy of leadership in this arduous task: "Spiritual leaders are the carriers of God's DNA in the church, the shapers of a church's vision and core values. They are influencers of what the church embodies" (98). Bill Easum believes that these leaders are "wired differently" and have an "altered genetic code" (32). He claims, "Of all the human characteristics that go into making a leader, none is as important as one's passion for the mission" (33).

Many are writing on the new and transforming role of the pastorate. Table 2.1

summarizes some of the more current thinkers on this topic.

Table 2.1. Roles and Responsibilities of Missional Leaders

Hunsberger	Roxburgh	Payne	McNeal
Know what time it is (historical memory)	Be apostolic	Embrace missionary model	See God at work redeeming world
Share responsibility for calling of church	Be Poetical	Examine beliefs about laity	See God in mission
Read culture well	Be Prophetic	Create lay ministries	See Church joining God on mission
Possess vision	Know marginality of the church	Develop lay apostolate	Practice mission over refuge
Envision (what gospel must do)	Prepare congregations for missionary engagement	Develop comprehensive volunteerism	
Be full of Holy Spirit		Make Church relational	
Have deeply rooted curriculum		Design worship for churched and unchurched	
Believe God		Teach apostolic faith	

Source: Hunsberger 1; Roxburgh 1-2; Payne and Beazely 192-201; McNeal 91.

The short descriptions of the ideas revealed in Table 2.1 are characteristic of the responsibilities of biblical leaders. Church leaders wishing to transform their churches into missional congregations would do well to capture these ideas and apply them into their ministerial contexts. What follows is my understanding of the role and responsibilities of ortho-doxological missional leaders.

Possessing doxological desire. Doxological desire characterizes a leader who possesses great passion to experience God's glory. This passion was found in Moses (Exod. 33:18), David (Ps. 42:1), and the Apostle Paul (Phil. 3:8 ff.).

Doxological desire causes missional leaders to seek encounters with God because the more intimately God is known and the more exposed to his glory they are, the greater the leaders' doxological capacity. These leaders desire God more than technocratic or specialized information that might cause their churches to grow.

The more the leaders experience God's glory, the greater their motivation for God's mission. Experiencing God's glory through the myriad means of grace enables missional leaders to lead with doxological spirit. On this point, Dick Wills believes that the formation of spiritual leadership is a prerequisite in reversing the decline of the mainline church (76). The uppermost issue in leaders' hearts is to worship God "in spirit and truth" not just to preach or hold public worship services and "take care of people" (Easum 33). These leaders are then able to lead their congregations courageously into the posture of Philippians 1:20 and 1 Peter 4:11:

> It is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be put to shame in any way, but that by my speaking with all boldness, Christ will be exalted now as always in my body, whether by life or by death.

> Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

Seeing ministry as mobilization to mission. Ortho-doxological missional leaders preach, teach, and believe that the glory of God is the reason of creation, the point of history, and the core theme of Scripture. Therefore, they are able to see ministry as mobilization to mission rather than an end in itself. Thus, they constantly encourage the

recipients of ministry to praise God and tell others what God has done for them.

Challenging the worldview of the anti-missional church. Ortho-doxological missional leaders prophetically challenge the worldview of the anti-missional church. Even in missional communities, these leaders must constantly be on guard against missional drift and doxological indifferentism (e.g., Isa. 29:13).

Doing the work of the evangelist. Ortho-doxological missional leaders "do the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim. 4:5). Being an evangelist and mobilizing others towards evangelism take precedence in ministry because evangelism is the primary vehicle of mission. Abraham provides a simple but effective definition of the nature of evangelism conceiving it as "that set of intentional activities which is governed by the goal of initiating people into the kingdom of God for the first time" (95). David J. Bosch sees evangelism's goal as the "placing all things under the rule of Christ" (420). Clapp understands evangelism through the practice of the early church as introducing people into a new culture with the hopes that they will become Christians or what he calls the "third race" (166). These definitions help clarify the necessity of evangelism but Inagrace T. Dietterich and Laceye Warner's "missional evangelism" helps the church be "clear about its identity and purposes" (4).

To carry out the work of the evangelist effectively, missional leaders must see their primary workspace in the traffic of people, not a room in the church building, where they intentionally seek relationships with unchurched people with a view towards an invitation to begin a saving participation with Christ and his Church. This type of leader "demonstrates encounter with the culture in action, not just teaching and sending" and "must be in the world rather than in the church" (Sheffield 5).

Knowing the social position of today's Church. Ortho-doxological missional

leaders, not unlike the men of the tribe of Issachar who "had understanding of the times,

to know what Israel ought to do" (1 Chron. 12:32), know the social positioning of today's

Church.[14] With such understanding these leaders intentionally form their congregations

"as a missionary outpost … where members perceive themselves as disciples making

disciples" (Payne and Beasley 27). Alan J. Roxburgh supports the point made here:

> The central and urgent question for Christian mission in North America
> focuses on the churches and their identity in the culture of modernity.
> Unless these leaders recognize and understand the extent to which they
> and their congregations have been marginalized in modernity they will not
> meaningfully shape the direction of congregational life for a missionary
> engagement. (1-2)

George Hunter III defines the church's present situation as being similar to that of

the apostolic community of the first century. Thus, he posits four primary characteristics

of that age and believes the Church today must regain its apostolic heritage: (1) The

Christian movement had to inform people of the story of Jesus; (2) The church had to win

friends and influence people to a positive attitude towards the movement; (3) Christians

had to convince people of Christianity's truth; and, (4) Christians had to invite people to

adopt this faith and join the messianic community (How To Reach Secular 35).

Keeping the question of mission uppermost. Ortho-doxological missional

leaders always keep the question of the mission before their congregations. As mentioned

previously, the quintessential missional question that must continually be proffered is,

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[14] This topic is too complex to erect simple categories. Bosch stipulates, "For the most part we are, at the moment, thinking and working in terms of two paradigms" (349). Alan J. Roxburg refers to the present age of the Church as a time of "liminality" (1). Peter Hodgson believes the present church in North America is going through a new "passage of history" that entails "the passing of Western bourgeois culture, historical progress, the capitalistic economy, and the absoluteness of Christianity" (11). Many believe that the Enlightenment influence, primarily responsible for spawning and sustaining the age of modernity with its core beliefs in the radical mind, radical individual, and radical progress, is fading.

"How does God want to save and serve the world through his Son's Church?" Missional

leaders must, therefore, tell and retell, state and restate Christian mission from the biblical

narrative and enumerate the examples of history. Peter M. Senge sees this responsibility

as central to leadership in any discipline:

> If any idea about leadership has inspired organizations for thousands of years, it's the capacity to hold a shared picture of the future we seek to create. One is hard pressed to think of any organization that has sustained some measure of greatness in the absence of goals, values, and missions that become deeply shared throughout the organization. IBM had "service"; Polaroid had instant photography; Ford had public transportation for the masses and Apple had computing power for the masses. Though radically different in content and kind, all these organizations managed to bind people together around a common identity and destiny. (9)

Furthermore, ortho-doxological leaders keep missional projects before the congregation

until the missional DNA is firmly embedded into the culture of the Church.

Characteristics of Missional Churches

If ortho-doxological missional leaders lead their churches as previously

recommended they will effect transformation in their ecclesiastical contexts. The end

result will be missional congregations that, "offer a living witness of hope that eventually

may lead the world to give glory to God" (Senior and Stuhlmueller 299). If the church

transforms into a missional congregation, it will need to be evaluated not only in terms of

attendance, finances, or pietistic measurements[15] but with missional measurements

grounded in a Matthew 5:16 rubric: "In the same way, let your light shine before others,

so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." Ecclesial

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[15] Guder et al. offer an antidote to individualistic pietism as it relates to devotional Scripture reading: "One must read scripture from a missional hermeneutic" (11). McClaren states his missional motivation for Scripture reading, "I seek to better understand Scripture not just for my own sake, but so I'll be better equipped to serve God and my neighbors" (109). The church must not forget that something as necessary as personal Bible study must find a transcendent motivation greater than personal edification.

bodies must diagnose with missional measurements not only to determine the missional strength of their congregations but also to avoid Jesus' rebuke in Matthew 23:23: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others." James' axiom that "faith without works is dead" (2:14-26) also sets the church on the right path by allowing it to employ missional measurements rather than ones valued by an American consumer culture.

Table 2.2 represents what missional thinkers postulate as the chief characteristics of missional churches.

Table 2.2. Characteristics of Missionary Congregations

Warren	Minatrea	Payne	Hunter	Gibbs	Webber
Celebrate God	Keep high threshold for membership	Practice meaningful worship	Root all in Scriptures	Proclaim gospel	Witness overthrow of evil
Practice whole life Christianity	Be real, not religious	Communicate with unchurched	Exercise earnest prayer	Become disciples	Embody redemption
Empower believers	Teach to obey rather than to know	Make gospel relevant to everyday	Practice compassion for the lost	Uphold Bible as authoritative	Call world to submit to Christ
Form Community	Rewrite worship every week	Make prayer central	Obey Great Commission	Maintain church as alternative community	Tell world Good News
Engage the world	Live apostolically	Build strong small group system	Envision what people can be	Encourage missional vocation	Call world to repent, be baptized
Integrate faith with life	Expect to change the world	Offer educational opportunities	Adapt language of culture	Grow in love for each other	Invite into community of Christ
Maintain Christian distinction	Order actions according to purpose	Create multiple lay ministries	Create small groups	Practice reconciliation	Warn of Christ's return
Simplify living	Measure by release not retain	Be tolerant of doubt-disbelief	Organize around gifts	Maintain accountability	Lead exemplary lives
	Place kingdom concerns first	Promote honest sharing	Shepherd people	Do hospitality	
		Embrace evangelism	Minister to unchurched	Guarantee worship is central	
		Integrate newcomers		Promote public witness	

Source: Warren 1; Minatrea vii; Payne and Beazley, 165-80; Hunter Church for the Unchurched 29-32; Gibbs 53; Webber, Ancient–Future Faith 38; Journey to Jesus 20.

The commonalities of missional churches reflected in these authors find their roots

in three broad categories: worship, outreach, and prayer. Moreover, these characteristics

reflect the kinds of activities the missional churches of the New Testament consistently

pursued and practiced.

Ideally, missional churches have had the following characteristics. First, missionary

congregations pray for a greater passion to reach the people for whom Jesus died. In other

words, lost people really do matter to God and to them (e.g., Luke 15). Second,

missionary congregations continually ask God to thrust them out of the worship

experience into the ripened harvest field, and they empower and expect every member to

share their faith in compliance with Acts 1:8, "You shall be my witnesses," and 1 Peter

3:15, "Always be ready to make your explanation to anyone who wants an understanding

of the hope that is in you." This missionary attitude is different and contrary to how most

congregations think of missions. Minatrea highlights this difference as such:

> With the development of the modern missionary movement, responsibility
> for sending missionaries transferred to missionary societies and
> denominational boards. Ultimately, church members came to assume that
> missionaries are professionally trained persons selected and sent by
> specialized agencies with acumen in developing strategies for national
> contexts. (115)

Third, missionary congregations maximize their resources of time, talent, and treasure to

invite, value, serve, and save people who are beyond the four walls of their churches.

Fourth, missionary congregations are filled with a sense of joy because God copartners

with them in his mission to save and serve the world. Fifth, missionary congregations

utilize each respective home in the congregation as missional outposts. As McNeal

teaches, "Individual believers certainly should be helped to develop a personal sense of

mission. The lack of this among Christians is one of the great tragedies of the modern

church" (91). That each home is viewed as an outpost of the missionary congregation,

keeps the Church aware of missional opportunities and sensitive to the second half of the

Great Commandment to "love one's neighbors as oneself" (Mark 12:33).

As stated previously, sheer statistical measurements of attendance and offering

are not, in and of themselves, accurate indicators of church health or strength.

Missional churches must measure the ratio of ministry being accomplished in the

church and mission beyond the church. It must invest its resources equally in terms of

ministry to saints and mission to sinners.

Missional churches must measure the rate at which their congregations are being

equipped for faith sharing. Faith sharing can be done in multitudinous ways; nevertheless,

since Christians are missionaries, each must be trained to share their faith.

Missional churches measure how many Matthew 5:16 "good works" are

accomplished per week, especially beyond the church (i.e., ministries to the poor,

hospitality to strangers, etc.). Lately, great emphasis has been placed upon the Holy

Spirit-endowed service gifts of individual Christians; however, many of these gifts are

being discovered, developed, and deployed simply to maintain the church. Again the

focus must be outward.

Missional churches are cognizant of the passion their primary leaders and workers

have towards corporate and individual worship. They do so in order to grow their leaders

as "in spirit and truth" worshipers. Dedication to congregational worship is a primary

indicator of missional growth (Heb. 10:25).

Missional churches spend a great amount of concentrated corporate time in prayer

in order to attain wisdom and power for the mission. As Piper surmises, "The reason the

Father gives the disciples the instrument of prayer is because Jesus has given them a

mission" (45).

Conclusion

"I see the dawning of a new missionary age," said a confident Pope John Paul II (par. 92). This new missionary age will be possible only if predicated on a Spirit-inspired recovery of the Church's biblical/missional identity.

Today is an exciting, albeit strange, time for the Church of Jesus Christ. "The fields are ready for harvest" (John 4:35) just as they were for yesterday's disciples; however, today's church lives in a very different field, a postmodern one. This realization leads Loren B. Mead to encourage all believers to see themselves as "being an apostle" (Five Challenges 69), and not to neglect those "to whom we are sent" (Once and Future Church 9-10). Likewise, Lewis reminds the church never to forget that it exists "to draw men into Christ, to make them little Christs" (Mere Christianity 171).

The people of God have always grappled over the issue of identity; therefore, the church today is not alone in its struggle to answer it. As it continues to struggle and strain for its core identity, through whatever processes and resources available, it can trust that God will continue to mature and sanctify his Church and make it more effective in doing the *missio Dei.*

The urgency of the day is for the Church to regain its biblical missional identity. What is at stake in this discovery is not only the future of the church but also the future of the world. William Freytag is not employing hyperbole when he suggests, "Without mission, history is nothing but human history whose progress consists at best in the intensifying of its catastrophe" (qtd. in Blauw 109).

The broad biblical/theological sweep of this chapter demonstrates the imperative

and, hopefully, the initiative, the church in North America must undertake to become what it once was: an ortho-doxological, missional community. Until the church recovers its true identity it will continue to be formed by present cultural and nonbiblical assumptions that have led it to its current identity crisis. Regardless, the church will experience a great period of joyful harvest when it realizes what it truly is and fully commits itself to the *missio Dei.*

CHAPTER 3

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The loss of biblical identity has precipitated the decline of the church in the North American context, and this loss has formed a dynamic whereby ministry has become largely a placation of the prevailing cultural narcissism rather than a mobilization to mission. Until the church adopts the ortho-doxological missional identity espoused in this project, it will continue to decline.

Therefore, the purpose of this research project was to evaluate the cognitive and behavioral changes in the worship participants of the Big Bend UMC located in Riverview, Florida, as a result of an eight-week theological/biblical message series on missional identity and missional activity. The series was presented in consecutive weeks over a two-month period.

Research Questions

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

Research Question #1

What changes occurred in the congregation's understanding of missional identity as a result of the sermon series? This research question evaluated the cognitive changes of the congregation as a result of this project's independent variable, the eight-week sermon series on missional identity and activity. What were these changes, and were they acute enough to inspire or to compel the congregation into functioning as ortho-doxological missionaries who became more faithful to worship and more obedient to the missional acts as described in Scripture and consistent with Big Bend UMC Church's

vision: "To Know Christ and to Make Christ Known"?

Research Question #2

What changes occurred in the congregation's understanding of missional behavior as a result of the sermon series? This question sought to evaluate behavioral changes as a result of the sermon series. In other words, was a correlation found between missional identity and missional activity? Since so many in the congregation have been formed and influenced under the anti-missional model of the church, preaching about the church's biblical identity is not enough because many enjoy understanding who they are merely for personal enrichment. Identity is the first move towards activity; therefore, this question needed to evaluate the types and number of missional activities being done by the congregation after exposure to the independent variable of this project.

<div align="center">

Population and Sample

</div>

The population and sample consisted of all adult worshipers who were 18 years and older and attended, at least once a month, the 8:00 a.m. and/or 9:30 a.m. and/or 11:00 a.m. worship services at Big Bend UMC in Riverview, Florida. The weekly sign-in rolls were used to help develop this category. In this project, the population and the sample are the same.

Whoever fit the criteria was mailed self-addressed, stamped pre- and post-study questionnaires. The pretests were mailed three weeks before the message series began (13 December 2004). The population was then given three weeks to complete and mail the questionnaires back to the church office. The posttests were mailed immediately after the message series was completed. The population was then given two weeks to complete and mail the questionnaires back to the church office.

The criterion of attending one of the Sunday morning worship services at least once per month ensures adequate exposure to the independent variable. This requirement intentionally restricts the candidates for the study; but this restriction is necessary due to the compactness of the series. The restriction provides the sample with exposure to at least two of the eight messages. Any less participation would result in a low impact, information-based message with little or no understanding of why the series is being preached or what the expectations are (i.e., missional activity). As discussed in Chapter 2, worship is the center of the missional church; therefore, those who neglect it on a regular basis are not being formed and fashioned as a missional people (Heb. 10:25); furthermore, they will not be viable test samples. A simple coding device of consecutive numbers was developed and implemented to ensure anonymity.

The average Sunday worship attendance, which included morning services, recorded at the end of 2003 was 277. The first service, or traditional service, attendance average was 118 with no youth or children counted. The second service attendance average was 71. The third service average was 88. On average thirty-eight children and twenty-one youth are represented in services two and three; thus, this under-eighteen age group comprised 21 percent of the overall population of Big Bend UMC.

Furthermore, the "snowbirds" affect the overall worship attendance of the Big Bend UMC. Snowbirds are northerners who migrate to Florida and reside there usually from late autumn to early spring. Currently, they account for 13 percent of Big Bend UMC's overall worship population. The snowbirds were included since they were present during the administration of the test. With the addition of snowbirds, the worship population eligible for this study was 221 (79 percent).

Methodology

This project was an evaluative study in the experimental mode that utilized the one group pretest-posttest design with no comparison group. The worshipers of the Big Bend UMC who were 18 years of age and older and attended one of the three Sunday morning worship services at least once a month were the participants of the test.

The pretest questionnaire sought to explore the congregation's cognitive understanding of missional identity. The posttest questionnaire sought to evaluate the congregation's missional behavioral as influenced by the preaching series.

Variables

The following describes the variables of this project.

The Independent Variable

The independent variable of this research project was the sermon series. Eight messages were preached consecutively over a two-month period. The series was theologically sound and scripturally based.

The parameters of this project disallowed a fully orbed theology of preaching. Nevertheless, the preaching convention was employed because historically it has always occupied a prominent place in Protestant worship. Preaching has been the primary way of inspiring, motivating, persuading, renewing, teaching, reaching, and transforming the people of God. Carlos F. Cardoza-Orlandi explains the purposes of preaching for a missional community:

> 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 … in which the congregation listens and discerns the activity of God in their world. (5)

Perhaps preaching is not the best form of communication, or the best educational venue; nevertheless, it is still a God-ordained activity (e.g., Isa. 52:7; Rom. 10:9; 1 Cor. 1:18-31; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). Moreover, preaching from Scripture is core value number one at Big Bend UMC: "The Bible is the one true Word of God upon which all of our preaching, teaching, and church life is based." On a very pragmatic level, the preaching office was leveraged for this project because it, more than any other single ministry, reached the most people at the same time with the same message. Furthermore, I have maintained a passion for preaching, and it is a personal spiritual gift that has been consistently affirmed by the body of Christ at Big Bend UMC and at other places as well.

At Big Bend UMC the Sunday morning worship styles are differently nuanced; therefore, the messages were differently delivered. The 8:00 a.m. traditional worship population mostly consists of the late Builders (pre-1925) and Silents (1925-1942) generations. The 9:30 a.m. attracts roughly the same demographic as the 8:00 a.m. service, but this audience enjoys some contemporary elements in worship. Although the 11:00 a.m. contemporary worship service is much more balanced in its generational representation, it appeals mostly to the Boomers (1942-1963), Survivors (1964-1981), and Millenials (1982-2001).

While the manuscript content was identical for each worship service, significant differences occurred in the delivery.

Style. The traditional service tended to be more lecture based, as was the blended service, while the delivery in the contemporary hour tended to be more animated.

Delivery. The physicality and animation of the delivery were different to match the genres of the services. The traditional service valued the authoritative symbolism of

the pulpit; therefore, I felt compelled to stay behind it during the entire preaching event.

In the blended service I started behind the pulpit but moved out from there as the sermon

progressed. In the contemporary service, no pulpit was present in order to provide more

room for the arts. A music stand served as a pulpit. The informal nature of the

contemporary service afforded me freedom to move about while preaching.

Dress code. In the traditional service, clerical robe was required while in the

blended service suit and tie was acceptable. In the contemporary service casual wear was

expected.

Preaching aids. In the traditional service, the preaching was supported by an

outline in the worship folder. In the blended and contemporary services, other media

supported messages: graphics and video.

The noted differences in the worship styles at Big Bend UMC represent

intervening variables beyond the controls of this project.

The reason the eight messages were preached consecutively over a two-month

period was to heighten the intensity of the experiment and to keep the congregation on

theme (see Table 1.2 p. 8). Because this series related to the primary reason why the

Church exists and my passion to build a missional church (or transform an anti-missional

one), I was not trying to be subtle, nor did I want to risk the congregation thinking lightly

of the content. The actual risk was the majority of the population not attending eight

consecutive worship services.

The Dependent Variables

The dependent variables of this project were the cognitive and behavioral changes

in missional identity and activity of the Big Bend UMC worshipers who fit the criteria.

The Intervening Variables

The intervening variables that might influence and help to explain the cognitive and behavioral outcomes of this project are age (chronological and relationship to Christ and to the Big Bend UMC), emphasis on the church's monthly outreaches, theological background, emphasis on and implementation of the July Celebrate Jesus Mission.

Instrumentation

A researcher-designed questionnaire was the primary instrument implemented to evaluate the cognitive and behavioral responses of the population in regards to its missional identity and behavior. The questionnaire was employed prior to the preaching series and at its conclusion. The complete questionnaire is found in Appendix C.

The questionnaire was principally designed to diagnose the current missional identity (congregationally and individually) and missional behavior (congregationally and individually) of the population. Nine questions were autobiographical in nature. Sixteen questions sought to diagnose missional identity, and eleven questions sought to diagnose missional behavior.

Table 3.1. Identity and Behavior Scales

Missional Identity Questions	Missional Behavior Questions
10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18,19,20, 22, 24, 28, 30, 31, 32	12, 21, 23 25, 26, 27, 29, 33, 34, 35, 36

Validity and Reliability

The instrument was pretested by the leadership groups at Sun City UMC in Sun City Center, Florida, and the UMC Apollo Beach Church of Life, Apollo Beach, Florida,

in order to test its validity. The pretest was administered a month before implementation at Big Bend UMC at Sun City UMC and UMC Apollo Beach Church of Life. I was present at the time of the administrations. Twenty-four pretests were administered, and feedback was taken for clarity of grammar, typographical errors, recommendations, and suggestions.

Data Collection

The pretested, researcher-designed questionnaire provided the primary source of data for measuring the missional identity and missional behavior of the population. The data was collected in two ways: (1) by means of a self-addressed envelope returned to the church office no later than ten days after the final message in the series and (2) a designated collection box placed in the back of the sanctuary. The church's office manager was asked to assist in expediting the returned questionnaires to the research team, and electronic mail reminders were sent to the population one week after the pretest questionnaires were administered. A second round of electronic mail reminders was sent three days after the last installment of the preaching series was completed in order to remind the population to complete the questionnaires.

Throughout the administration of the questionnaires, the participants' confidentiality and response anonymity were assured through a simple numerical coding system. After the questionnaires were collected and collated, they were sent for statistical analysis to Cynthia Lewis-Younger, M.D., M.P.H., a member of the dissertation team.

Data Analysis

The null hypotheses for the research questions were (1) the sermon series did not affect the missional identity of the attenders of Big Bend UMC and (2) the sermon series did not affect the missional behavior of the attenders of Big Bend UMC. Data analysis

was employed to determine if the null hypotheses could be rejected and conclude an association between the preaching series and missional identity and behavior of the population.

The primary statistical tool that was used for analyzing the pretest and posttest questionnaires was that of *t*- tests. According to Walter R. Borg and Meredith D. Gall, *t*-tests "are used to determine whether two means, proportions, or correlations coefficients differ significantly from each other" (428). Statistical analysis was performed using the SPSS statistical package.

The data gathered by the instrument were assumed to be normally distributed, with approximately equal distances between the increments on the scale employed (strongly agree to strongly disagree in five increments). The Likert-type scale produced ordinal data. The sums of the responses to the identity questions were summed and then divided by the number of responses to obtain the mean for each item. Each item was assigned to an index. Two main scales were employed, one for identity and one for behavior. Those items with a "negative" value were converted to a positive scale by scoring backwards. This procedure was done for items such as number 6: "The church should do outreach in order to get more people to share the financial burden of the church," where the answer is strongly disagree in order to make the scores all scaled in a comparable direction. Rescaling was performed for items 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, and 30 on the pretest and 38, 40, 41, 42, 44, and 57 on the posttest. Means of each item were summed, and then a mean was constructed. The mean for the pretest index was compared with the corresponding posttest index.

In order to use participants as their own control, items from the pretest were

repeated on the posttest. To differentiate the identical questions from each other, the

posttest questions were numbered in sequence with the pretest questionnaire. The first

nine questions were the descriptive questions. Questions 10-36 were the pretest

questions. The identical set of posttest questions began at question number 37, continuing

to question 63. This control assumed that each participant obeyed the instructions given

on the surveys, answered honestly, and returned the surveys within the specified time.

Paired t-tests were performed to test the hypotheses, using two-tailed tests. A

probability level of 0.05 was set as the significance level, indicating that an effect, if

identified, had a probability of one in twenty or less for occurring by chance alone.

Results were rounded to two decimal places.

Generalizability

This project was delimited to include the population of Big Bend UMC located in

Riverview, Florida. The purpose of the research project was to evaluate the cognitive and

behavioral changes in the worship participants of the Big Bend UMC as a result of an

eight-week theological/biblical sermon series on missional identity and missional

activity. It was presented over a two-month period. The findings of this study may be

applicable to any Christian church that recovers its biblical identity and consistently

behaves accordingly. Results of this study are summarized in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

What is the foundational identity of the Church and what is it in relationship to the world around it? This question is a foundational one that the Church has always sought to answer. From the biblical/theological paradigm articulated in Chapter 2, the cogent and compelling answer is that the Church's foundational identity is that of an ortho-doxological missionary. Thus, two questions have directed this study: What changes occurred in the congregation's understanding of missional identity as a result of the sermon series? What changes occurred in the congregation's missional behavior as a result of the sermon series?

Profile of Subjects

Pretest and posttest surveys were distributed to the subjects of this study. The pretest was administered three weeks before the instrument was implemented and the posttest was sent out one week after the conclusion of the instrument. Those who were 18 years of age or older and who consistently attended (at least once a month) the 8:00 a.m. and/or 9:30 a.m. and/or 11:00 a.m. Sunday worship services at Big Bend UMC in Riverview, Florida were included in the study. The number of candidates who fulfilled the criteria as elaborated here was 221 (N). The number of participants in both the pre and posttest was 55 (n). This number of participants represents an acceptable return rate of 24.8 percent of the population for both the pretest and the posttest. Their responses have provided the statistical measurements for this study.

The pre- and posttest-questionnaires were prepared simultaneously prior to the start of the project. The questionnaires were stamped with the same number and covered

with an unstamped cover letter. Two addressed, stamped envelopes were prepared for
each member of the population sampled, and the two questionnaires were inserted into
the envelopes and sealed, separating the posttest questionnaires from the pretest
questionnaires. This action was required because when the questionnaires were inserted
with the cover page in place, the participant number was obscured and no one knew who
had which participant number. This process ensured complete confidentiality for the
questionnaires. Questionnaires from staff were excluded as were questionnaires when the
pretest and posttest were not matched.

Figure 4.1 illustrates that 90 percent of Big Bend UMC population was born
before 1964, with the largest group born between 1942 and 1963 (45 percent).
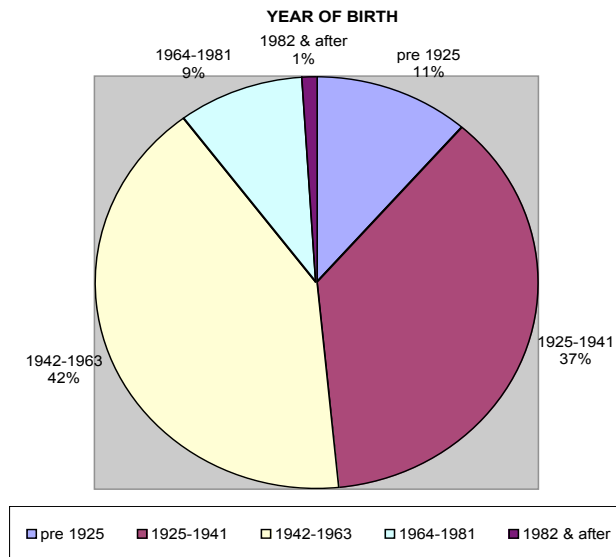
Figure 4.1. Participants' year of birth.

Figure 4.2 illustrates that 89 percent of the participants have been Christians at
least thirteen years, with the largest group (80 percent) having been Christians thirty-five
plus years.
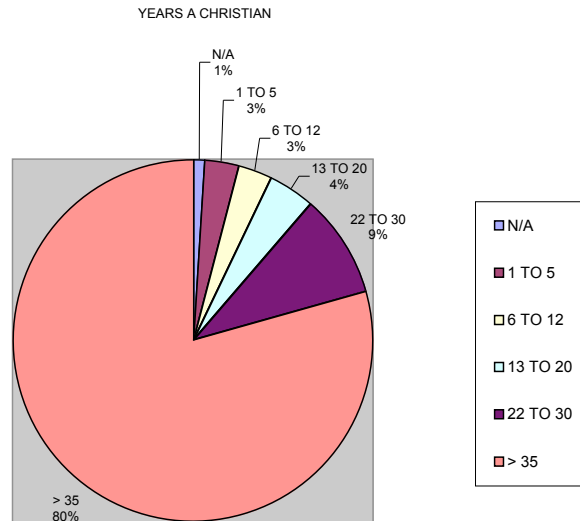
YEARS A CHRISTIAN

Figure 4.2. Number of years a Christian.

The largest group (46 percent) that has been attending Big Bend UMC the longest

has only been there between one to three years. The second largest group (27 percent) has

been there eleven plus years. Remarkably, the classic 20-80 rule; 20 percent of the people

do 80 percent of the work is the dominant feature at Big Bend UMC. According to the

responses exactly 80 percent of the participants are involved on the attendee and

membership level while 20 percent are involved at the leader/teacher level.

A high percentage of the population attends worship services at least three times a

month (95 percent).

Forty-eight of the participants of the study attend Big Bend UMC for the worship

and preaching experience while three do so for the stated vision of Big Bend UMC: "To

Know Christ and to Make Him Known."

Of the three worship services offered, 63 percent attend the 8:00 a.m. traditional

service while 22 percent attend the 9:30 a.m. blended service and 15 percent attend the

11:00 a.m. contemporary service. This worship attendance is important given that the

local community demographic desires a more contemporary and recreational church.

Further biographical study shows that 70 percent of the participants learned about Jesus through family. The second largest group learned about Jesus through the church (27 percent). What is striking is that only 5 percent learned about Jesus through a friend or other means and none of the participants met Christ through either media or acquaintance. This data is significant because Christians are generally more comfortable and passionate about introducing others to the faith and sharing their own personal faith in ways similar to how they were initially introduced to it. If most Big Bend UMC attendees have learned of Jesus through family, and they have removed themselves from their family circles to reside in Florida, then the possibility for family evangelism is very limited (see Figure 4.3).
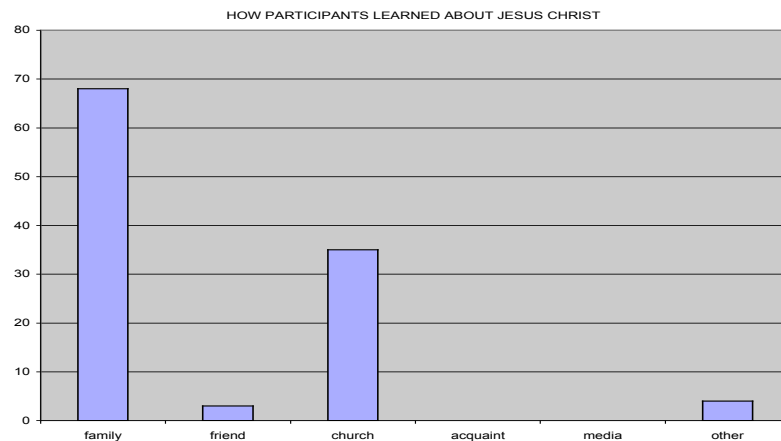

Figure 4.3. How participants learned about Jesus Christ.

Lastly, in regards to biographical information of the population, the gender distribution was split almost equally (male 51 percent and female 49 percent).

Statistical Procedure

The questionnaire contained items that were intended to determine if the conception of Big Bend attenders was missional. That major scale was split into two subscales that assessed composite Christian identity and identity of the Big Bend Church. Questionnaire items were allocated as found in Table 4.1.[16]

Table 4.1. Questions on Identity Scale

Pretest Identity Major scale	Posttest Identity Major scale	Pretest Composite Subscale	Posttest Composite Subscale	Pretest Big Bend Subscale	Posttest Big Bend Subscale
10	37	10	37	18	45
11	38	11	38	20	47
13	40	13	40	22	49
14	41	14	41	30	57
15	42	15	42	31	58
16	43	16	43		
17	44	17	44		
18	45	19	46		
19	46	24	51		
20	47	28	55		
22	49	32	59		
24	51				
28	55				
30	57				
31	58				
32	59				

The other major scale was intended to assess if behavior matched the missional identity. That major scale was split into two subscales that assessed missional and

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[16] Each major index was split into two minor indices. Items 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18,19, 20, 22, 24, 28, 30, 31, and 32 on the pretest referred to missional identity. Because the posttest did not include the nine biographical questions from the pretest, items were renumbered 37, 38, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 49, 51, 55, 57, 58, and 59 on the posttest. The two subsets of items were a general identity for all Christians, composed of items 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 24, 28, and 32. Posttest items included were 37, 38, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 46, 51, 55, and 59. Items 18, 20, 22, 30 and 31 referred to the specific missional identity of Big Bend. Posttest items were 45, 47, 49, 57, and 58.

evangelistic action and the more inward focused practice of spiritual disciplines.

Questionnaire items were allocated as found in Table 4.2.[17]

Table 4.2. Question for Behavior Scales

Pretest Behavior Major scale	Posttest Behavior Major scale	Pretest Action Subscale	Posttest Action Subscale	Pretest Discipline Subscale	Posttest Discipline Subscale
12	39	12	39	33	60
21	48	21	48	34	61
23	50	23	50	35	62
25	52	25	52		
26	53	26	53		
27	54	27	54		
29	56	29	56		
33	60	36	63		
34	61				
35	62				
36	63				

Table 4.3 indicated the mean, standard deviation, the *t*-values, and P values

obtained in the analysis of the behavior scales.

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[17] Items addressing behavior were 12, 21, 23, 25, 26, 27, 29, 33, 34, 35, and 36 on the pretest. Because the posttest did not include the nine biographical questions from the pretest, items were renumbered 39, 48, 50, 52, 53, 54, 56, 60, 61, 62, and 63. A subscale for action was identified containing 12, 21, 23, 25, 26, 27, 29, and 36 on the pretest and 39, 48, 50, 52, 53, 54, 56, and 63 on the posttest. The other sub-index was for practicing other spiritual disciplines including items 33, 34, and 35 on the pretest and 60, 61, and 62 on the posttest.

Table 4.3. Behavior Scales

| | MEASUREMENTS | | | | | |
| | Pretest | | Posttest | | | |
Scale	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	*t*	*P
Behavior	2.37	0.70	2.28	0.65	1.17	0.25
Action	2.54	0.69	2.40	0.68	1.80	0.08
Discipline	1.91	0.88	1.96	0.80	-0.47	0.64

*P value of <5 is statistically significant.

Examining the population as a whole, none of the values is statistically significant; however, a trend toward statistical significance is discovered in the action subscale. With the exception of the spiritual discipline subscale, all the scales showed decreasing means, which suggests a trend toward agreement with ortho-doxological missional identity and behavior.

The data were further analyzed by gender, age group, level of involvement, services attended, number of years a Christian, and number of years attending Big Bend UMC. Most of the comparisons were not statistically significant; however, those born between 1942-63 (Boomers) had a statistical significance in both identity and composite Christian identity and in behavior scales and subscales for action and discipline (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4. Identity and Behavior Scales: Ages 42-63

	PAIRED *t*-TEST RESULTS (Ages 42-63)					
	Pretest		**Posttest**			
Scale	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**	***t***	***P**
Identity	2.17	0.57	.194	0.53	2.50	0.02*
Composite	2.23	0.64	1.98	0.64	2.35	0.03*
Behavior	2.37	0.67	2.09	0.61	3.86	0.00*
Action	2.53	0.63	2.23	0.60	3.58	0.00*
Discipline	1.96	0.90	1.73	0.79	2.20	0.04*

*P is statistically significant.

Furthermore, statistical significance was demonstrated on the missional behavioral scale for the persons who have been Christians 22-30 years. The 3.05 mean for pretest and the posttest mean was 2.65 with a *t* of 6.19 and P value of .01.

Statistical significance was demonstrated on the missional behavioral action subscale for all males. T pretest mean was 2.62 with a SD of 0.67. The posttest mean was 2.38 with a SD of .062, and the *t* is 2.44 and P value .02.

Reliability

The questionnaires (see Appendixes A and B) used for this study was a researcher-designed instrument. The scales were developed and based on the theological premises elaborated in Chapter 2. Questions were determined to be either identity questions or behavioral questions. Additionally, the behavioral questions were further divided into spiritual maturity behaviors and missional behaviors.

Item analysis was conducted. Reliability of the scales was measured using a two-way mixed effect model for consistency. The reliability coefficients for the scales were computed using the items for the pretest scales and the items for the posttest scales separately. The alpha statistic indicated acceptable internal consistency when it exceeded 0.70. Pretest and posttest scales for missional identity and for missional behavior were

reliable. The subscales for composite Christian identity and for actions also met the

reliability standard. The posttest subscales for Big Bend identity (.70) did not meet the

reliability standard, although it was very close to acceptable standards. The spiritual

discipline subscale included only three items, which may have contributed to the

relatively low reliability of that subscale (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.5. Internal Consistency Reliability Scales

Scale	Pretest Alpha	Posttest Alpha
Missional identity	0.88	0.80
Composite Christian	0.75	0.74
Big Bend UMC	0.61	0.69
Missional behavior	0.89	0.83
Actions	0.82	0.77
Spiritual discipline	0.72	0.64

Anecdotal Evidence

Positive changes have occurred in missional behavior as a result of the

effectiveness of developing missional identity through the technique of the eight-week

message series. These changes have not only been noticed in the positive statistical

evidence but also in some unsolicited parenthetical comments on the posttest. For

example, question 38 stated, "Mission is an overseas program the church supports." Two

responses saw the church's mission as everywhere. Two response added "includes but is

not limited to" and "but is also everywhere." Question 40 stated, "Reaching out to the

community is the job of the pastor and/or those who have the gift of evangelism." A

participant answered, "Others should learn to reach out with their own talents." Question

41 stated, "The primary purpose of the church is to minister to its members." Two

participants elaborated, "That's not its only mission" and "it must also bring lost sheep into the fold." Lastly, question 44 stated, "Missionaries are people who have specialized callings to go overseas to evangelize and do humanitarian services." One participant added bluntly, "All Christians are missionaries." Perhaps these responses were reflections from question 23 on the posttest: "America is a nation in need of Christian missionaries" (significantly, this question received a mean high score of 1.722).

Two more examples of growing in missional understanding come from comments from people who have responded with enthusiasm over the message series itself. One person, new to the church, after hearing missional message six stated, "Pastor, I grew up in the church and attended many different churches in many denominations and I have never heard what you are saying. This is very interesting and exciting."

Another example (and the last mentioned here) comes from a member of the dissertation team. He is a late Boomer who grew up in the church. He is also a strong leader and a long-tenured member. After reading through the initial drafts of the dissertation and having intense dialogue with me about the nature of the church, he made the following comment:

> This is what every church I ever attended has been missing. I have always been told and was led to believe that missionaries are people who go oversees and we in the American church support them prayerfully and financially. I have never heard that as a Christian I am a missionary to my local community. Now I am beginning to see the whole thing differently.

 These unsolicited remarks clearly demonstrate that behind the numbers and statistics, minds, hearts, and behaviors are being transformed.

Summary of Significant Findings

Some of the significant findings that have been revealed in Chapter 4 are

1. Big Bend UMC is a maintenance church;

2. The Big Bend UMC population is older than its surrounding community;

3. Only a small percentage of the Big Bend population supports the corporate vision: "To Know Christ and to Make Him Known";

4. A large percentage of the population comes to Big Bend UMC primarily for the worship experience;

5. Statistical significance was found among the Boomer generation; and,

6. Big Bend UMC is transforming from a maintenance into a missional church.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The origin of this study was to begin the transformation process of turning Big

Bend UMC, culturally and spiritually a maintenance church, into a missional

congregation (and also to theologize as to why the church in the North American Context

is in decline). The strategy was to begin with the question of identity, for answering this

foundational question is necessary because people and organizations act consistently with

who and what they believe they are. In Chapter 2, I have sought to demonstrate from a

theological/biblical paradigm that the foundational identity for the church is one of an

ortho-doxological missionary. The hope was that if the church genuinely understood that

it possessed this kind of missional entity, missional behavior would result (orthopraxis).

This expectation parallels Alec Motyer's truism: "The great glory of Christian ethics is

that it calls us to be what we are" (131).

Major Findings

The first major finding is that Big Bend UMC is a maintenance church. This

reality was speculated in Chapter 1 and has been confirmed by the statistical data, the

unsolicited comments on the pre-and posttest, the anecdotal behavior in which past

outreach initiatives were met with relative indifference and that Big Bend UMC lost

members during the sermon series.

Big Bend UMC lost members during the preaching of the sermon series. This

response is perhaps the greatest indicator of how strong the maintenance sentiment is in

this church. Follow-up inquiries evoked the dominant response: "We don't like the

direction the church is taking." When the follow-up question was asked, "In which

direction is the church going?" the answers were generally maintenance oriented. These departures are significant because it demonstrates that the world view of the maintenance church is hard to challenge and even harder to overcome and if Big Bend UMC makes the shift from maintenance to missional as is envisioned in this study, it must expect conflict because this move is actually a reengineering of the image and purpose of the church that necessarily changes the expectations and roles of those who are within it.

The second major find regards the biographical information. Two biographical dynamics present a much greater challenge for Big Bend UMC to transform itself from a maintenance to a missional church: the age of the average member and the length of time the member has been a Christian.

As Figure 4.1 (68) illustrated, 90 percent of Big Bend UMC population was born before 1964, with the largest group born between 1942 and 1963 (45 percent). On the other hand, 62.4 percent of the community Big Bend UMC is trying to reach is under the age of forty-eight (United States Census Bureau). The difference in age demographic makes effective outreach and assimilation into the life of the church a more difficult task because people generally desire to worship and fellowship with people most similar and familiar to themselves.

Furthermore, the average time an individual has been a Christian is a significant factor. The longer one is a Christian, the more his or her social sphere is centered in and around the church—its life, activities, and people. As Figure 4.2 (see p.69) illustrated, 89 percent of the participants have been Christians at least thirteen years, with the largest group (80 percent) having been Christians thirty-five plus years.

For missional reasons (only) Christian longevity is problematic since the longer

one designates the church as his or her sociological center, the less missional and evangelistic contacts he or she will have with the unchurched (especially if the church is mired in the maintenance or anti-missional mode). If the large majority of people become Christians because of family and friend evangelism, then this sociological phenomenon presents a formidable challenge for the missional future of Big Bend UMC.

A third major finding was that such a small percentage of the participants supports the Big Bend's corporate vision: "To Know Christ and to Make Him Known." If such a low percentage of commitment exists for the overall population of Big Bend UMC, an additional problem emerges. Alignment of time, talent, and treasure is necessary for a church to execute its vision. The greater the overall commitment to the corporate vision, the more productivity and harmony a church will enjoy. The inverse is also true, the less agreement or commitment to the corporate vision, the more difficult the execution. This lack of commitment to the corporate vision is a component that helps explain why Big Bend UMC has never experienced sustained growth in a community that has seen tremendous growth.

A fourth major finding was that a large percentage of the population comes to Big Bend UMC for the worship experience (87 percent) and does so at least three times a month (95 percent). Since worship is the core dynamic of the missional church, the dedication to worship is a positive sign that indicates that Big Bend UMC is forging an ortho-doxological identity.

A fifth major finding of this study is the statistical evidence that the Boomer generation (1946-1964) is gaining a greater understanding of missional identity and behavior. This evidence has been substantiated by a tendency towards action by the

Boomer males of the church and those who have been Christians between 22-30 years. The unsolicited comments on the posttests and the anecdotal evidence support that this finding is significant and did not just occur by chance.

The statistical significance and positive commentary originating from the Boomer generation are not surprising because I myself am a Boomer and naturally have a stronger relatability quotient with my generation (i.e., values, spiritual formation, cultural experiences, socioeconomics, music taste, etc.,).

A sixth major finding is that Big Bend UMC is transforming from a maintenance church into a missional church. Although the statistical analysis of Chapter 4 reveals a modest trend towards this transformation, it is a trend nonetheless. As was expected, missional behavior for most of the population lagged. This lag, however, may not be a cause for concern because the premise of the study was that people first have to understand and believe who they are before they act consistently with who they are. On the other hand, this lag must be carefully monitored, and challenged if it continues so that the transformation process is not thwarted.

Forging a missional identity is a dynamic and complicated process; nevertheless, doing missional behavior, especially after most worshipers of Big Bend UMC have had their primary spiritual formation shaped in the maintenance model (and most for very many years), leads me to believe that a delay between the formation of missional identity and missional behavior is to be expected. As Big Bend UMC continues the development of its missional identity, for altruistic, biblical, and theological reasons, its missional activity should increase.

Weaknesses of the Study

The weaknesses of the study were (1) the small sample size (24.8 percent of total population), (2) the short duration of the study (two months), (3) the lack of an abundance of institutional outreaches (i.e., only the monthly outreaches), (4) some misunderstanding regarding what constitutes missional behavior (some have thought that only evangelism is the missional act), (5) the ambivalence of some questions that failed to evoke an either/or response but a both/and response (i.e., 14, 17, 31), and (6) excessive exposure to the theological tenants of the missional church before the instrument was implemented. Because I have been clear about forming a missional church since I arrived at Big Bend UMC eighteen months ago, the congregation had prior knowledge of my pastoral direction. This prior knowledge of my pastoral direction may have suppressed the statistical results of the study. If the study had been initiated immediately upon my arrival at Big Bend UMC, the magnitude of change or trend towards missional identity and behavior might have been more statistically dramatic for the entire congregation.

Although the questionnaire was pretested twice and reviewed by the dissertation team, these problems did not surface until the actual testing. For future study, refinements will be necessary to make the questionnaire a more effective tool.

Possible Contribution to Research Methodology

This particular research sought to understand the nexus when missional identity is forged and missional behavior is expected. The particularly nuanced research methodology employed by this project is helpful to general research methodology since it utilized a sound pretest/posttest design and a solid instrument (albeit after some refinement).

Comparison to Results of Previously Published Material

Much of the literature detailing, and even lamenting, the decline of the church in the North American context has much to do with methods, programs, and problem solving. As elaborated in Chapter 1, even more has been written on such ideas as leadership ability, church growth initiatives, and strategies. Again these are important concepts; however, they are ultimately secondary to a foundational and functional understanding of what the Church is and what is it called to do by God in the inspired Scriptures. Thus, in Chapter 2, the theological foundation for the Church as a missional entity was laid. Therefore, the contribution this thesis makes is mostly for the theological disciplines of missiology and ecclesiology. The Church is God's unique missionary outpost on earth. Its chief identity as a missionary congregation means that it joins God in its missionary endeavors.

To help establish this identity, the church's theological institutions, conference leadership, and ordination authorities must hear the call for the church to become what it once was—an ortho-doxological missional community. Even the leaders of these institutions must see themselves as co-missioners in the *missio Dei* and then prepare their students, candidates for ministry, and clergy for missionary engagement. In agreement with this recommendation a member of this project's dissertation team wrote the following:

> It is imperative that seminaries take to heart the conclusions outlined here since they need to supply the leadership required to transform the church into the missional model described in this study. Furthermore, efforts of the clergy will be futile unless the laity also realize that the primary reason for the church's existence is to reach the unchurched, not to feed the egos of existing members.

Ray Anderson gives ecclesiology a starting point to reinvent the church: "Mission

precedes and creates theology" (162). McLaren elaborates, "Rather than seeing missiology as a study within theology, theology is actually a discipline within Christian mission. Theology is the church on mission reflecting on its message, identity, its meaning" (105). In other words, ecclesiology must be understood and developed under the overarching theological rubric of missiology, not vice versa. All theologians of every theological discipline must begin to treat the missional nature of the Church as central.

Further Studies

Missional identity and missional behavior are set within the plain command and extreme privilege of being Christ's witnesses in the world and to the world (e.g., Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; 1 Pet. 3:15). Therefore, a further study would be to monitor the correlation between missional identity and missional behavior over a much longer range of time, perhaps a full year. This longitudinal study is warranted because cognition precedes behavior; however, before behavior is established, or considered habitual, a time gap is assumed. Thus, the question arises as to what would be the outcome of forging missional identity and establishing missional behavior over a longer period and then seeing how this development impacts spiritual formation. Such a study would be important for any church wishing to become an ortho-doxological community.

Furthermore, implementing the design and instrument of this study in a declining or plateaued maintenance church that had no prior or deep understanding of missional identity and behavior and seeing what the effects are would be an invaluable study.

Unexpected Conclusions

The intervening variables had more of an impact in this study than was expected. Three of the more dominate ones were (1) the various theological backgrounds of the

participants, (2) my vision to transform churches into vibrant missional cultures by converting religious consumers into ortho-doxological missionaries, and (3) the brevity of my pastoral tenure with this congregation.

Theological background was an important intervening factor in this study. As are most churches in Florida, Big Bend UMC is a composite congregation consisting mostly of retirees or transfers from the northeast, midwest and other snowbelt states. A majority of these churches can be classified as theologically centrist or liberal (at least in the UMC). Generally speaking, missional churches tend to be more theologically conservative and evangelistic than their anti-missional or maintenance counterparts. When the typical northern church transplant comes to Big Bend UMC and discovers a more conservative and evangelistic community than to which they are accustomed, a theological conflict emerges. This conflict is exacerbated in that I classify myself a theologically conservative United Methodist leader and desire to transform this congregation into a missional community using a biblical paradigm.

Furthermore, if Big Bend UMC converts into a missional church, it must call its constituency to greater commitment and a missional spirituality that is described later in the project. In other words, it must transform religious consumers into missionaries. This transformation is very difficult especially given that most people come to Florida to relax, retire, or resign. This religious consumerism includes not just the older transplants but also the younger members of the congregation. Very few of the younger population have inculcated the kingdom virtues of sacrifice, loyalty, and servanthood, all necessary for the formation and sustainability of a missionary congregation.

The third intervening variable is that I have only been the pastor at Big Bend

UMC for a short duration (eighteen months at the time of the writing of this project).

Thus, the church is experiencing the normal (and necessary) transitional issues regarding

a change in pastoral leadership especially after a longer-tenured pastorate. These issues

include mourning the loss of my predecessor and the challenge of getting accustomed to a

leadership and preaching style that is vastly different than past years. These transitional

issues are being exacerbated not only by a change in pastoral leadership but also by the

necessary intrinsic changes as Big Bend UMC moves from maintenance to mission.

Frank discussion with the leadership group of Big Bend UMC has revealed that the

biggest difference between my predecessor and me, in terms of leading the church, is that

I have placed greater accountability on executing the vision than he had.

Another unexpected conclusion was how little the different worship styles

influenced this study. There was scant statistical evidence that demonstrated that the

worship times and styles were a factor on missional identity and missional behavior. The

8:00 a.m. traditional service and 9:30 a.m. blended service share the same demographic

of the late Builders, Silents, and early Boomers generations. The demographic of the

11:00 a.m. contemporary service is comprised of mostly late Boomers, Survivors, and

Millenials. Although the liturgical formats, preaching and music styles, and dress, are

different in all three, none of these factors indicated a significant statistical difference

regarding missional identity and missional behavior.

Another unexpected conclusion was the realization of the patience that will be

needed to transform a flat maintenance culture into dynamic missional culture. I better

realize that much more than a two-month preaching series on missional identity and

missional behavior is required. Because of the passion with which I preached and worked

the instrument, I was hoping for a more immediate, universal, and stronger response. After the study I am more cognizant that the fundamental changes this study hopes for will take years. This assertion takes nothing away from the Spirit of God effectively, miraculously, and quickly, applying the Word of God to the hearts and minds of churches wishing to become missional congregations. Should the Holy Spirit desire to expedite the missional identity and behavior of his people sooner, rather than later, may his Church be ready.

<div align="center">**Practical Applications**</div>

In order for Big Bend UMC, (or any maintenance church), to transform into a ortho-doxological missional church, three practical recommendations must implemented: it must undergo a new spiritual formation, it must always be offering multiple missional opportunities, its leadership must increase the relatability quotient with the entire congregation and it must be sensitive to change dynamics.

Develop a Missional Spirituality

The theology and findings of this project lead to the conclusion that a missional spirituality is the aim of Scripture rather than mere personal piety or mystical experience. Matthew 28:20 contains one of two instances in the book of Matthew where Jesus strongly and explicitly promised his presence: "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." The location of this promise is important for it concludes the premiere missional text of the New Testament—the Great Commission. Therefore, if churches want a greater experience of the Spirit of Jesus, they must be comprehensively involved with and joyfully committed to the Great Commission. Avery T. Willis, Jr. and Henry T. Blackaby teach the supreme reward for churches that pursue this kind of

spirituality: "God accomplishes His work through them" (164).

Continual involvement in and obedience to the Great Commission will transform a privatized salvation and individualistic devotional life into missional spirituality. This spirituality is based on doing the missional commands of Scripture rather than pursuing a pseudo or hyper-spirituality, or esoteric mysticism, that is gauged more by the being fed and feel good syndromes parodied in Chapter 2. Jesus' own spirituality rested on the execution of his Father's missional will. His spiritual formation was based on working in cooperation with his Father whom he described as "always working" (John 5:17). His involvement in his Father's missional endeavors was the food of Jesus' soul (e.g., John 4:32-34). Thus, in forming the spirituality of his disciples, Jesus constantly led them into missional activities where they experienced the presence and power of God (e.g., Luke 10:1 ff.). These on-the-job forays into the mission fields helped to forge the "image of Christ" (Rom. 8:29) deeply into the disciples' souls: the point and goal of all spiritual formation. Therefore, I posit here that by default, missional churches are more spiritual and healthier than their anti-missional counterparts.

Because I speak from the UMC context, I believe the United Methodist denomination needs to grapple with a missional spiritual formation because in doing so it has the capability to bring its more than 33,000 American churches into conformity with the teaching of its own Book of Discipline:

> The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ by proclaiming the good news of God's grace and thus seeking the fulfillment of God's reign and realm in the world. This mission is our grace-filled response to the Reign of God in the world announced by Jesus. (par. 121)

The second practical recommendation that is both relevant to Big Bend UMC and churches hoping to move from maintenance to mission, is to create more institutional

opportunities for missional engagement. As was claimed previously, ongoing

participation in the *missio Dei* is the ground for a new spiritual formation, therefore, the

all churches need to offer as many institutional missional events and encourage as much

broad-based participation as possible. Such opportunities will not only spiritually develop

individuals within the church but the corporate spiritually of the church as well.

On an operational level, offering missional events and encouraging participation

will mean freeing the congregation from many organizational activities which are

maintenance in nature. Restructuring a church's administration requirements and

ministries will be a key component for freeing people for missional rather than

maintenance activities.

The third practical application is directed to leaders of churches. As noted in

Chapter 4, the most statistical significance regarding establishing missional identity and

doing missional behavior and the most positive comments originated from those who are

members of the Boomer generation. Conversely, the smaller statistical significance and

negative commentary were of generations not my own (i.e., the aforementioned families

that left). For the sake of the body of Christ, its health and future, leaders of churches

must create and sustain loving relatability within their congregational settings regardless

of how multi-generational their churches may be. To create this relatability, leaders must

practice ongoing theological dialogue, especially with people outside of their generation

so that all might understand and participate in church-wide missional transformation.

The fourth practical application recommended in this project is for churches to be

sensitive to the dynamics of change. As communicated in Chapter 1, the leadership of

Big Bend UMC cherishes its missional vision: "To Know Christ and to Make Christ

Known"; however, as has been indicated in this project, a dissonance exists between what the leadership claims and what the congregation actually does. For Big Bend UMC to live out its vision with integrity, changes in behavior must occur. In order to initiate a bias towards action, the leadership of Big Bend UMC must discover and train those persons in the congregation who recognize and readily adopt the changes that must occur. These early adopters are the ones who incarnate the vision, inspire others to do so, and challenge the status quo. They are the ones who eventually influence the late joiners, or those who are uncommitted or ambivalent until others embrace or experience the benefits of change. Although a full treatment of the change process is beyond the scope of this project, empowering the early adopters to initiate the change is a necessary strategic move.[18]

Developing a missional spirituality, creating more institutional missional activities and freeing people to participate, having church leaders engage in ongoing theological dialogue, especially with congregants outside of their generation, and being sensitive to the dynamics of change will greatly help churches transform themselves into ortho-doxological missional communities.

Personal Reflections

When I entered full-time ministry, I, like most graduated seminarians, was filled with a tremendous sense of hope and idealism, joy, and enthusiasm. For me, ministry would be a place filled with loving and spiritual fellowship, saving souls, and changing the world. Much of my idealism evaporated; however, in the first few years of ministry, when I began to encounter things I thought should never happen in the church: power

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[18] Alan Nelson's and Gene Appel's How to Change Your Church Without Killing It is a useful work that outlines a healthy change process of which church leaders need to be aware when attempting to transform their churches into missional communities.

struggles, backbiting and bickering, political maneuverings, racism, gossip, immorality, and perhaps worst of all, inertia; spiritual and evangelistic inertia. Surely what I encountered in my first few years was not Jesus' vision for his church.

Thankfully, after some fifteen years later, a mature realism has set in but surprisingly, so has a gritty determination. I do care deeply that I now minister during the greatest decline of the church in North American history and that my denomination's current attrition rates is approximately 100,000 members a year. I do get anxious that this same church is caught in what Roxburgh describes as the place "liminality" (see p.49): a place not that dissimilar to the Twilight Zone, where it is not quite sure what happened, where it is right now, and what will happen next. The church of yesterday is gone (almost) and the church of tomorrow is not yet here (not fully), and what church is emerging is anyone's and everyone's guess.

I also get uneasy when I know that the role of the minister and ministry is changing and must change in order to engage and reach this new post-Christian world. My denomination; however, still evaluates ministry from the bottom line; numbers and bucks, and keeping the peace (usually false peace) with my local congregation that pays my salary and for the most part, still demands a Christendom chaplain (the high score of 1.943 for question 21 on the questionnaire demonstrates how strong this demand is).

In spite of my best effort to explain, the vast majority of my congregation is struggling to get their arms around the fact that in the past few decades, the majority culture has shifted away from the church. Therefore, the beautiful buildings and grounds they worked so hard to build and maintain, will never be filled up again unless they transform themselves (and rather quickly) into a missional congregation.

I also get concerned when I encounter so much malaise in my own church and dying denomination, especially after I read of and preach about the mighty exploits of the early "People Called Methodist" and their great leader, John Wesley, my hero in the faith. It was because of his missional theology and more importantly, his missional example, that I became a Methodist minister.

Thus, I pursued this project with vigor because for me it was much more than a final requirement for a doctoral degree. The longer I worked on this project, the more it became a crystallizing of theological and ministerial thought. And then, through the months of research and writing, it became a vision to transform maintenance congregations into missional communities, and a mission to turn religious consumers into legendary missionaries. I am deeply thankful for the demands of this project because it has helped set the tone and direction for the rest of my ministry: revive the church by getting it to recognize what it once was.

So as I prepare for the middle years of my ministry, I do so with a deeper hope, clearer vision, stronger determination, and greater courage, than when I first started because, now I truly believe I better sense what the Spirit is saying to his Church in these last days: become missional communities that give glory to God by joining him in the *missio Dei.* May God grant us the grace, wisdom, love, and perseverance to transform his church into an ortho-doxological missionary community.

APPENDIX A

Cover Letter for Pretest Questionnaire

Rev. John R. Guerre, Pastor
11525 Big Bend Rd.
Riverview, Florida 33569

Date: 12/13/04

Dear Friend of Big Bend,

At this time I am completing the dissertation requirements for the Doctor of Ministry degree from Asbury Theological Seminary. The first three chapters of the dissertation have been finalized and approved. The research and writing phase is almost complete. To complete the church-based research and practicum, I need your participation. Therefore, please do the following:

1. Complete the enclosed questionnaire. The questionnaire should take no longer than 10-15 minutes to complete. Please complete it during a time when you are most uninterrupted. Note that a total of 36 questions are distributed on three pages.
2. Please respond as accurately as possible regarding your views and feelings on the matters listed.
3. When you complete the questionnaire, either mail it back to the church office in the self-addressed envelope or place it in a designated box in the back of the sanctuary when you come to church. Do whichever is more convenient but please do so by January 2, 2005.
4. For the next two months please try to be as faithful as possible to Sunday morning worship and listen intently.

I genuinely appreciate your participation in this project. To thank you, I promise:

1. Not to compare your responses with the responses of anyone else.
2. To keep complete anonymity of your responses.
3. To assure you that your responses, whatever they are, will be included in this study.

Thank you again for your participation.

Agape,

Pastor John

APPENDIX B

Cover Letter for Posttest Questionnaire

Rev. John R. Guerre, Pastor
11525 Big Bend Rd.
Riverview, Florida 33569

Date: 2/17/05

Dear Friend of Big Bend,

Thank you for your participation in my dissertation project. Please complete this final questionnaire now that our eight-part message series is finished.

Please follow just a few more instructions as we wrap up this phase of the dissertation:

1. Complete the enclosed questionnaire. The questionnaire should take no longer than 10-15 minutes to complete. Please complete it during a time when you are most uninterrupted. Note that the 27 questions are distributed on two pages.
2. Please respond as accurately as possible regarding your views and feelings on the matters listed.
3. When you complete the questionnaire, either mail it back to the church office in the self-addressed envelope or place it in a designated box in the back of the sanctuary when you come to church. Do whichever is more convenient but please do so by February 27, 2005.

I appreciate your participation in this project. To thank you, I promise:

1. Not to compare your responses with the responses of anyone else.
2. To keep complete anonymity of your responses.
3. To assure you that your responses, whatever they are, will be included in this study

Again, thank you for your participation.

Agape,

Pastor John

APPENDIX C

Pretest Questionnaire

Instructions: This survey is designed to assess the missional identity and missional behavior of the population of the Big Bend UMC. The survey should take approximately 10-15 minutes. Your answers will remain anonymous. For accuracy purposes please do not spend a considerable amount of time on any one item. Thank you for your help and participation.

1. What is your age bracket? [   ] pre 1925 [   ] 1925-41 [   ] 1942-63

    [   ] 1964-81 [   ] 1982-

2. Gender [   ] female   [   ] male

3. How did you first learn about Jesus Christ? [   ] family [   ] friend [   ] church

    [   ] acquaintance [   ] through the media [   ] other

4. How long have you been a Christian? [   ] 1-5 years [   ] 6-12 years

    [   ] 13-20 years [   ] 22-30 years [   ] 31+ years

5. How long have you attended Big Bend UMC? [   ] 1-3 years [   ] 4-6 years

    [   ] 7-10 years [   ] 11+ years

6. What is your primary reason for attending come Big Bend UMC?

    _____

7. How often you attend weekly worship services at Big Bend UMC?

    [   ] 1 time a month [   ] 2 times a month [   ] 3+ a month

8. Which best describes your current involvement with Big Bend UMC?

    [   ] Attendee [   ] Member [   ] Leader [   ] Teacher [   ] Staff

9. Which Sunday worship do you primarily attend?

    [   ] 8:00 a.m. [   ] 9:30 a.m. [   ] 11:00 a.m.

Instructions: Using the scale provided below, circle the number beside each statement that most closely corresponds to your understanding of yourself and the Big Bend UMC.

1=Strongly Agree 2=Agree 3=Somewhat Agree 4=Disagree 5=Strongly Disagree

10. All Christians have a responsibility to share   1   2   3   4   5
    their faith in voice and action.

11. Mission is an overseas program the church supports.   1   2   3   4   5

12. I enjoy participating in Big Bend UMC's   1   2   3   4   5
    monthly love raids (door-to-door outreach) into the community.

13. Reaching out to the community is the job of the pastor   1   2   3   4   5
    and/or those who have the gift of evangelism.

14. The primary purpose of the church is to minister   1   2   3   4   5
    to its members.

15. The church should do outreach in order to get more people to   1   2   3   4   5
    share the financial burden of the church.

16. Jesus' primary reason for coming to earth was to   1   2   3   4   5
    seek and save the lost.

17. Missionaries are people who have special callings to go   1   2   3   4   5
    overseas to evangelize and do humanitarian services.

18. Big Bend should invest more time, talent, and treasure in   1   2   3   4   5
    communicating the gospel to its community.

19. The primary reason why the church exists is to save and serve   1   2   3   4   5
    its community.

20. Big Bend has a clear vision and core values.   1   2   3   4   5

21. I regularly invite my friends to worship with me at Big Bend.   1   2   3   4   5

22. Big Bend demonstrates the love of Christ   1   2   3   4   5
    in practical ways to its friends and community.

23. Big Bend's ministries equip and inspire me to share my faith.   1   2   3   4   5

24. All Christians are missionaries to their neighbors and local   1   2   3   4   5
    communities.

25. When God meets my needs, I am motivated to share   1   2   3   4   5
    with others what he has done for me.

26. I regularly participate in Big Bend outreach ministries   1   2   3   4   5

27. I regularly share my faith with unchurched friends and family. 1 2 3 4 5

28. The chief function of the pastor is to equip the church
for the mission of God. 1 2 3 4 5

29. I regularly share my faith (voice and action). 1 2 3 4 5

30. The chief function of the minister is to take care of my needs
and the needs of my family. 1 2 3 4 5

31. Big Bend UMC should become a missionary community. 1 2 3 4 5

32. America is a nation in need of Christian missionaries. 1 2 3 4 5

33. I regularly practice the spiritual disciple of prayer 1 2 3 4 5

34. I regularly practice the spiritual discipline of private and
public worship. 1 2 3 4 5

35. I regularly practice the spiritual discipline of Bible Study. 1 2 3 4 5

36. I regularly practice the spiritual discipline of sharing my faith. 1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX D

Posttest Questionnaire

Instructions: This survey is designed to assess the missional identity and missional behavior of the population of the Big Bend UMC. The survey should take approximately 10-15 minutes. Your answers will remain anonymous. For accuracy purposes please do not spend a considerable amount of time on any one item. Thank you for your help and participation.

Using the scale provided below, circle the number beside each statement that most closely corresponds to your understanding of yourself and the Big Bend UMC.

1=Strongly Agree 2=Agree 3=Somewhat Agree 4=Disagree 5=Strongly Disagree

37. All Christians have a responsibility to share   1   2   3   4   5
    their faith in voice and action.

38. Mission is an overseas program the church supports.   1   2   3   4   5

39. I enjoy participating in Big Bend UMC's   1   2   3   4   5
    monthly love raids (door-to-door outreach) into the community.

40. Reaching out to the community is the job of the pastor 1   2   3   4   5
    and/or those who have the gift of evangelism.

41. The primary purpose of the church is to minister   1   2   3   4   5
    to its members.

42. The church should do outreach in order to get more people to 1   2   3   4   5
    share the financial burden of the church.

43. Jesus' primary reason for coming to earth was to   1   2   3   4   5
    seek and save the lost.

44. Missionaries are people who have special callings to go 1   2   3   4   5
    overseas to evangelize and do humanitarian services.

45. Big Bend should invest more time, talent, and treasure 1   2   3   4   5
    communicating the gospel to its community.

46. The primary reason why the church exists is to save and serve 1   2   3   4   5
    its community.

47. Big Bend has a clear vision and core values.   1   2   3   4   5

48. I regularly invite my friends to worship with me at Big Bend. 1   2   3   4   5

49. Big Bend demonstrates the love of Christ   1   2   3   4   5
    in practical ways to its friends and community.

50. Big Bend's ministries equip and inspire me to share my faith.   1   2   3   4   5

51. All Christians are missionaries to their neighbors and local communities.   1   2   3   4   5

52. When God meets my needs, I am motivated to share with others what he has done for me.   1   2   3   4   5

53. I regularly participate in Big Bend outreach ministries   1   2   3   4   5

54. I regularly share my faith with unchurched friends and family.   1   2   3   4   5

55. The chief function of the pastor is to equip the church for the mission of God.   1   2   3   4   5

56. I regularly share my faith (voice and action).   1   2   3   4   5

57. The chief function of the minister is to take care of my needs and the needs of my family.   1   2   3   4   5

58. Big Bend UMC should become a missionary community.   1   2   3   4   5

59. America is a nation in need of Christian missionaries.   1   2   3   4   5

60. I regularly practice the spiritual disciple of prayer   1   2   3   4   5

61. I regularly practice the spiritual discipline of private and public worship.   1   2   3   4   5

62. I regularly practice the spiritual discipline of Bible Study.   1   2   3   4   5

63. I regularly practice the spiritual discipline of sharing my faith.   1   2   3   4   5

APPENDIX E

THE SERMON SERIES:

SERMON #1
WHO ARE YOU? PART I:
AN ORTHO-DOXOLOGICAL PEOPLE
Genesis: 1:26, John 4:23-January 2, 2005

Introduction: Who are we as Christians?

I.   The Secret to Success In Life.

        a. Discover who you are and do the absolute best with what you find.

II.   Who Are We?

        a. Genesis 1:26: We are God's image bearers.

        b. We bear God's goodness and love.

        c. This distinction places us in harmony with the rest of God's creation

            (Hab. 2:14 and Ps. 19:1-3).

III.   We are a "Doxological" People

        a. Ephesians 1:2; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Psalm 104:33

        b. "All Creatures of our God and King," "Blessed Assurance"

IV: The Nature of Sin:

        a. Genesis 3: sin enters the universe and humanity.

        b. One effect of sin: we praise in the wrong direction (Rom. 1).

        c. The results of sin" Romans 3:23, 6:23.

Conclusion: Restating Jesus' Mission

        a. John 10:10: give us eternal life.

        b. John 4:23: make us "ortho-doxological" people.

SERMON #2
WHO ARE YOU? PART II:
AN ORTHO-DOXOLOGICAL PEOPLE
1 Peter 2:9-January 9, 2005

Introduction: Review that we are an "ortho-doxological" people.

I.   "You Are a Chosen Generation"

   a.   Peter contrasts the identity of pagans with the identity of Christians.

   b.   God is a choosing God (e.g., Israel, Isa. 43:20; Church, 1 Pet. 1:2).

   c.   Discussion on Ephesians 1 and Matthew 24:14.

II.   "Your are a Royal Priesthood" (Exod.19:6; Rev.1:6, 5:10).

   a.   Priesthood stressed in Reformation.

   b.   Ancient kings had their own company of priests.

   c.   We are priest and sacrifice (1 Pet. 2:5; Rom. 12:1-2; Heb. 13:5).

III.   "You are a Holy Nation" (Exod. 19:6).

   a.   Wholly holy: Matthew 5:8 and Hebrews 12:14.

III.   You are God's Treasured Possession" (Deut. 7:6).

   a.   Ephesians 1:2; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Psalm 104:33

   b.   Titus 2:14 (illustration of little boy and sailboat).

IV: Our Mission:

   a.   "To show forth the praises of Him who called us out of darkness."

   b.   We are God's P.R. department on earth.

Conclusion: Growing businesses spend 20% of their income on marketing (Isa. 52:7).

SERMON #3
MISSION ACCOMPLISHED?
John 20:21-January 16, 2005

Introduction: Review of who we are from past two sermons.

I.   God is on a mission.

        a. Jesus and the Father are "always working" (John 5:17).

        b. On what are they working? The *missio Dei.*

II.   *Missio Dei*, Part I:

        a. Create a Doxological Universe (Num. 14:21; Ps. 8).

        b. Mission Accomplished!

III.   *Missio Dei*, Part II:

        a. Send his son to save us and straighten our praise (John 4:23).

        b. Mission Accomplished!

III.   *Missio Dei*, Part III:

        a. Send the Spirit to Send the Church into the mission (John 20:21).

        b. The sending sequence.

        c. Mission Accomplished????

Conclusion: Global, Regional, and Local statistics about the unchurched

SERMON #4
MAINTENANCE OR MISSIONAL?
Philippians 2:21; Matthew 5:16-January 23, 2005

Introduction: My former weightlifting prowess (I use to work-out to get big and strong,

not just to maintain what I have).

I.   The Maintenance Church:

a.   Inward focus.

b.   Asks: "How do we best take care of our members?"

b.   Philippians 2:21 characterizes the maintenance church

c.   Illustration: the grease factory.

II.   The Missional Church:

a.   Definition: a reproducing body of authentic disciples who are being

equipped as missionaries sent by God to live and proclaim his

kingdom in their world.

b.   Involved in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20).

c.   Asks: "How does God want to serve and save our community through

our church?"

d.   5 attributes of the missional church.

e.   Matthew 5:16 characterizes the missional church.

Conclusion: Which Church does God want us to be? Which church do we want to be?

SERMON #5
TOWARDS A MISSIONAL MINISTY
John 4:29; Matthew 5:19; Mark 2:12; John 9
January 30, 2005

Introduction: How and why did Jesus do Ministry?

I.   The Samaritan Woman (John 4:29).

     a.   Jesus reveals himself as her Messiah.

     b.   Her response: she praises God and tells others.

II.   The Gaderene Demoniac (Matt.5:19).

     a.   Jesus delivers him from his demons.

     f.   His response: he praises God and tells others.

III.   The Paralytic Man (Mark 2:12).

     a.   Jesus enables him to walk.

     c.   His response: he praises God and tells others.

IV: The Man Born Blind (John 9).

     a.   Jesus heals his blindness.

     b.   His response: he praises God and tells others.

V: Ministry Mobilizes Us for Mission.

     a.   The thoughts of John Wesley.

     b.   The need to do excellence in ministry

     c.   Purpose of ministry is found in the Abrahamic covenant (Gen.12-1-3).

     God blesses us so that we might bless others.

Conclusion: Illustration: Preparing Soldiers to Carry out the Nation's Missions?

SERMON #6
MISSION PRIORITY I: TO MAKE DISCIPLES
Matthew 28:18-20-February 6, 2005

Introduction: The Story of Curtis Sliwa

I.   The Mission is to Make Disciples (Matt. 28:18-20).

    a.   The church exists for no other reason.

    b.   What is a disciple?

II.   Disciples are Followers.

    a.   Thoughts from "Forging a Real World Faith" by Gordon McDonald.

    c.   Jesus' constant invitation was "Follow me" (21x).

    d.   Following Jesus is the original "follow the leader game."

III.   Disciples are Learners.

    a.   Disciples learn best by on-the-job-training.

    b.   The goal of all learning is Romans 8:29.

IV: Disciples are Doers.

    a.   The exhortation of James 4:17.

    b.   Disciples learn while they do and do what they learn.

    c.   Sermons are only good if we do them.

Conclusion: Jesus is a world Discipler and wants to disciple all into the best life ever.

SERMON #7
MISSION PRIORITY II: RESCUE THE PERISHING
John 8:24-February 13, 2005

Introduction: The Absence of teaching about Hell in the Contemporary Church.

I.   The Reality of Hell.

  a.   Jesus describes hell as:

    i.   a place where the "worm never dies" (Mark 9:48).

    ii.   a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 9:12).

    iii. a place "where the fire is never put out" (Mark 9:48).

  b.   Hell is not just "a state of mind."

II.   The Nature of Hell.

  a.   Hell is the fairest place in the universe (Rom. 12:19; Exod. 21:14).

  b.   Hell is eternal and hurts like hell.

    i.   Edwards's, "The Future Punishment of the Wicked."

  c.   Hell is the most merciful place in the universe.

Conclusion: 2 Peter 3:8 "God is willing that none should perish."

The image of the church: A fire station that rescues people.

SERMON #8
METHODIST MISSIONARIES
Matthew 28:18-20-February 20, 2005

Introduction: Thoughts from Guder, Hunsberger, and Minatrea

I.   The Manifold Actions of Missionaries.

   a. A missionary does "good works (Matt. 5:16).

   b. A missionary does "honorable deeds" (1 Pet. 2:12).

   c. Jesus' "good works" and "honorable deeds" summarized in the "Great

       Thanksgiving" liturgy.

II.   The Life and Inspiration of John Wesley.

   a. Wesley's warning from August 4, 1786.

   b. The "spirit" the original Methodist had.

   c. The missional spirit Methodist need.

III.   A Hope for our Denomination's Future.

   a. Insights from C. S. Lewis's "Mere Christianity."

   b. What Pope John Paul II sees.

Conclusion: The Story of Jackie Pullinger

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