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IN THE SHADOW OF CATHEDRALS:
Conflict between the "Shadow Culture" of Marginal Groups and the
"Cathedral Culture" of Established Christian Groups and an
Exploration of Ways to Overcome Boundaries between the Two
Cultures

A Dissertation

presented to the Faculty of

The E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission and Evangelism

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Missiology

by

Thomas D. Minton

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DISSERTATION APPROVAL SHEET

This dissertation, entitled

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"Cathedral Culture" of Established Christian Groups and an
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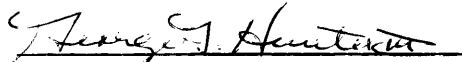
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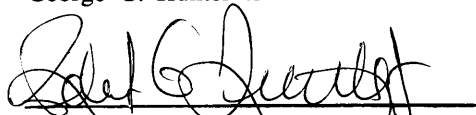
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ABSTRACT

IN THE SHADOW OF CATHEDRALS:

Conflict between the “Shadow Culture” of Marginal Groups and the
“Cathedral Culture” of Established Christian Groups and an
Exploration of Ways to Overcome Boundaries between the Two
Cultures

Thomas D. Minton

This study describes and analyzes the culture clash which occurs when persons from the “shadow culture” (marginalized subcultural groups) come to Christian faith and seek incorporation into existing Christian groups that exhibit “cathedral culture.” It discovers and recommends models of churches, missionaries, and missionary groups as culture brokers to overcome existing barriers between the two cultures.

Using semi-structured personal interviews among missionaries, marginalized persons, and churches, parachurch ministries, and youth groups in Basel, Switzerland, it was determined that the cultural barriers which exist between marginalized persons and Christian groups hinder the integration of converts from subcultural groups of society into existing Christian communities. Nevertheless, both the persons from the shadow culture and members of the cathedral culture desire trusting relationships and mutual respect from one another. Bicultural missionaries and Christian friends serve as the best bridges between the two cultures. All those who were interviewed agreed that small groups are a key to experiencing a

meaningful Christian life and for finding entrance into the larger Christian church community.

Theories and models from anthropology have been used as the interpretive framework for the dissertation and for explaining the dynamics of the culture conflict and its resolution. Focusing upon Jesus as model *of* and model *for* mission, Jesus' *kenosis*, and his modeling of the kingdom of God in story and event provide the theological center for Christian communities of faith. The socio-historical school of New Testament interpretation gives insights into how the early churches understood their faith communities to be socially diverse, yet united in faith. Finally, principles of church growth help explain how churches today can rediscover "apostolic" practices for creating churches that are socially diverse and thus more nearly reflect the kingdom of God than monocultural churches do.

The several models portrayed in this dissertation produce a synthesis which describes the dynamics of a revitalized, missionary church that is centered on Jesus and his example of the proclamation of repentance and the kingdom of God in story and event, rather than a church which is overly concerned with maintaining its cultural boundaries.

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Especially I am grateful to Ruth and Luc Wenger who twice, in 1974 to my whole family and in 1995 to me, extended generous hospitality in their home. I do not know how our initial entry into Basel or my recent research would have been possible without them. Their long-term commitment and involvement in the Mitternachtsmission and in their local church have been an example to me. They often provided wise counsel and served as sounding board for me. The faculty of the E. Stanley Jones School of World

Mission and Evangelism has been a constant source of inspiration and encouragement during this missiological reflection. Special thanks goes to my mentor, Darrell Whiteman, who saw in me the potential to undertake this project and has, in more ways than I can recite, helped shape it.

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INTRODUCTION: Living among the Shadows

The Basler Münster, St. Peter's Basilica, Westminster Abbey, Notre Dame, the Koelner Dom, the Liebfrauenkirche, the Grossmünster, the Gedächtnis-Kirche, the Abbey of Einsiedeln, Milan Cathedral, St. Mattheauskirche, etc., etc., etc.

No one, especially tourists and new residents, can travel in Europe without being impressed with the numerous cathedrals--once all Roman Catholic,¹ now Catholic and Protestant, all Christian. Cathedrals dominate the landscape, looming large in towns and villages across the Continent and British Isles, usually occupying the highest terrain and holding the center of a locale's identity. Only in the cities do the cathedrals give way to taller, more imposing structures, but even here the steeples of cathedrals are an inescapable part of the skyline. Noticeable to tourists, they are often hardly noticed by residents who take them for granted and give them little thought until one is condemned to the wrecker's ball or marked for renovation at an enormous financial burden to the common weal. Cathedrals, however, offer a commentary on much of the life and thought of most Europeans.

Cathedrals cast shadows. Those shadows take on the size and shapes of the structures themselves. The shadows vary in length and intensity depending on the time of day, the meteorological conditions, the season of the year; but the shadows are always there,

both on the inside and outside of the cathedral itself, falling on all who approach it, enter in, or only casually pass by.

Swiss cathedrals, if not among some of Europe's best known or most elaborate, are, however, among some of the most solid, best kept in all of Europe, much like the Swiss Confederation, the Swiss economy, and scenic Switzerland itself (Kubly 1964)!

As linguistically, ethnically, and culturally diverse as Switzerland is--there are four official national languages (German, French, Italian, and Romansch), and at least as many ethnic and cultural groups which have entered into the Swiss Confederation since its inception in 1291 (Kubly 1964:12), and all this before the modern influx of refugees and immigrant labor--it shares in a Christian culture which began with the Christianization of the resident populations by the Frankish kings at the beginning of the sixth century (Widmer 1968:62; see also Kubly 1964). Prior to that, however, Christian symbols that date back to the second half of the first century have been found on grave stones near the city of Basel among the ruins of Augusta Raurica, a settlement of retired Roman legionnaires, their families, and servants. Riva San Vitale, at the southern tip of Lago Lugano on the Italian border, is the site of the oldest known Christian edifice on Swiss soil. Adjacent to the cathedral in Riva San Vitale stands the Baptisterium. In the floor of the small square structure is the baptismal pool about eight feet in diameter with steps leading into it. Just outside the door is a well from which water was drawn to fill the pool. Later, as the mode of Christian baptism changed in this church, a small, black marble

baptismal font was added in one corner. This is still in use today. The original baptistery dates from the time of the earliest Christian missionary incursions from the south around 395-405 A.D.

In February 1995 I was traveling by railway from Basel to Zürich and, passing through one small town near Basel, I saw from the train window three flags flying from poles in front of the local city hall. On one pole was the Swiss flag with its white cross in the center. Then came the canton flag of Basel-Land containing a bishop's staff. This was followed by the flag of the township which also held a cross, the vertical and horizontal beams extending from border to border. This experience reminded me of the time in 1966 I heard a prayer in a Christian worship service in a small church in Zürich, "O God, I thank you, that we Swiss have a cross on our flag." Criss-crossing the land in all directions one cannot deny the existence of the long, rich Christian heritage of this land and its peoples, recognized today in the names of Zwingli, Calvin, Bultmann, Barth, Brunner, and Küng.

Basel, Switzerland (*Encyclopedia Britannica* vol. 1, 1979:851) has a significant Christian history as well. It is the location of first-century Roman outposts marked by the presence of individual Christians; it is the home of Alemanni who came under the preaching of the early Christian missionary Columban and fellow monks who probed the Rhine and Limmat Rivers as far as Lake Constance and Zürich in 610 A.D. (Widmer 1968:67); and it is the crossroads on the Rhine whose peoples were Christianized as kings and lords adopted the Christian faith, some of them coercing their vassals to do the

same. It became a See of bishops of the Church up to the time of the Reformation. The Council of Basel took place here (1431-1449 A.D.) and in 1440 elected a maverick pope. The city's university became the gathering place of outstanding humanists such as Erasmus of Rotterdam who significantly influenced the Protestant Reformation with the first publication of a Greek and Latin New Testament from which Martin Luther made his German translation. Having taught at the University of Basel from 1521-1529 (*Encyclopedia Britannica* vol. 1, 1979:851) Erasmus is buried in the Basel Münster. Here at the oldest university in Switzerland, founded in 1460 (*Encyclopedia Britannica* vol. 1, 1979:851), Christian humanism was born, a humanism that strongly influenced the political, economic, and social life of the city and the confederation (Widmer 1968:194-202; Rotach 1979:5). It was in and around Basel that French Huguenots in 1685 (Buri 1979:65), found hospitality and co-existence alongside other Christians. In 1847 Mennonites, persecuted in Germany and Russia, received permission to build their first chapel in Basel (Raith 1979:101). During World War II many Jewish refugees from Hitler's Germany found asylum in Basel (Lindt 1979:185).

No one in Basel escapes the influences of its Christian history: the early presence of Christians in the Roman settlements and the "second Christianizing" (Widmer 1968:68) of the Alemanni and Celts by the Irish missionary monks and by Frankish lords, the Holy Roman Empire, the Medieval Church, the Reformation, Enlightenment and Pietism, free church and religious-social movements, Neo-orthodoxy and ecumenism (Rotach 1979:5).

We are all shaped by our culture and the history of that culture. Our culture is the learned, acquired, and shared set of mental constructs by which we live our lives. It is the internal road map by which we find our way in the world (Whiteman 1983:27, n. 26). No one can shake totally free of the dominant cultural influence that has shaped us or that surrounds us.

A conversation which took place during my research interviews in Basel in January-February 1995 illustrates that fact. Several years ago Robert (21 February 1995), now 35 years old and the father of two young girls, officially declared his withdrawal from the church of his upbringing. This accomplished in the official church registry what had already occurred inwardly in relation to the church and the Christian faith. Now, he was asking me how he could have his girls christened, instructed, and confirmed since he no longer belongs to the church, does not pay the church tax, and cannot expect the services of the church. When I asked him why he wanted this for his children, he explained that it was expected [culturally], and so that the children would not suffer discrimination socially. Even though he may have tried to distance himself from the official church, Robert cannot escape the shadows of the cathedral. He lives in a "cathedral culture." Though he, and a growing multitude like him,² may be at the margins of the dominant Christian church culture, those cathedrals still cast their shadows upon him and his children.

Unseen by most casual observers, however, are the many smaller chapels and store fronts of free churches throughout the land

such as Baptists, Pentecostals, Free Evangelicals, Methodists, Brethren, Mennonites, Salvation Army, and all other Christians who do not belong to the state churches (which are the Evangelical Reformed, Roman Catholic, and Christian Catholic churches). Some of the so-called minority churches are experiencing slow, steady growth, but they still comprise only a very small percentage of Christians in the Basel region (Heitz and Simson 1989). They have struggled so long for acceptance and recognition by the dominant church culture that they have become, in some ways, like their critics. They have structured and defined themselves in similar ways and set boundaries of their own self-definition in order to be understood and accepted so that now they, too, exhibit a similar attitude of “cathedral culture” or “Christian church culture.” That is to say, “unless you become like us, you cannot be a part of us,” often exhibiting less tolerance toward *Andersgläubige* (those who believe differently) than members of the state churches which are sometimes religiously pluralistic yet socio-economically monocultural. These words could never be found in the creed or by-laws of any church nor are they spoken expectations, but this is what those at the margins³ hear through the observed behavior and perceived attitudes exhibited in Christian circles.

I lived and worked in this setting with some of the subcultural, marginal groups of Basel, Switzerland during the last eight years of a sixteen-year European sojourn as a Christian missionary and teacher. In this setting, I engaged in reflection and field research, seeking answers and contextual models of intervention to resolve the culture

clash which occurs when persons from marginal culture groups seek incorporation into existing Christian churches or groups, and what role the missionary group or pastor plays in that attempt at integration. (See Research Questions in chapter 1.)

Not only do my research findings reveal the influence of the cathedral culture's shadows, my own assumptions and analysis can not fully escape the "shadow of cathedrals." Even though some Christians and church leaders feel the Christian churches themselves are being marginalized by an increasingly secular society, I am still placing the church and its historical influence at the cultural center and using "cathedral culture" as the dominant factor when speaking of things religious in the context of this project. My experience with night people, street youth, and the working class has led me to this position as well as history itself. Whenever one talks with subcultural or marginal people about matters of faith, they immediately speak of, whether favorably or unfavorably, *die Kirche* (the church).

In order to achieve a vital and relevant Christian witness in this setting, in order to lead marginals into Christian faith communities, and in order to work toward revitalized Christian churches at the beginning of the 21st century, the history and culture of a people cannot be ignored or circumvented. It is somewhat like the African-American composer, William Grant Still, has said about writing music,

Everyone who writes music should learn the established forms, and should have a thorough foundation in the forms developed by the classicists. After that, a person with a creative mind

will or should make an effort to build on what he has learned, to add an individual touch. (1978:n.p.)

Also, where there is a historical Christian tradition with its established forms, the Christian missionary or missionary group, whether from within that historical tradition or from a more recent Christian movement, should have a familiarity with those forms and their intended meanings. With that awareness and with sensitivity to the surrounding subcultures, the missionary as change agent and culture broker, is better equipped to build a bridge between the cathedral culture and the socially marginal cultures that surround it. In this way, meaningful interaction between the cathedral culture and those cultures within its shadows can occur so that, at any given moment and whenever conversion takes place, there are fewer and less formidable barriers to be overcome.

Notes

1 . The term "cathedral" derives from the latin *cathedra*, meaning chair or seat (Langenscheidt's 1960:62), being originally used to refer to the seat (or see) of a Catholic bishop and being the principal church of a diocese. In later usage, however, it has come to refer to any cathedral-like church structure (Webster's 1976:353).

2 . Recent church demographic studies by Heitz and Simson (1989) show that the fastest growing category in the general population of Basel-City and Basel-Land is the "confessionless," i.e., those who have officially left church and are unattached and uncommitted to any church, Christian fellowship, or parachurch group. From 1970-1988 that classification, the confessionless, grew by 900%, while the major state churches declined by 40-50% of their membership in Basel and region.

3 . During interviews and conversations in Christian church groups in Basel in January-February 1995 whenever I spoke of "marginal groups" (Randgruppen), the discussion immediately turned to the social evils of alcoholism and drug addiction with the accompanying problems of spousal and child abuse and AIDS. I quickly realized I meant much more when speaking of "marginal groups." In this paper "marginal" or "marginal group" is not used in a demeaning or condemning way. Its usage is not a value judgment. It merely refers to those who are not a part of the mainstream, dominant middle class of society and who do not adhere to its traditional Christian cultural values. Those at the margin may include, as well as alcoholics and drug addicts, blue-collar workers, foreign language immigrants and refugees of other races, night people who find their social identity in the bars and taverns, social drop-outs, homeless, mentally and emotionally distraught ("psychisch angeschlagene" who, some social workers claim, may comprise as much as 30% of the potential work force), and upper business class persons. In short, marginals are anyone outside the mainstream of the dominant middle-class society, all of whom share a similar view of the "cathedral culture" of the Christian church. This

does not suggest that all middle class persons are confessing Christians. My research does show, however, that most church going persons in Basel are middle class and that the churches reflect this culturally. Marginals share the view that the church--with its existing traditional structures, visible and invisible--is largely irrelevant to their lives and they feel alienated by it.

Beatrice Stoeckli (1993:4-5), missionary with the Mitternachtsmission Basel, gives a caution about the use of the term *Randgruppen* (marginal groups). She raises the question, "Who defines 'margin' and 'marginal groups'?" It depends on one's perspective and standpoint, she adds. With Jesus, she continues, the word finds no justification, but it is difficult to convince people who have been told all their lives that they belong to the margins of society that they can be included in anything (Cf. also Bittner 1993:136).

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1983:72-84) provides a useful discussion of "Early Christian Beginnings: The Disinherited and the Marginal." After discussing the various views of the social origins of the Christian sect from Gager (1975) to Theissen (1978) to Meeks (1983), she notes how, with the institutionalization of the Christian movement by the latter half of the second century, Christianity had succumbed to the dominant patriarchal society and culture to the exclusion of women, the poor, and peasant followers of Jesus. Much of Christianity in the West today still views society in a similarly stratified way, viewing those at the margins of society or those who are different as "non-persons."

CHAPTER 1

Discovering the Shadows: The Problem Emerges

Stefan¹ was dead. Philippe was dead, also. Theirs had been the only deaths at that time.² But why was it, after each had made firm and outspoken confessions of faith in Christ and we all, both Christian and non-Christian friends, saw efforts on both their parts to turn their lives around, that Stefan took his own life with a friend's automatic military assault rifle? How was it that Philippe stole money to hire two thugs to kill him with a lethal dose of heroin--a method the thugs eschewed and chose to cut Philippe's throat instead because it was more cost effective? How was it we had lost two of our best young friends when we had invested years of our lives and some of our best energies to reach them with the gospel of salvation, hope, and transformation?

Stefan had been an avowed anarchist, bi-sexual, and occasional heroin user. Philippe had been a practicing homosexual for seven years and had contracted a disease "like Hodgkins disease," but in 1980 the doctors were not certain about a diagnosis. Why had it been seemingly impossible to find places of accepting, nurturing fellowship suitable and meaningful to them within the existing Christian faith communities in the city of Basel, Switzerland--a city well-known for its Christian humanism and hospitality since the days

of the Reformation and now renowned for its spirit of Christian tolerance and cooperation (Rotach 1979:5)? Why had there been such resistance on the part of persons from the "milieu" of Basel's street culture and night scene, like Stefan and Philippe, to join a Christian youth group or church once those persons had become serious seekers after God and after some had accepted the Christian faith? Why was there often reluctance by Christian groups to incorporate such "types" into their circles of fellowship until they first espoused the group's doctrinal understanding of the Christian faith and also got their messed up lives in order by lacing their shoes, having their tatoos removed, or cutting their hair?

The deaths of Stefan and Philippe were the exceptions. Their experience with Christian groups and churches was not. The invisible boundaries which Stefan and Philippe came up against when seeking to enter Christian community were experienced by countless others. What were they hitting up against? What were the commonalities in those experiences? Why did so few of these find acceptance and integration into existing Christian groups, which had been the goal, working strategy, and intentional design of our mission organization since its inception in 1940?³ Why was this strategy not working? Had it ever worked? What had we done wrong in our outreach? Where did the problem of incorporating persons from subculture groups into the existing Christian youth groups and churches lie? What can we learn by endeavoring to understand the dynamics at work in those encounters?

Background to the Problem

The problem of integrating "street people"⁴ who were turning to Jesus into existing youth groups and churches proved to be the most difficult phase of our missionary effort. While engaged in coffee house and street evangelism with the interdenominational Mitternachtsmission Basel from 1974-1982 in Basel, Switzerland, we were repeatedly frustrated at this point on the continuum of moving persons from the "milieu," or night culture of taverns and streets, to incorporation and participation in a Christian community that would be meaningful for them and encourage them in their new faith. Recent reports of the Mitternachtsmission Basel ("Freundesbrief," November 1994:5; May 1995:3; August 1995:11) confirm that this is still a concern of the missionaries.⁵

In order to understand the dynamics at work in this situation it is first of all important that we understand the context or culture of these street people.

My area of responsibility within the mission was primarily that of outreach to the youth and young adults (14-25 years) encountered on the streets after school and in the night. Most of these young persons feel no sense of worth, purpose, or acceptance in a sterile and orderly society run with "Swiss precision." Feeling they are merely cogs in the smooth-running machinery of the highly industrialized, technological economy with little or no voice in family decisions, level of schooling, or chosen vocation, these youth undergo a tremendous and devastating identity crisis. This is especially true of the second generation immigrant laborers who are torn between

cultures and languages, and who face tenuous futures. These young persons have grown up in a different cultural environment than their parents, with peers of different ethnic origin. They have been disadvantaged in school due to the differences in education, language, and worldview of their southern European parents and that of their immediate central or northern European context.⁶

Consequently, many of these youth rebel against the accepted norms of society in which they live and submerge themselves in the culture of rebellion: drugs, alcohol, shop-lifting, and promiscuous sex encouraged by the red-light, low-rent districts where they live and where they therefore congregate after school and work.⁷

This phenomenon affects not only these immigrant youth. Many indigenous youth are disillusioned, disappointed, and disenfranchised with parents, church, and society as a whole. They feel rejection by the economically productive parental culture and indeed find themselves at the stage in life when they are seeking to gain independence from parental culture;⁸ they see moral hypocrisy and meaninglessness in the upward-striving middle class which comprises most of the society; and they have experienced what they feel is the irrelevance of either pluralistic state churches on the one hand and small, conservative, free church fellowships on the other.⁹ Although most of these youth have been through catechism and confirmation in one or another of the churches, they view this confirmation as a rite of passage into adulthood privileges with freedom *from* external restraints rather than having anything to do with faith, moral values, or a worldview influenced by Christian faith

that would provide them with any internal restraints.

As Max Stackhouse (1988:11) has pointed out, "We are forced to ask what it is that defines the boundaries of [this] context: regionality, nationality, cultural-linguistic history, ethnicity, political system, economic class, gender identity, social status, or what?" Whichever definition of "context" we might take, and however we might understand the "decisive contours of human contexts, of what the 'here' is" (1988:11; cf. Eames and Goode 1977:262-278), in the case under consideration all of the boundaries mentioned above are factors which have strongly influenced and shaped the subculture of street people and most lower-class, blue-collar workers, young and old alike--"shadow culture." Common to them all is disillusionment which creates in them a sense of alienation and marginality (Liebkind 1989:237-243).

This condition of life in the "post-Christian" West, in many ways, makes the passage into Christian community all the more difficult. The passage from "night culture" into the dominant "Christian church culture," even when conversion to Christian faith occurs, meets seemingly insurmountable barriers, thus denying incorporation of many into the Christian faith community.

Rationale for the Study

My wife, Barbara, and I, together with our co-workers in the Mitternachtsmission Basel, felt called of God to try and reach the multitude of youth on the streets of Basel, Switzerland with liberating good news. We had done that by establishing a presence

in their natural setting or cultural context, i.e., a coffee house located in the night district where large numbers of them would hang out after school and work.

The youth who had begun to frequent *Der Wendepunkt* (The Turning Point) came into an atmosphere where hopefully they felt comfortable and accepted. The large crowds which soon filled our small rooms indicated to us they did. We would dialogue the Christian message and experience with them and try to lead those who were seeking answers to life with its problems and struggles into a meaningful, transforming, nurturing youth group or church.

Old Context (Pagan)

New Context (Christian)

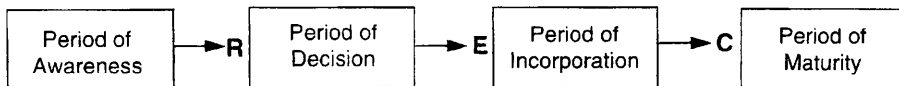


Figure 1

Conversion as a dynamic process according to Tippet (1977)

According to Alan Tippet's model (1977:203-221) we were working within the old context of the street youth, bringing them through a period of awareness and a period of decision. At this point of encounter (E), and if a faith decision had been made to follow Jesus as his disciple, we attempted to introduce them into existing Christian youth groups (Period of Incorporation) for maturing as disciples.

We did not feel at that time we were to start a church ourselves, but to be an integral part of, and to work with, the existing churches already there. This had been the policy and methodology of the interdenominational, inner-city mission which invited me and my family to join them in mission in autumn 1974. Little did we suspect the vast religious and cultural gap that existed between street youth and the established Christian groups.

Knowing that few, if any, of the street youth who became interested in following Jesus would feel comfortable in traditional church settings, we initially appealed to Christian youth groups to help with the coffee house outreach. By establishing relationships with the street youth, our hope was that these youth could be drawn into the Christian groups through testimony and friendship of the Christians. Some of the Christian youth had themselves experienced radical conversion and could identify well with the "rowdies" from the street and with their present experiences.

Cathedrals, however, cast long and lasting shadows. The shadows can be found inside the church as well as outside.¹⁰ Tippett calls to our attention that "for any religious conversion to be permanent its new structure should both meet the needs of the converts and operate in meaningful forms" (1977:211)--especially in the heart and mind of a young believer! If the existing churches and youth groups do not meet the religious, emotional, and social needs of the new convert and if the traditional, liturgical church does not provide a Christian framework the new convert can relate to meaningfully, is the only alternative then to create indigenous

Christian groups among the marginal cultures, even in the shadow of cathedrals? One could expect that a Christian youth group in many ways constitutes an “indigenous Christian group,” at least as far as the youth are concerned. This may be true. But the reality of our experience was that the youth groups had themselves also become institutions which had created their own cultures with usually unspoken, but exclusive boundaries while claiming an openness to receiving new members (Andreani, 15 February 1995). Is there, then, no way an existing, already institutionalized church (or youth group) can become relevant to the new convert for the sake of incorporation without maintaining rigid “Christian cultural” boundaries which set it apart from seekers and new converts? Do the cathedrals of Western Europe cast such permanent shadows in the hearts of those who have found no meaning in its forms that totally new structures have to be found for this large segment of Europeans living within the shadows of the town’s cathedrals? Must those existing churches, whether state church or free church,¹¹ be bypassed, and new, distinct, culturally indigenous groups be formed which by their own cultural formation exclude the existing Christian community--in whatever stage of vitality it may find itself?

Statement of the Problem

This study describes and analyzes the culture clash which occurs when persons from the “shadow culture” come to Christian faith and seek incorporation into existing Christian groups that exhibit “cathedral culture,” and it discovers and recommends models

of churches, missionaries, and missionary groups as culture brokers to overcome existing barriers between the two cultures.

This research will attempt within the Basel context:

1. to establish that there are barriers which hinder incorporation into institutionalized Christian groups when "seekers," (i.e., those who are intentionally engaged in increasing their awareness of the alternative of the gospel of the kingdom), and when converts, (i.e., those who make a decision to receive Christ's forgiveness and follow him), have been evangelized from marginal subculture groups.

2. to explain the barriers which exist between "centered set" converts and "bounded set" groups (Hiebert 1978) and the psychological, cultural, and religious dynamics at work.

3. to discover and develop models of incorporation that can guide us in overcoming these barriers, and

4. to recommend these models of incorporation of converts out of the subculture of street people as defined in this study into existing Christian groups, showing the role of the missionary as culture broker between the two cultures.

The study will also include examination of biblical cases of conversion and inclusion into Christian community as well as historical examples of this phenomenon. Current church growth theory of homogeneous and heterogeneous units will be considered in light of theological and anthropological findings. Current contextual models of intervention will be examined and analyzed. Finally, models will be suggested from the data collected. Existing

theories and models from the interpretive framework will be used to make missiological application to the particular problem under investigation and offer resolution to it with special attention to the role of the missionary as culture broker bridging the gulf between the cultures^{1 2} in question.

The problem is drawn from the situation and sociocultural context of a case in Basel, Switzerland, with attention given to the meanings of Christian conversion and Christian community, and the dynamic process of passing from the former into the latter. The problems and issues examined are those encountered when "centered set" evangelism bumps up against "bounded set" Christian groups or churches into which new converts want to be incorporated. (For a thorough explanation of centered sets and bounded sets see "Interpretive Framework" on page 36.) This conflict seeks resolution by looking at the inevitable institutionalization of all social entities (Berger and Luckmann 1966), the nature and essence of community and how it comes about (Turner 1977) and the nature of Christian community specifically as expressed in the church (Küng 1976:114-124; Meeks 1983:74-110; Dunning 1988:505-538; cf. Oduyoje 1986:138-145; Evans 1992:128-140).

The convert's need for a new reference group points out the necessity of finding new models for incorporation and/or models of *innovation within the Christian groups themselves* so that it is not necessary for the convert to conform to a prescribed, bounded Christian culture in order to find inclusion in the Christian community and recognition by it. It is here that the role of the

missionary as culture broker and agent of change comes to bear upon the problem under investigation. The missionary may serve both as model *of* and model *for* (Geertz 1973:93) mission to the church and, as a participating member of a local church congregation, model *of* and model *for* Christian community to the new convert, thus providing a bridge between the two over which members of the two cultures cross in order to meet, bond, and find community.

Out of this background and problem, then, flow the following research questions.

Research Questions

Question 1: What are the positive and negative aspects of the boundaries of Christian groups which serve to give the groups identity and stability, yet hinder new converts from finding inclusion in the Christian groups?

If, as Berger and Luckmann (1966) insist, boundaries are necessary to help establish and maintain the group's self-identity, how can these be recognized and maintained without hindering socially marginal persons from being incorporated into the Christian group?

Question 2: What are the dynamics at work when "shadow culture" clashes with "cathedral culture" at the stage of incorporation of converts into the Christian community (new reference group)?

Question 3: What elements of incorporation would be included in a model which takes into account the sociological phenomenon of the institutionalization of religion (Berger and Luckmann 1966), yet

allows for flexible and dynamic churches and groups (Hiebert 1978; Kraft 1979)?

Question 4: What models of intervention are currently underway to overcome the barriers between subculture converts and the dominant Christian church culture and how useful are they? Based on my theoretical framework and a review of related literature, these models will be evaluated as to their usefulness.

Question 5: What new wholistic model that is sensitive to both the missiological and the ecclesiological implications of the study can be recommended for addressing the problem?

Question 6: What role does the missionary group play in this model? This question seeks working models of the missionary group as cultural bridge between the cultures of socially marginalized groups and church. It will show that the bridge is, however, not a one way bridge between the two mind-sets but a bridge that allows movement in both directions between the cultures in order for full inclusion, i.e., a welcomed presence and participation with the Christian community, to occur.

Significance of the Research

This research is missiologically significant because it will show the theological and cultural dynamics at work when seekers and converts from street or night culture clash with the dominant cathedral culture at the point of incorporation into the Christian church. It will provide biblical, historical, and anthropological working models which facilitate the difficult transition from the pre-

Christian context to a Christian one. The missiological implications of this study might apply wherever Christian churches already exist and attempt to evangelize marginal groups in their society. In any case, the phenomenon under study occurs where there are “the shadows of cathedrals.”

Delimitations and Generalizability

The study does not attempt to address all situations in every place where cross-cultural encounter occurs when persons convert to Christian faith. It will focus upon eight years (1974-1982) of experience working with the Mitternachtsmission Basel, a para-church, interdenominational faith mission in Basel, Switzerland and on the current experience of the MMB and Christian churches within the city of Basel. This mission’s past and present experience has been one of trying to lead persons from the night culture to faith in Christ and incorporate them into existing churches and fellowship groups of either state church congregations or free churches for the purpose of Christian discipleship and nurture.

If answers can be found to the research questions, the results could significantly benefit other places and situations where there are traditional church institutions which are often in decline.¹³ That decline may be due to the growing cultural distance¹⁴ between church and people from within the culture, or between church and those who belong to subcultures which find themselves at the margins of a dominant Christian church culture. Similar conditions may exist in other parts of western Europe, in eastern Europe, Latin

America, and North America where there are existing historical churches--lands which have a Christian past, but in some ways are more accurately described today as Christo-pagan, post-Christian, or neopagan.

Notes

1 . Names of all persons from the “shadow culture” have been changed for the sake of anonymity and are known to the author. Names of persons from the missionary and church cultures have been retained.

2 . Recently, while researching in Basel, Switzerland, I learned that Andriano, Berthold, Lauro, and Paul also died from drug overdoses or drug related deaths. There may have been others, but these I know about. There were also some young women who had begun to use heroin, but the outcome of those lives are yet unknown to me. However, according to accounts received from mutual friends in Basel, these four never wanted to become part of any Christian groups. Ari (1977) and Theo (1995), at least, were changed by encounter with the Christian message and were both able to overcome early stages of alcohol addictions. Max (1995), without being more specific, said, “Tommy, *Der Wendepunkt* (The Turning Point, the name of the coffee house ministry of the Mitternachtsmission Basel which I established and operated for six and a half years), saved my life. It saved the lives of many of us; we just didn’t recognize it, but it saved our lives.” Although Ari was confirmed just two weeks after his conversion experience in May 1977, he did not become an active part of a church congregation or youth group, even though he did attend with us several city-wide youth events. During my research in 1995 I could not establish contact with Ari. Theo later tried to take part in a church and a house group, but today has no contact with a Christian faith community. Max says he would consider being part of a Christian group if it were tolerant of his appearance and life-style.

3 . In my research interviews among the midnight missionaries (i.e., those persons who minister with the Mitternachtsmission Basel, whether on a full-time or volunteer basis) only three expressed that they had never intended to bring into a church those persons whom they had encountered in the night with a witness to God’s love that could save them from lives of dissipation and self-destruction. For

these few missionaries, these random meetings in the night were considered just that, "one time encounters in the night." They believed it was up to individual converts to choose whom they would associate with, and no pressure was put on them to "join the church." The response of those persons confronted with that gospel was entirely up to those persons. Whether or not they chose to identify bodily with a group of Christians was left up to them. Those Christians bearing witness to their faith in the night, on the streets viewed themselves as "the church on the streets in the night," and this was sufficient to fulfill the Great Commission.

4 . By "street people," "night people," and "milieu" I mean those whom one usually or only encounters on the street, in the night, and in or around the bars and taverns of the central city. These persons may be young or old. They may come from different ethnic European or from non-European backgrounds and diverse socio-economic roots, but the culture which is shared by them is the life of the pubs, taverns, game rooms, and the habit of roving from one to the other in search of social fulfillment and shared meaning. (According to Eames and Goode 1977:262, this social group may be taken as a "unit of analysis" for the purpose of research.) Some of these persons work in the pubs and restaurants, but all of them are part of a distinct subculture group, alienated from more stable and prosperous segments of society and disenfranchised from its commercial, social, and religious institutions.

Many teenage school children may be found among these places late afternoons after school. It is here they establish rapport and sympathies with this distinct social class which is fraught with alcohol and substance abuse and dysfunctional relationships. These associations represent to them an alternative to the upward-striving, middle class of parents and teachers during this crucial time of adolescence and psychological development. By young adulthood many of these teens, whether offspring of migrant workers or indigenous youth, have become firmly entrenched in this stratum of Swiss society--a distinct subcultural group, counter to the predictable, prosperous, parental culture of enduring Swiss institutions such as school, business, industry, and church. The New Zealand missionary-anthropologist, Gerald A. Arbuckle in *Earthing*

the Gospel: An Inculturation Handbook for Pastoral Workers gives a concise description of this phenomenon and suggests what the church's response might be in chapter 8, "Inculturation and youth subculture" (190:130-146). He speaks of a youth subculture that in its own ways protests and resists adult society which includes the mainline churches. They consider the churches "alien to them, uncaring and hypocritical." The youth have their own cultural trappings--"symbols, myths and rituals that people in the subculture cherish, because they give particular meaning and identity to their lives." If an identity with the prevailing culture is not found, many of these youthful cultural traits may be carried over into adulthood.

During field research in Basel, Switzerland in the winter of 1995 I learned that many of the youth who were earlier submerged in that milieu, or at least threatened by it, are now, thirteen years later, solid, blue-collar, working class members of society. Several of these were subjects of my field research interviews and, though they admit being affected by "Christian church culture" and influenced by some form of religious upbringing and instruction, are today still alien to any form of institutional church and from the mainstream of society. Their critique of the "cathedral culture" has provided some valuable insights for this project. Some of them attribute their own "salvation" from a life of drugs and dereliction to experiences they had as youth frequenting the *Wendepunkt* (Turning Point), a coffee bar outreach ministry of the *Mitternachtsmission Basel* which I established and operated from 1974-1982. During that time co-workers and I engaged over 600 youth between the ages of 14 and 25 in personal conversations about life, its meanings, and the good news of God's love as revealed in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

In order to refer to these social groups which are marginal to church and everything which "cathedral culture" represents to them, I choose to refer to the culture shared by these groups as "shadow culture."

5. The difficulty of incorporation of converts from subcultural groups of society appears also to be a topic of growing concern to church leaders and students of mission and church growth. In recent years there have been a number of doctoral dissertations dealing

with this subject. For example: Eric G. Peterson (1990) "Incorporation of Members into the Life of a Multi-Cultural and Multi-Racial Congregation"; Raymond J. Muller (1990) "The Renewal and Growth of a New Zealand Church: St. Michael's, Wellington); Lon Ben Johnston (1988) "Assimilating People Reached through Church Social Work into Congregations in Transitional Communities"; James Villa (1980) "Renewing the Faith Community: A Liturgical-Catechetical Model"; Max E. Brand (1990) "The Development of Strategies for New Member Assimilation".

6 . For more information regarding this phenomenon see the occasional paper (Nr. 42) published by the World Council of Churches (1990) "Migration Today: Current Issues and Christian Responsibility." This entire edition deals with the issue of migrant workers in Europe and the problems they face. See also Karmela Liebkind, ed. (1989), *New Identities in Europe: Immigrant Ancestry and the Ethnic Identity of Youth*.

7 . Though there are neighborhoods with government subsidized housing for low income families, there are no closed ghettos or tenement slums. There do exist, however, ghettos of the mind and slums of the human spirit which cannot be defined by neighborhood boundaries or socio-economic levels of existence.

8 . The parental culture is, according to the psychology of human development (Robert Kegan 1982:133-183), the culture of embeddedness. In addition to the above mentioned phenomena, youth are, during their moral development, in transition somewhere between the impulsive stage (Stage 1 follows infancy and pre-school, corresponding approximately to early childhood through pre-adolescence) and the interpersonal stage (Stage 3 begins with early adulthood, emerging from the stages of embeddedness in the parental culture and the time of role differentiation during Stage 2). This places this particular group in the imperial stage (Stage 2) when these youth are wanting to display self-sufficiency, competence, and role differentiation from parents and the parental culture, the culture of personal embeddedness. This stage of normal human development is what some want to call "teenage rebellion."

9. For a thorough discussion of this phenomenon from the perspective of a former state church pastor see Chapter Five in Wolfram Kopfermann (1990:107-133). In this treatment the author speaks of the problem caused in the minds of church members when religious or theological relativism is espoused by the church. This relativism embraces all religions as equal and valid thus causing confusion and rejection of the church by many of its constituent members who feel that the church stands for nothing and consequently makes no difference for a person's spirituality or eternal destiny. Kopfermann contrasts this pluralism with the New Testament consensus that Christianity is unique and the proclamation of the New Testament church that there is salvation in none other than Jesus Christ. Thus, for Kopfermann at least, today's state church is illusory for many, if not most, of its members who are leaving the state churches in droves. He also explains that it is an illusion for the state church to think it can continue to see itself and to function today as it has in the past. From a church growth perspective both phenomena are described by Johan Lukasse (1990:55-67) when he speaks of "How to Deal with Dead Churches" in Chapter Three.

In a 1989 survey of Basel and agglomeration conducted by church growth researchers Volker Heitz and Wolfgang Simson (1989) it was discovered that out of a population of over 332,000 only 7.82% were actively engaged in any kind of church, fellowship, or Christian parachurch group. From 1970-1988 the Reformed Church lost 50% of its membership, the Roman Catholic Church 40%, the Christian Catholic Church 50%, while the "free church" fellowships grew from 1970-1980 by almost 500%. However, these fellowships still comprise only about 1+% of the total population. The fastest growing group in the population are the so-called "confessionless," i.e., those confessing no church affiliation of any kind. This group now comprises the largest designated group and grew 1970-1988 by 900%. The majority of these leaving the churches are indigenous Swiss between the ages of 20-30. This study also revealed the vast majority of active Christians are from the well-situated middle class of society. Response to the gospel message among working class and socially marginal groups, as well as upper class professional people is

extraordinarily small.

Field research confirms that the attitudes among the milieu and among some working class people are consistent with these reports. Criticisms of churches from these populations range from churches that exhibit tolerance but believe nothing, to churches that hold their convictions so strictly there is no room for any sort of variance or diversity in doctrinal understanding of Scripture and its effect on lifestyle.

10 . Since the time of Constantine, Theodosius, and the Holy Roman Empire, as well as the Reformation with its “two kingdom doctrine” and the increasing secularization of society which followed it, the concept of state church (Staatskirche) as part and parcel of the dominant Christian culture in western Europe must be considered. Everywhere one goes and everywhere one looks in western Europe, whether in village or city, cathedrals are part of the landscape or skyline. This belies a “cathedral culture” in the minds and lives of all, whether conjuring up feelings of good will or bad will. As my research interviews showed, even those who have officially left the church to avoid the state-levied church tax are inquiring how they might now have their children christened, instructed, and confirmed because “es gehoert sich einfach” (it is just the proper thing to do) and parents do not want their children to be discriminated against by other children and others within the culture. For a full discussion of state church in Europe see U. Scheuner (1962:314-316); also H.-R. Müller-Schwefe (1962:1458-1461). For a brief discussion of how nationality and religious ideologies affect identity among immigrant youth see Karmela Liebkind (1989:65-71), *New Identities in Europe: Immigrant Ancestry and the Ethnic Identity of Youth*.

11 . The “free churches” came into existence in opposition to, or as an alternative to, the notion that everyone born in a Christian nation belonged to the state church or folk’s church (Volkskirche), each free church bearing its own doctrinal distinctives and institutional structures. Free churches base their membership on volunteer association and are independent of any state control or special privilege, though today they are founded according to legal guidelines as non-profit associations. In the late Middle Ages and

during the Reformation they were often severely persecuted and oppressed. Today they have attained not only tolerance, but acceptance, legal recognition, and protection and they are now being looked upon by some innovators as the model for the future church paradigm in western Europe due to the decline of both membership and finances in state churches. Among the general population, however, there are many who consider free churches to be sects and cults because they are not necessarily part of the state church. Others in society see them as part of the dominant "Christian church culture." It may be true that in their struggle for survival and recognition by both society and the state churches, they have become so much like the latter in nature that the average member of society can scarcely tell them apart. This has given rise to my use of the term "cathedral culture" for the yet dominate notion of "church" which is pervasive throughout most of western European society. See A. Adam (1958:1110-1113).

12 . I am convinced that the subcultural group identified as "street culture" or "night culture" in Basel, Switzerland is a subculture with permanence and not a counter-culture which dissolves whenever cultural innovation or, as in the case under study, whenever Christian conversion takes place. What is happening on the nighttime streets of Basel has more permanence within the larger society of the Swiss urban center than the protest movements of the 1960s in the U.S.A, France, or West Germany as described by Theodore Roszak (1969) in *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition*. It also carries some positive traits which, if received by the dominant Christian church culture, could help to enliven and revitalize church, such as spontaneity, brutal honesty with keen perception for what is false, "gutsy" transparency and vulnerability (especially among trusted friends). People from this stratum of society, due to the struggle for survival and the necessities of a minimal existence, are often more in touch with the joy and the pain of living than is a comfortable, prosperous middle class which is "in need of nothing."

During research interviews in Basel, Switzerland during January and February 1995 I discovered that there is considerable similarity and overlap in expressed attitudes toward Christian

churches by people from the nighttime milieu and by blue-collar, working class people. Some of the persons interviewed live and move in both realms. These attitudes and life styles have been described by both Gerald A. Arbuckle (1990:130-186) and Tex Sample (1993:17-88). In the case of each group there is, however, the shared experience that both are at the margins of society and thus in the shadows of the dominant Christian church culture.

The phenomenon under current study has been treated also in part in *New Identities in Europe: Immigrant Ancestry and the Ethnic Identity of Youth*, edited by Karmela Liebkind (1990). Further readings regarding social change can be found in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, 18 vols. (1968), especially the articles concerning social cohesion (Vol. 2:542-546), conformity (Vol. 3:253-260), cross pressure (Vol. 3:519-522), homelessness (Vol. 6:494-499), pseudo-kinship (Vol. 8:408-413), human motivation (Vol. 10:514-522). See also "The Poor: Aliens in an Affluent Society: Cross-Cultural Communication," by Jack Daniel (1976:81-90); "Homelessness, affiliation, and skid row," by Howard M. Bahr (1973:17-38); and Tex Sample (1993:9-88).

13 . A church growth study by Heitz and Simson (1989) shows how the state churches in Basel City and Basel Region have declined since 1970. A recent restructure of parishes and personnel in the Reformed Church in Basel City also testifies to the current numerical and financial losses of that church (Evangelisch-Reformierte Kirchgemeinde Kleinbasel 1994). But not only are state churches nation wide (Bittner 1994:7-12) experiencing membership decline, some of the traditional free churches are reporting losses as well. For example, the Swiss Mennonite Churches indicate a 16% decline from 1989-1994 and are currently attempting to understand the reasons for this phenomenon ("Perspektive" 114(9/10) 26 February 1995:34). Some local church congregations report similar negative growth also ("Domino," Gemeindeblatt der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche, Kleinbasel January/February 1996:10).

14 . Brenda E. Brasher (1995:82) gives an interesting "anatomy of culture rupture" that portrays the rift between those who adhere to the paradigm of modernity that holds to the notion of the

“historical modern era marked by a high value accorded to reason and cultural institutions and practices that favor a unified social order” and those whom she describes as postmoderns who are a “pluralistic brood of 20th century techno-infants cloned into existence by accelerating technologies.” This, she maintains, has ruptured U.S. culture causing tensions within churches and denominations between those who hold a more traditional view of the world and social order and those who hold other cultural values. The culture conflict experienced in Basel, Switzerland is, in my opinion, of a different nature. There is no rupture taking place because there has not been any cohesion to begin with. Since the onset of the Constantinian era in church history, there has been a hierarchical power structure within the church that has usually manipulated or neglected the poor, lower classes to the advantage of the ruling class and the emerging middle class. As my research has shown, the church today, which the socially marginalized person encounters at the point of conversion and incorporation, is a middle class culture which has difficulty admitting the economic lower class or the person who holds other cultural values (Cf. Oden 1990; Newbigin 1989, 1991; Bosch 1991:349-362, 477-483 for discussions on modernity, postmodernity, and pluralist society).

CHAPTER 2

Defining the Shadows: Procedures, Methods, and Interpretive Framework

Reflection on the years of experiences I gained living in Basel, Switzerland from 1974-1982 and working with the Mitternachtsmission Basel, an interdenominational outreach ministry among night people, most of whom live on the margins of a very ordered, stable, predominantly middle-class Swiss society, has led to this project. Living and working in that setting required that I move among the shadows of the cathedral culture.

Missiological reflection has helped explain some of the dynamics of that earlier experience. The frustration that I and other co-workers in mission to subculture groups experienced (and, I might add, are still experiencing today) arose when we tried to lead seekers and new converts to faith in Jesus into existing Christian groups and churches where, we hoped, they could find integration into a faith community for making them disciples (Swanson 1989). Repeatedly, at this point of incorporation (Tippett 1977) into the existing Christian church, our efforts were frustrated. Why?

Further research data would be needed to answer that question.

Data Needed

While I collected observations and experiences for eight years, more specific data needed for the study was collected during a 7 week period in January-February 1995 in Basel, Switzerland. It took place among the archives of the Mitternachtsmission Basel (MMB) and through interviews with full-time and volunteer staff of the mission using a semi-structured interview protocol. Their collective number of years of "midnight missionary" work totals 259 years, two of these persons being involved now for 55 years each. Interviews were also held among the clientele of street youth, both Christian believers and non-believers, who had frequented The Turning Point (Der Wendepunkt), a coffee house outreach sponsored by the MMB during 1975-1982.

Also, numerous Christian groups in Basel were interviewed for needed information related to this study using a semi-structured interview protocol. Other spontaneous conversations pertaining to this study topic took place with Christian groups and various individuals. Extensive notes of these interactions have been kept as well as notations on my observations and impressions on the life of the city after a 12 year hiatus.

In addition to these interviews, conversations, and observations I gathered printed data from various sources, such as newspapers, magazines, denominational and congregational church documents, Christian books relating to the subject, and other materials explaining possible models of intervention currently underway by churches and Christian ministries for reaching and

incorporating subcultural groups which are, at best, marginal or, at worst, totally alien to the church's life.

History and Method of the Mitternachtsmission Basel

Archives of the Mitternachtsmission Basel, in Basel, Switzerland, have provided background into the methods and strategic goals of the mission since its inception in 1940. These archives contain the charter of the mission, as well as copies of regular newsletters to friends and supporters and contain accounts of the missionary work as told by full-time and volunteer staff who reflect on their experiences in these letters. Often, personal and numerical results of their evangelistic efforts are included, although I found these to be rather vague. Also found in the archives are annual reports of the mission which contain statistical reporting of mission activities. Most of these accounts are, however, regarding financial matters. The archives do provide information about whether or not the methods and strategies used have been effective in bringing people of the night culture in Basel to a crisis decision of faith and introducing them into existing Christian groups and churches for the purpose of Christian discipling. These archival sources should also reveal whether the approach of the Mitternachtsmission Basel to its task of evangelism and integration of converts into Christian groups has ever changed or varied during the course of its history, and demonstrate whether these changes have proved effective.

Current Mission Approach of the MMB

Personal interviews with both full time Midnight Missionaries and volunteer co-workers of the Mission, some of whom have been involved with the MMB from its beginning, shed further light on this subject.

From these persons I sought answers to the research questions by use of the semi-structured Missionary Interview Protocol (MIP) found in Appendix 1.

Other Sample Population Groups

Further populations which were interviewed, using a semi-structured interview protocol (also found in Appendix 1), were:

1. Street people from the night "milieu" in Basel and previous visitors at *Der Wendepunkt*:¹

a. who have heard the gospel, but have not responded positively. This population provides data used to determine the manner in which street persons hear the gospel and their reasons for rejecting it, with particular reference to perceived barriers to the Christian groups and churches. Did conditions placed upon the seeker/convert by the Christian group influence the seeker's/convert's decision to reject the gospel?

b. who have heard the gospel, responded positively, but have not found incorporation into a Christian community. This group should also provide information concerning the convert's perception of any potential barriers which discourage integration of the new convert from a marginal cultural group into the Christian group.

c. who were successfully incorporated into existing Christian groups or churches. How did incorporation occur for these persons? What, if any, barriers had to be overcome and what expectations were met in order to find acceptance from the group?

2. Christian groups in Basel, including some churches, that are willing to receive new converts from marginal cultural groups, attempting to determine on what basis or under what conditions those new converts are successfully, or unsuccessfully, received into the group. By what means and with what expectations does incorporation occur with these groups, whether successful or not?

Methodology

From these groups I collected data according to the interview protocols which follow. These data have been described and analyzed in Chapter Four according to the theoretical framework of this project. The research findings are reported using an explanatory, iterative style according to the methods laid out by Robert K. Yin (1989:84-152).

Research has consisted of a search for information about methods and results of evangelization and incorporation from the archives of the Mitternachtsmission Basel with special attention given to the role of the missionary group as culture broker between marginal cultures and churches. Information has been sought from street people, both Christians and non-Christians, as well as from Christian church groups by means of a semi-structured personal interview protocol.

From the findings I look for points of agreement and disagreement about why persons from socially marginal cultures can or cannot be successfully incorporated into already established Christian groups. I also seek to understand the role of the missionary (or missionary group) in this process.

Data Collection Procedures

The subjects interviewed were, if possible, contacted either directly by letter, through Christian acquaintances in Basel, Switzerland, or through the network of friends and clients of the Mitternachtsmission Basel as well as through other known Christian groups and churches in Basel. Some small amount of data has been requested by letter following my personal on-site research in Basel with some worthwhile response. The cooperation of these persons and groups has been very helpful.

Due to the nature of part of the sample population, some contacts and interviews had to be made spontaneously, but they proved to be successful. Help also came via the Mitternachtsmission Basel which is constantly in contact with persons from the night culture of Basel, but those persons are often shy, and suspect of "strangers," and consequently not many of these were reached. The current full time workers of the mission were somewhat reluctant to help me find access to their clientele for fear those persons might be frightened away or intimidated by me, thus jeopardizing their relationship with those persons. However, friends and acquaintances from my own sojourn in Basel from 1974-1982 were pleased to be

interviewed and provided invaluable information and insights.

After research in Mitternachtsmission archives at Socinstrasse 13 in Basel, Switzerland, 52 interviews were conducted using my interview protocols. Five churches, three youth works, two parachurch missionary works, and one Christian social work have been examined as possible models of intervention.

In addition, an interview with a Christian psychiatrist who has been actively involved with these issues for over 20 years and who often advises Christian works in matters of mental health and spiritual life, conversations with a member of the church synod of the *Evangelisch-reformierte Kirche (ERK) Basel-Stadt*, and a telephone interview with an indigenous missionary with OC International in Germany took place. Numerous other spontaneous and informal conversations, both group and individual, were held.

During my seven weeks of research in Basel, I attended, observed, and notated ten different worship services which included a Mennonite church, three Swiss Reformed churches, two Methodist churches, a newly-formed independent Evangelical church, a city-wide interchurch praise service, a multi-lingual service for immigrants and refugees, and an ecumenical early morning prayer service. The weeks in Basel allowed me to reflect on eight years of living in Basel and working with the Mitternachtsmission and Der Wendepunkt. During the course of 6 1/2 years of Der Wendepunkt's operation, co-workers and I engaged in conversations about matters of faith with over 600 youth between the ages of 14-25, often including many of them in short devotions, Bible study groups, small

house groups, retreats, and city-wide youth rallies.

All of these sources and experiences provide impressions, data, and reflections for this research project.

The purpose of these interviews was to determine the methods by which street persons hear the gospel and their reasons for accepting or rejecting it with reference to perceived barriers to the Christian groups and churches. Further, I wanted to discover the reasons why those who accept the gospel, frequently do not find incorporation into meaningful Christian community. What would it take for them to enter into a corporate Christian experience? Or how did those few who made the transition from old to new reference group do so?

From among the Christian groups and churches I wanted to learn under what conditions new converts, especially those from the milieu, are admitted into the Christian group and what might be required of them once they are admitted.

I wanted to identify and interview those who might have functioned as intermediaries between marginal groups and the Christian communities. Also to be determined was how these persons carried out their mission as a bridge between the two groups.

Instrumentation

The semi-structured interview protocols used to investigate my three sample population groups are reproduced in Appendix 1. The words used in response to my inquiries are those of the persons

interviewed and the questions are open-ended in order to allow for the most personal, honest, open response possible, although this has made interpretation and analysis of the findings more difficult and complex. As a result I sometimes report more from the findings than may be absolutely necessary, but it is my judgment that this provides a more thorough picture of the responses in hopes that the true personal thoughts and feelings of the persons I interviewed become obvious without being preponderate.

The Personal Interview Protocol (PIP) was used in interviews of persons from *Der Wendepunkt* and the shadow culture. Leaders and participants in churches, parachurch ministries, and youth groups responded to the Group Interview Protocol (GIP).

Summary of Methodology

In short, I collected data about the dynamics of the encounters between persons from marginal social groups who have been evangelized, usually in one-on-one encounters, by inviting persons to declare allegiance to Jesus of Nazareth, and the attitudes of Christian youth groups and churches on the other, which often focus on confessional or doctrinal distinctives as preconditions to faith, forgiveness, and participation in Christian community. My questions explore this phenomenon from the different perspectives of the varying groups--including: the Mitternachtsmission Basel specifically; persons from the subculture whether they have rejected the gospel, accepted the gospel but find no entry into a Christian group, or find entry and acceptance in a Christian group; and from Christian youth

groups and churches themselves. I want to identify the boundaries, assuming they do exist, which hinder incorporation of converts from subcultural groups into “Christian church cultures” and implement missiological models and make recommendations for overcoming or penetrating these barriers.

Interpretive Framework

The theory used for my interpretation of data is taken from mathematic’s “set theory” (Zadeh 1965) as applied to Christian mission by anthropologist Paul G. Hiebert (1978).

Hiebert’s concept of “centered sets” and “bounded sets” explains precisely what I and my co-workers experienced.² As we attempted to lead seekers and new Christian converts out of the pre-Christian street culture of Basel, Switzerland into nurturing, relevant Christian faith communities for the purpose of growth in Christian discipleship, we experienced the most difficult and frustrating aspect in our mission. According to recent evidence from the Mitternachtsmission Basel (“Freundesbrief,” February 1994:5; May 1995:3, 7 ; August 1995:11) this continues to be a cause of concern and prayer. Based on my experience with the Mitternachtsmission Basel from 1974-1982 and on what I have since learned, this has always been a difficulty with which the mission has wrestled. Hiebert’s model helps explain this phenomenon in the following way.

Drawing upon set theory from the field of mathematics to explain the phenomenon of “centered sets” and “bounded sets,” with reference to “fuzzy set” theory demonstrated by L. A. Zadeh (1965),

Hiebert applies the theory to Christian mission, conversion, and inclusion.

Zadeh speaks of “a class of objects with a continuum of grades of membership.” Zadeh states further, “More often than not, the classes of objects encountered in the real physical world do not have precisely defined criteria of membership” (1965:338). Hiebert identifies two kinds of sets among Christians. First, there are “centered sets” that are defined and identified by their center. In the case of Christian faith the center is the rule of God personified in Jesus of Nazareth, Son of God, and the saving, liberating events of his cross and resurrection, leaving the edges or boundaries of the set “fuzzy” or irregular. “Bounded sets” on the other hand are defined and recognized by boundaries which are rigidly fixed by the Christian social group and may consist of affirming particular doctrinal understandings of Christian Scripture, creeds, or certain behaviors considered by the group to be particularly Christian. This is true of both state churches and free churches, although those boundaries may be fixed at different places in some categories, but may be very similar or identical at the cultural level. Hiebert calls these criteria “cognitive categories” [of dogma] or of abiding by the cultural mores or norms established by the group.

The criterion for inclusion in the centered set is turning toward and moving in the direction of the center regardless of one’s starting point or where one is situated along a line from starting point to center. Inclusion in the bounded set is determined by one’s recognizing, affirming, and crossing over pre-fixed, distinct

boundaries which have been determined by the group and which define the group's identity.³ For a graphic illustration of this model see Figure 2.

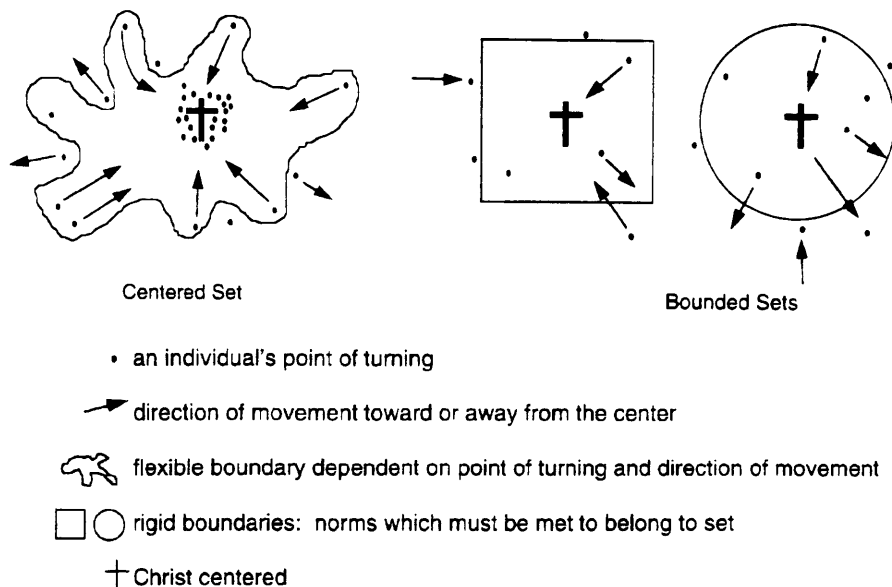


Figure 2

Hiebert's (1978) model of "bounded set" and "centered set" Christianity

According to the centered set from this theory, conversion occurs when the good news of the reign of God through Jesus Christ is

proclaimed and hearers respond to that gospel by believing it and changing their allegiance from previous gods to Jesus Christ as Lord, according to the understanding of Jesus Christ they have, however limited that understanding may be. It is a question of a turning of the heart and mind, declaring allegiance to Jesus Christ, and beginning to live life in a "Christ-ward direction" or with an orientation toward Christ. For Hiebert, this new orientation includes a person or persons into the Christian faith community.

However, Hiebert recognizes that most Christian groups may be categorized as bounded sets, i.e., the focus of the group is on the boundaries which make it distinct and give it self-identity. This makes it therefore very important to that group that any new persons seeking to be a part of that group affirm those boundaries and fulfill any prescribed cognitive or behavioral categories established by the group in order to join it. These boundaries, Hiebert maintains, are often only cultural rather than theological and are therefore without scriptural warrant. These boundaries, when rigidly upheld by the group, prove to be barriers to incorporation of the new convert into the community. If the Christian group or church does not lower these barriers or allow the boundaries to flex and include the one who has turned and begun to move toward the center, which is Jesus Christ, the new convert does not find inclusion in the Christian community that is crucial for identity, further growth, and discipleship and, therefore, is in danger of reverting to the old reference group. (See Figure 1, p. 6)

This theory provides not only an explanation for what we were

experiencing in Basel, but also raises several questions which have given rise to this study. (See the Research Questions, p. 11)

Because this theoretical framework deals with various areas of emphasis, such as center, conversion, culture, and inclusion in Christian faith community, literature and models will be reviewed from four related, but distinct disciplines: biblical studies/theology, anthropology/sociology, church history, church growth.

In order to trace the difficult passage from Christian conversion to incorporation into Christian community, to understand the dynamics and difficulties of that process, and to find ways to overcome existing barriers and answer my research questions, the following concepts and models will be examined:

1. Biblical and theological studies
 - on the kingdom of God,
 - on conversion and incorporation, and
 - on kingdom communities and churches;
2. Cultural anthropology and sociology
 - on conversion as dynamic process of innovations,
 - on the social phenomenon of institutionalization,
 - on liminality in ritual process,
 - on revitalization of institutions, and
 - on culture brokers and change agents;
3. Church growth considerations
 - on homogeneous and heterogeneous units, and
 - on assimilating new members.

Notes

1 . Commissioned by the Mitternachtsmission Basel I opened *Der Wendepunkt* (The Turning Point) in August 1975. It was a coffee house gathering place for street youth who would come there after school and during the evening hours. In a friendly, conversational manner I and my co-workers shared the Christian message with our guests. *Der Wendepunkt* remained open for 6 1/2 years. During that time it was frequented by over 600 youth. After it was closed a youth group from a free church attempted to operate it under the name *Café Cactus*. This attempt was short-lived. Soon the rooms were eliminated during a remodelling by the owners of the building. One of the members of the youth group that operated *Café Cactus* is now the state church pastor of *Offene Kirche Elisabethen* in Basel, an innovative city-church that is attempting to include socially marginalized groups in dialogue with the church. This model of missionary church will be explained in detail in chapter 6.

2 . For a graphic depiction of this concept, see Figure 2, p. ?. Proclamation of the gospel as recorded in the book of Acts contains two essential components, i.e., repentance and acceptance of Jesus as God's Christ who brings God's reign (kingdom of God) to bear upon human existence, as attested to by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead (Acts 1:3, 20-22; 2:29-36; 4:10-12 et al.). Evangelism in the New Testament centers around this. Michael Green (1970) and William J. Abraham (1989) give thorough treatments of this subject.

3 . In a doctoral dissertation at Fuller Theological Seminary entitled "Developing A Contextualized Church As A Bridge to Christianity in Japan," Mitsuo Fukuda (1992:182-187) argues there are dangers to a centered, fuzzy set approach to conversion and Christian identification without distinct moral and doctrinal boundaries, which, he argues, may lead to dual allegiance to gods (kami) and to Christ at the same time. On the other hand, David Teeter (1990) in "Dynamic Churches for Tentative Muslim Believers" argues for a conversion process which allows that a Muslim may in

many respects remain “Muslim” while pledging allegiance to Jesus Christ. Identification for Teeter is not as culturally and doctrinally distinct nor necessary as in bounded set thinking. It may also be asked if this is not, at least in part, what Jesus meant when he said that “whoever is not against us is for us” (Mark 9:40) and also in his teaching on the wheat and the tares (Matthew 13:24-30).

CHAPTER 3

Illuminating the Shadows: Review of the Literature

Because the theoretical framework of “centered sets” deals with the entire process of conversion from advocacy to inclusion in Christian community relationships, literature from several fields must be reviewed in order to illuminate the various aspects of the full conversion process as interpreted by set theory (Tippett 1977; Hiebert 1978).

Centered set theory, when applied to cross-cultural Christian mission, includes: 1. definition of the center, 2. point of turning (conversion, change of allegiance), 3. direction of movement (orientation), and 4. boundaries of inclusion or membership in the set that help define the socio-cultural make-up of Christian communities which reflect the kingdom of God as proclaimed and portrayed by Jesus.

Since these areas of study are interactive with one another and can scarcely be held apart, this review of literature from those fields is interactive in its design and structure, but all of them are included in the review.

Biblical and Theological Perspectives

It is my primary assumption that Jesus of Nazareth, sent by God into the world in order to carry out the *missio Dei* and in order that the world might be saved by and through him, is “model *of*” and “model *for*” mission (Geertz 1973:93-94; cf. John Stott 1995:54-55).² The testimonies from Scripture that are central to this project are, first, those about the preaching of the kingdom of God and, second, those shedding light on the nature of that kingdom and the social dynamics of Christian communities as preached and practiced by Jesus, his disciples, and the early churches (Matthew 4:17; 9:35; 24:14; Mark 1:15; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 17:21; Acts 1:3; 8:1; 14:22; 28:31; Romans 14:17; et al.). These, too, will be viewed as “models of and models for” missionaries and communities of that same kingdom which was brought near in the person of Jesus as understood and practiced by his first disciples (Matthew 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; Mark 6:7-13; Luke 4:16-21). God’s reign remains with us in its present and future realities through the abiding presence of Jesus with his disciples (Matthew 1:23; 28:20; John 1:14; Romans 1:1-6).

On Kingdom Of God

What appears to be central, or core, to the message proclaimed by Jesus’ forerunner John, Jesus himself, the disciples sent out by Jesus, and the earliest faith community after the resurrection of Jesus, is the gospel of the kingdom or rule of God (Matthew 3:2; 4:17; 9:35; 10:7; 16:19; 24:14; Mark 1:15; 4:11, 26, 30; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 6:20; 9:2; Acts 1:3; 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31; Romans 14:17; 1

Corinthians 4:20; Colossians 4:11; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; 2 Thessalonians 1:5; et al.). Based on the biblical testimony that Jesus and the apostles proclaimed repentance and the kingdom of God, and based on the evidence of what the earliest church understood the good news of the kingdom to include, it is my premise that the themes of justification, atonement, holy living, and community of faith are part and parcel of the reign of God. How could one otherwise hope to see God's justice, mercy, and righteousness in this age or in the age to come?

Although Jesus did not give a concise definition of kingdom of God, he did illustrate the kingdom of God in story and event. As E. Stanley Jones argued in 1940, kingdom of God is more than metaphor, more than figure of speech, more than manner of speaking. It is "realism" (Jones 1940). To that proclamation with presence and power, people responded in faith, changing allegiance from gods and law to God and grace, living with a Christ-ward orientation, and forming themselves into faith communities under the name of Christ. Nor is the church an interim solution to Jesus' otherwise thwarted effort to usher in God's reign on earth in his day, thus relegating the kingdom of God to a future eschatological view which shaped Jesus' ethical teaching for the present (Schweitzer 1922). But rather churches are the communities of faith in the resurrected Christ that live in the reality of God's present *and* future reign. These churches reflect the nature and values of God's kingdom, and are themselves engaged in prayer for the kingdom to come--"your kingdom come"-- and in work that it be fulfilled--"your

will be done"--on earth, in our time so that we may hear the good news, "The kingdom is among you."³

In fourteen essays from as many authors, Wendell Willis (1987) delivers a wide-ranging discussion of this topic among twentieth-century theologians in *The Kingdom of God in 20th-Century Interpretation*. Various understandings of the kingdom of God are explored. These range from the early twentieth-century discoveries of eschatological interpretations of the kingdom, to linguistic approaches, Old Testament concepts, intertestamental understandings, the Gospels' representation of God's rule, the Luke-Acts view of God's reign, the kingdom of God in John's gospel and by the Apostle Paul, as well as the notion of kingdom of God in patristic literature.

The most helpful among these essays is by Eldon Jay Epp (1987:35-52), "Mediating Approaches to the Kingdom: Werner Georg Kümmel and George Eldon Ladd." In this essay, contrasted to previous representations of the kingdom's coming and time of its coming, both Kümmel (1956) and Ladd (1974) show that the kingdom of God and heaven is not *either* now, in the first century present, *or* at the end of human history in the future (whatever one's starting point may be); but rather the kingdom of God is *both* now *and* future, really breaking into human history as promise and hope in the person and practice of Jesus Christ of Nazareth and in those who follow him. The kingdom of God finds its ultimate fulfillment in the parousia at the end of time when God's reign is completely recognized by all of creation.

Kümmel reaches a “consensus” understanding of kingdom (Epp 1987:39) arguing that the promise of God’s kingdom on earth is fulfilled in Jesus and promised to be “fully” fulfilled in the future. Ladd (1974:74-75) arrives at his “biblical realism” (Epp 1987:46) by also presenting the view that the rule of God is both now and not yet. It is the church of Jesus Christ that holds this realization of God’s kingdom in tension. Not that the church is equivalent to the kingdom, but that it is reflective of the kingdom and prays and works faithfully and fervently for the kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10). How may this all be understood today in the shadow of cathedrals?

The kingdom of God, however, is not contained in theological ideas or ecclesiastical offices and institutions, but rather it is expressed relationally--through relationships with God, with the One God has sent, and with others who recognize God’s reign and those who do not, but are nonetheless subject to God as part of God’s creation.

Donald B. Kraybill’s (1990) social understanding of “kingdom of God” as preached by Jesus and the apostles, is germane to the analysis of data gathered for this project. This pastor-sociologist provides insights into Jesus’ call to *The Upside-Down Kingdom*, which “favors those suffering at society’s margins” (back cover) and the social dynamics at work within Christian faith communities striving toward God’s rule in life on earth.

According to Kraybill, Jesus introduced into the world the kingdom of God both in word and deed. By doing so he proclaimed

and practiced a radically different view of human behavior and relationships. The Old Testament prophecy of Jesus' coming, as reiterated by his prophet-cousin John, foretold that all of life's relationships would change under the new reign of God embodied in Jesus, God's Messiah.

The way of the Lord would fill the valleys, lower the mountains, straighten the crooked paths, and smooth the rough places for humans, and in doing so reveal the salvation of God to people. Jesus' coming among us was a leveling of pyramidal, hierarchical structures in religion, politics, and economics, according to Kraybill.

He traces the life of Jesus from his birth to the empowering of his church through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and shows how radically different Jesus and his intentions for the people of God were in contrast to the accepted religious, cultural, social, and political norms of his day.

Commonly held current rationalizations about why the Jesus style should not apply and could not work in our day are shown by Kraybill to be fallacious. He argues they are not culturally and historically bound, nor are they to be spiritualized for our time and age. Rather, Jesus resisted the temptation to introduce God's kingdom by means of political, religious, or economic power as portrayed by the wilderness temptations of Jesus by Satan. Contrary to the "right side-up" kingdoms of his day Jesus went against the false and self-serving standards of political, religious, and economic exploiters by identifying with and becoming servant to the weak and

vulnerable, scorned, and outcast of society--those at the margins of the political, economic, and religious institutions. He radically lived out the premise that the "well" do not need a physician, but rather the sick, hurting, exploited, and excluded ones, indiscriminate of how they got that way, whether through their own sins or the sins of others. In turn, the mark of a true disciple of Jesus is to follow him--both in word and deed.

Kraybill gives numerous examples of "reasonable" arguments, "scriptural" interpretations, and "pious" traditions why Jesus' way of living would not work today. But Jesus' way is different, radically different. It is as different as the Wholly Other, Holy God is different from sinful humans. And if Christians today are serious about following Jesus they, too, will be different, willing to go against the status quo and accepted norms of culture and society where necessary, even against the religious structures, in order to be a part of God's kingdom--the upside-down kingdom, as Kraybill portrays it.

The ultimate "inverted" symbols of Jesus' reign and service are the towel and basin, the cross, and the empty tomb. These represent for his followers the model for their life and mission--service, self-denial, and victory over what in the definition of non-kingdom of God thinking is failure and defeat. Though Kraybill limits his portrayal of Jesus to the Gospels, it is also consistent with the apostle Paul's words in Philippians 2:7 that in his coming into the world Jesus "emptied (*kenosis*)⁴ himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death--even

death on a cross” (NRSV). As Kraybill maintains, such an attitude of generosity, Jubilee, mercy, and compassion mark the new community of God. Such living will “turn the world upside down because we know there is another King named Jesus” (1990:272). This is true witness to the kingdom of God in the world, “on earth as it is in heaven.”

Kraybill provides the biblical and theological interpretation for my application of “kingdom of God” to this project and the model of Jesus as portrayed by Kraybill will be reflected in those churches which reflect the essence of that kingdom on earth.⁵ Kingdom of God is not an utopian ideal or futuristic rule of God. It is not “pie in the sky when I die by and by.” As Kraybill has argued, it is not to be spiritualized away just because it is difficult in this world. Kingdom of God is realizable, now and future (Kümmel 1956), biblically realistic (Ladd 1974). Just as Jesus said, it is near; it is in our midst; it is among us. Therefore, we can pray for it to come fully on earth, during our life time, just as it has fully come in heaven. But what does it look like when it does come? Does it look any different now than it did when the kingdom of God came among us in the person of Jesus of Nazareth?⁶

In a 1991 book *Models of the Kingdom*, Howard A. Snyder has given eight models to which some have adhered throughout Christian history and assesses these models showing that the reign of God may be experienced in a number of ways which are not exclusive of one another, but, however, may cause tension with one another.

First, to experience the kingdom of God is to experience hope

for the future, hope for a better world to come “on earth as it is in heaven,” indeed hope for a “new heaven and a new earth.” For this model the rule of God is both historical and eschatological, but its scope is weakened historically by spiritualizing the present and projecting fulfillment into a non-historical or temporally altered future.

Second, as expressed in, for example, Monasticism and Pietism, the kingdom of God is primarily an inner spiritual experience resulting in strong tendencies toward individualism. Often this model has taken a low view of the physical body and material world within God’s creation. This model, according to Snyder, “can undercut the transforming power of the kingdom both in the church and in society” (1991:35).

In the third instance, the kingdom has often been understood as a “mystical communion” of saints from all ages and otherwise known as “the Heavenly Kingdom” in which presently living saints participate together with the already departed saints (1991:56). This model, too, has little social impact on the present order since it is largely spiritual and futuristic, other worldly.

Perhaps the most problematic model, according to Snyder, is the kingdom as institutional church, a model which has historically been assumed by many, whether the church is seen as Jesus’ intentionally formed embodiment of God’s kingdom or as interim solution to a diverted or frustrated attempt by him to bring God’s rule to earth. Snyder has called this the “Ecclesiastical Kingdom model” (1991:67). Assuming this model, the church loses its

prophetic vision, its dynamic as a movement, and views itself triumphalistically and hierarchically both in internal structure and in relationship to creation, as Snyder points out (1991:74). This model does, however, provide stability in society and a driving force for mission in the world. There is rarely enough tension between our identity as the church of Christ and our longing for the kingdom of God when this model is adopted and there is the danger that the church become comfortable and presumptuous about itself.

Most critical of the institutional model of the church is the “kingdom as countersystem” or the “Subversive Kingdom” (1991:77). This model is marked especially by its prophetic character, its Christocentric ethics, its countercultural nature in faithfulness to Jesus Christ, and its pacifistic stance and suffering-servant attitude (1991:77-79). This model might readily be identified among Mennonites, Moravian missionaries, and other restorationist movements within the church throughout its history, even Augustine himself. Its mark is radical discipleship, regardless of what society or the established church says or does, and calls Christians to be as Jesus was, say what Jesus said, do what Jesus did, and suffer the consequences as Jesus suffered. This model is more consistent with the model of God’s “upside-down kingdom” portrayed by Donald Kraybill and discussed above. Both Kraybill’s model of the “upside-down kingdom” as well as Snyder’s “Subversive Kingdom” model create tension with several other prevailing views. These two models approximate H. Richard Niebuhr’s (1951) model of Christ against culture.⁷ Snyder also admits this to be the attitude of the

church during at least its first two centuries and found subsequently in reformation movements in the post-Constantinian era of the church's history. Though it may appear that this model of the kingdom has a dim view of human culture, political process, or institutional churches, it does represent a prophetic voice to them all. If God's prophetic voices from Hebrew and Christian Scripture can be taken as model of and model for life and mission, including Jesus and his first followers who interpret his life and teachings in their own way of living, then this model of God's reign has considerable biblical support (1991:82-85).

Though possessing some similarities but displaying stark differences as well, Snyder's models six, seven, and eight describe the kingdom as political state, christianized culture, and earthly utopia, all which have historical (some recent) examples ranging from Calvin's Geneva to forms of German Pietism to Walden's pond (1991:86-120).

All of the models identified by Snyder have some aspect of truth, but each chooses one dimension of the kingdom over the other thus limiting its usefulness as a model. But then that is the nature of models. If, as Snyder states,

we take Scripture seriously, we must affirm that the kingdom is *both* heavenly and earthly; *both* present and future; *both* individual and social. That is the nature of God's reign because of who God is and because of the nature of the created order. The kingdom comes *both* by divine and human action, yet without compromising God's sovereignty. The kingdom comes gradually, but there are those crisis points, those critical moments of powerful inbreaking or revelation of the kingdom.

The Bible consistently presents the day of the final coming of the Son of Man as the crowning cataclysm. Finally (as we have seen), the kingdom is not the church but is closely linked with the church because Jesus Christ, the one under whose sovereignty all creation is being gathered together, is also Head of the church (Ephesians. 1:9-23). The church, to the degree that it is faithful to Jesus Christ, is the first fruits of the kingdom, of the general reconciliation God is bringing to fullness. (1991:121)

In his final chapter, "Building Kingdom Communities Today" (1991:145-156), Snyder raises a question important to this study: What will those kingdom communities look like in today's world? How will they function in worship and witness to the world? Snyder proposes ten characteristics of God's kingdom which are manifest in those communities that reflect the rule of God. They are:

1. God reigns over all things in heaven and on earth.
2. Jesus Christ is the decisive inbreaking of God's kingdom into human history.
3. The kingdom of God is historical.
4. God's kingdom is, and promises, a new social order.
5. It is opposed by the kingdom of Satan, whether personal or systemic.
6. Church is not the kingdom, but is a kingdom community.
7. Kingdom participation requires repentance, faith, and obedience.
8. It is a kingdom of grace more than law.
9. The life of the kingdom is found in Jesus' example and teaching.
10. The kingdom comes by the working of God's Spirit, but by human faith and obedience as well.

Is it not conceivable and expectant that wherever God's reign is found today, these same characteristics will be manifest?

On Conversion and Incorporation

Missionary anthropologist, Alan R. Tippett in “Conversion as a Dynamic Process in Christian Mission,” (1977) provides a model which I have used as a track along which I traveled in this project. I refer frequently to this illustration as I trace the passage from conversion to incorporation. In the end, other models will be overlaid on it to suggest a synthesis of models which, I believe, along with new insights which are gained by several historical and contemporary models of intervention, could offer resolution to the challenges of incorporation.

Old Context(Pagan)

New Context (Christian)

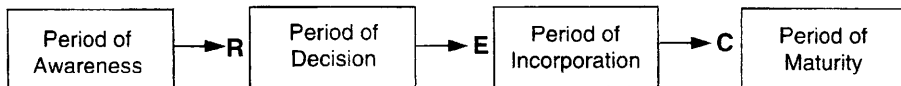


Figure 3

Conversion as a dynamic process according to Tippett (1977)

Tippett points out that this “model is purely processual, measuring *periods* and *points*,” not length of time of any given period (1977:207).

To understand the nature and dynamics of our emerging dilemma, however, a scriptural definition of Christian conversion is

helpful. As the Willowbank Report (1978:19) of the Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization states, "The radical nature of conversion to Jesus Christ needs to be reaffirmed in the contemporary church." What is meant by Christian conversion? "The words used in Scripture to describe what we call 'Christian conversion' and 'regeneration' indicate the idea of turning or changing one's course of action, direction, attitude and relationship" (Kasdorf 1980:55). Kasdorf continues by observing that conversion contains both "motional and emotional qualities" and with the study of "these and other conversion words, it becomes evident that they are interrelated" (1980:57).

As Tippet's model shows, encounter (E), which concludes the period of decision-making, begins a new period, i.e., the period of incorporation. What does that mean?

Christian conversion involves, as a crucial element of that conversion, trust comprised of confessing Jesus as Lord, and believing that God raised him from the dead (Romans 10:9-10). This expresses a "new relationship and a change of allegiance from the former self-life to a life of discipleship under the lordship of the risen Christ" (Kasdorf 1980:57).

Repentance (*metanoia*) and turning, i.e., conversion (*epistrepho*) are placed in direct relation to each other accompanied by deeds which evidence that turning (Acts 3:19; 26:20; Tippet 1977:213). In other instances, believing and turning (conversion) and "repentance to God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" comprise Christian conversion (Acts 11:21; 20:21). The apostle John describes

the elements of conversion as believing in Christ's name, being born of God, and receiving Jesus into one's life (John 1:12; 3:16-17; 6:37). These are all essential to the experience of Christian conversion and, as Kasdorf has said, "therein lies the Christological basis of a New Testament theology of conversion" (1980:57). "Mere assent to a creed, even if supplemented by good works, is no substitute for conversion," he states further (1980:144; cf. Hiebert 1978).

The Lausanne Theology and Education Group meeting at Willowbank states in its report, however, that "too often we have thought of conversion as [merely] a crisis, instead of a process as well; or we have viewed conversion as a largely private experience, forgetting its consequent public and social responsibilities" (1978:19). Not only must one be converted, i.e., declare or demonstrate a change of allegiance and a change of direction to move toward the Lord Jesus Christ with the intention of doing his will; but conversion also entails, as part of the "dynamic process of conversion," incorporation into Christian community, a new context (Tippett 1977:219; Hiebert 1978).

Alan Tippett's model of the conversion process (1977:219) moves along a continuum beginning from old context (pagan) through a period of awareness to the point of realization (R). This is followed by a period of decision-making which leads to crisis and the point of encounter (E) or climax of decision.

Through this climax of decision (if the "new news" is accepted and believed) one enters into a period of incorporation which involves several things. One becomes familiar with new norms for

living. New identity is found as a child of God, loved and accepted by God and by oneself. This period is also one of instruction and training in the Christian faith. Once these have occurred the convert should be ready for incorporation and full recognition of the group by some act or rite of incorporation. Coming from a pagan context that act is usually Christian baptism. The period of incorporation brings the convert into a new context and, once incorporation has transpired, the new believer should move on to confirmation (which Tippett equates with Wesley's teaching of sanctification) leading to Christian maturity (1977:208-219).

According to Tippett's model the conversion process is not complete when persons merely demonstrate "conversion out of something, but they must at the same time enter into something else" (1977:218). As Kasdorf points out "individualism and Christian conversion exclude each other" (1980:106). It is a group, or corporate, experience. Using the analogy of a human body with many essential member parts in a relation of interdependence to one another, the apostle Paul says that we are all baptized [initiated, incorporated] into one body [the church] (1 Corinthians. 12:12-28).

To summarize "Conversion as a Dynamic Process in Christian Mission" (Tippett 1977:203-221): process-conversion comes about as a result of *direct advocacy* when the Christian message is communicated during a period of awareness, at the point of realization (R), during the period of decision-making, and at the point of encounter (E) or crisis. This is both true for an individual and for a group engaged in this process (1977:212). There comes a point of

realization (R) when the person or group realizes that acceptance or rejection of the communication and “passage from the old context to the new is not merely an idea,” but “[i]t is a real possibility” (1977:212-213). The period of decision-making follows.

During the period of decision, the message which has been heard and realized becomes meaningful, thus leading to a point of encounter, at which point the message is accepted or rejected. This point of encounter Tippet also calls the crisis moment (1977:213).

This decision surely involves a crisis, a struggle with whether to continue in the old context or to separate from it. It brings a change in allegiance by turning toward Christ and moving in a new direction in life. The convert is ready also to enter a new context with new life orientations according to the Holy Spirit as informed by Scripture.

According to our guiding model, Tippet’s dynamic process in conversion, if a person rejects the gospel message of new life orientation in Christ, that person continues in the old pagan context. If, on the other hand, a person accepts the good news at the point of encounter, then separation from the pagan context begins and is accompanied by some ocular demonstration of that intention (1977:213; cf. Acts 8:26-38; verse 37, which is contained in some ancient manuscripts and not in others, is non-consequential in view of Matthew 10:32, Luke 12:8, Romans 10:9-10). By comparison with Hiebert’s concept, this would be the point of turning, changing allegiance and beginning life-movement in a new direction. Furthermore, according to Hiebert (1978:28), it is at this point,

Tippett's point of encounter, that a person becomes a Christian and is included in the "Christian set." The convert has crossed that invisible boundary from darkness to light, from pagan in allegiance to Christian. Whether and by what conditions the Christian group recognizes and acknowledges this change of allegiance is precisely the issue in this study. For many Christian groups it is not until point C, i.e., initiation or confirmation, on Tippett's model that a person is accepted into full membership in the group. What at this point of the continuum creates barriers to inclusion in the Christian set, preventing the new convert from entering into a new context for living out allegiance to Jesus Christ?

Kasdorf (1980:65-81) identifies three types of conversion: Type A, the volitional and gradual (which seems consistent with Tippett's conversion as a dynamic process); Type B, the sudden self-surrender whereby the entire process of conversion takes place in an instant at a moment of crisis. These two types Kasdorf takes from William James (1905). Kasdorf suggests a third type, Type C, gleaned from Abraham Maslow (1964) which Maslow calls "peak experiences."

Whichever type of conversion one takes as normative, if that is possible or even necessary (there do seem to be varieties of religious experience in the book of Acts as the gospel of the kingdom of God encountered persons, some of whom had long periods of awareness and decision-making, others who had little time before the point of encounter or crisis), there does come a moment in time when the recipient of the message must decide to accept or reject the message.

Hiebert maintains (1978:24) that a true conversion can occur after hearing the gospel message only once. Having a good education, an extensive knowledge of the Bible, or living a near perfect life are not prerequisites for changing one's allegiance, one's direction of orientation, and becoming a Christian, Hiebert argues. At this point, Tippett and Hiebert agree. For Tippett these are a process over periods of time. However, Tippett goes on to say that the periods preceding the point of encounter or crisis could be compacted in time (1977:207).

Lewis R. Rambo (1993) looks at conversion from the perspectives of psychology, sociology, theology, and missiology. He provides thorough explication of the topic from the perspectives of earlier works dealing with conversion (1993:209-234).

Rambo, while allowing for momentary conversion experiences, holds to the notion, agreeing with Tippett, that conversion is more process than instantaneous, but in either case, conversion is defined, however, by the receptor community in which it occurs (1993:5-7). It is the one who experiences conversion who can say if a change of allegiance and orientation has occurred and not the outside observer who can make that determination. It is, according to Rambo, the convert who knows if conversion has taken place. If the church, as in our case, erects conditions of inclusion which are prerequisites to Christian conversion, then these function as boundaries of exclusion as perceived by the convert seeking incorporation into their faith community. Is it possible for Christian groups to accept a person on the basis of the person's confession of faith in Christ without laying

down other prerequisites for membership in the group? Hiebert has raised the question concerning the conversion from false gods to Jesus Christ, "How much must Papayya know to be a Christian" (1978:24). How much, or how little, must one know to convert to Jesus?⁸

It does appear, however, there needs to be a time of transition (period of incorporation, according to Tippett) which draws the newcomer into the group, but if the group has other expectations of that newcomer then there must be time allotted for those to be met; neither doctrinal knowledge nor moral transformation are, according to Hiebert, prerequisites to conversion and inclusion in the Christian set. But according to fuzzy set theory, as Zadeh (1956) points out, there are degrees of membership in a set. For Tippett this must correspond to decision at the point of encounter, the period of incorporation, initiation or confirmation, and the period of maturing. For Hiebert it is important that the convert be included in the Christian set from the point of turning which changes allegiance and begins a Christward orientation.

As Allen J. Swanson (1989:55) also observes, "evangelism which . . . emphasizes the individualistic dimension of faith at the expense of the corporate will contribute to a large back-door membership loss," i.e., the converted will not remain so. Church growth practitioners also recognize this truth. Win Arn and Charles Arn (1984) cite research by Flavil Yeakley (1977) which supports this premise. They maintain, once conversion has occurred, relationships to other Christian believers is essential in order for

assimilation into a supporting Christian group to occur.

When the new Christian has not built any friendships with members in the church . . . has not become part of any group where there is a sense of belonging . . . has not had prior exposure to the church, its people, its beliefs, and its expectations, some very large roadblocks are put in the path of assimilation. (Arn and Arn 1984:29)

We can see, therefore, that Arn and Arn also recognize the necessity of a period of incorporation, i.e., a time of building relationships, of establishing trust, and of bonding with church members. The path of assimilation (Arn and Arn 1984) and a period of incorporation (Tippett 1977) are similar.

As some of the street youth in Basel, Switzerland, and others from the subcultural group of the night and street milieu, began to move toward a relationship with Christ through acceptance of forgiveness and turning both heart and mind toward him, several other means of outreach and nurture were established in the mission. Figure 4 helps depict these attempts to further our gospel witness, provide initial nurturing for "becomers," and to build bridges to existing youth groups and churches.

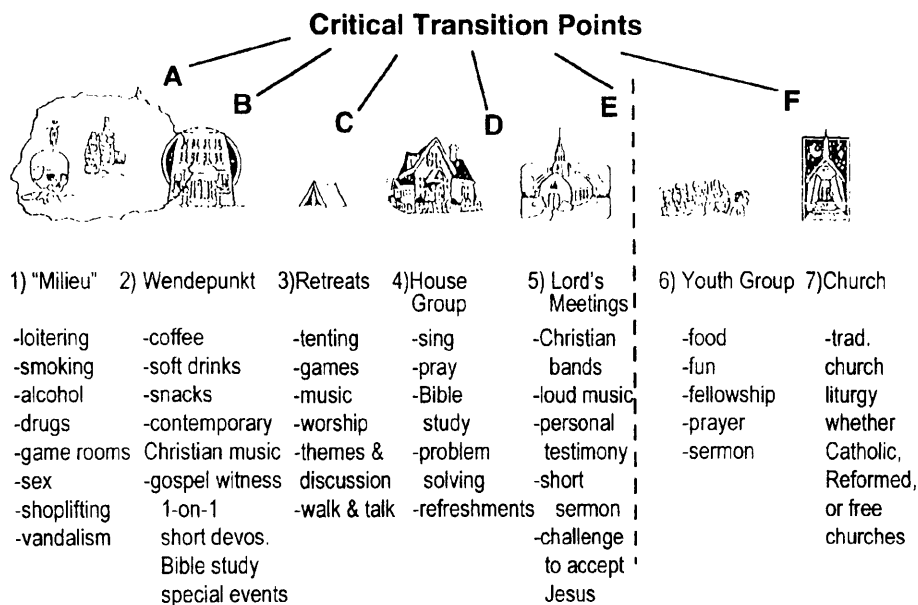


Figure 4

Evangelism and incorporation strategy attempted by *Der Wendepunkt* during 1974-1982.

At points A, B, C, and D of Figure 3 many street youth successfully made the transition from one stage to the next. However, at points E and F almost none moved into existing groups

even though program and activities were often of the same kind. Often some of the same people were engaged in Wendepunkt outreach on the one hand and the established groups on the other. "Why?" we asked ourselves. What was the difference, especially with the existing youth groups?

The problems and issues faced at this point of incorporation on the continuum from old to new context can best be explained using Paul Hiebert's categories of "bounded set" and "centered set" (1978:26-29). Whereas stages 2, 3, 4, and 5 of our outreach to street youth was based on the principle of centered sets which recognizes as Christians all who have turned and are moving toward the center, which is Christ, regardless of how near or far the converts may be to Christ in informational knowledge or Christian behavior. As Figure 2 (p. 35) shows, the boundary is flexible, fluid, and defined only by the point of turning and the direction of movement. In speaking of the biblical concept of conversion Charles Kraft also emphasizes "the central focus remains that of turning, changing direction, reversing the direction in which one is headed so that it is toward rather than away from God" (1979:333). And as Rambo has suggested, only the convert knows when and by what conditions this has occurred (1993:5, 7).

When attempting to incorporate fresh converts into existing church groups, however, we discovered that these groups, Stages 6 and 7 of Figure 4, were operating out of a bounded set structure which made inclusion in the group dependent upon meeting certain rigid guidelines such as prescribed behavior, habits, modes of dress,

preferred taste in music, and “definitive characteristics . . . that we can see or hear, namely tests of orthodoxy (right beliefs) or orthopraxy (right practice) or both” (Hiebert 1978:26-27).

Even though the center may have been the same, the cross of Christ and faith in him as Savior, the terms of inclusion to the group were different. In this instance, inclusion in the group meant, according to Hiebert, crossing the boundary or acquiring the defining behavioral characteristics (1978:27). This attitude, then, excluded anyone who adhered to many of the cultural values of the milieu or shadow culture, such as “hanging out,” smoking, drinking alcoholic beverages, game rooms and pool halls, movies, dancing, tattered jeans, and young men with long hair.⁹ When this approach is used in defining who may or may not be included into the “Christian set,” Charles Kraft (1979:340) concedes that “conversion in response to such an approach may result in a genuine relationship with God on the part of the convert(s). Or, they may simply convert to the culture of the witness without developing a saving relationship with God” which sometimes indeed occurred in our experience and proved to be of brief duration.¹⁰

Most young converts coming to faith as a result of centered set evangelization (Tippett 1977:219) to the point of seeking incorporation into Christian community were often made to feel that they were not Christian because the “basic requirements for being a Christian” were raised too high (Hiebert 1978:27) by the group. Sometimes they felt a lack of personal concern and warmth and believed their budding new faith was called into question. Sensing

rejection, they were unable to bond with the new reference group, the Christian community. Thus, without creating new friends to act as bonding agents with the new community, these people revert to their "non-Christian primary reference group" and lose hope in joining themselves to the Christian community (Swanson 1989:62-65). But how must Christian community be defined?

A socio-historical method of interpretation is used in understanding New Testament texts and in the analysis of dynamics within first-century churches. In a two-part article, "Sociological Exegesis: Introduction to a New Way to Study the Bible," Walter F. Taylor (1989, 1990; cf. also Willy Schottroff 1984:3-5; Kuno Füssel 1984:13-25; Wolfgang Stegemann 1984:81-84; Gerd Theissen 1992:1-29) has explained the methodology and value of this hermeneutic. He says in reference to the socio-historical approach to theological studies, as contrasted with the traditional historical-critical method,

Scholars in particular have questioned the idealistic assumption that what is important is ideas, and that ideas are to be explained solely by other ideas with no reference to the sociological realities in which they are found or which have given them birth. In the study of biblical texts, that idealistic bias had resulted in an almost exclusive emphasis on theological meaning to the exclusive [sic] of social *realia*. (1989:106)

Taylor (1989:106) points out that sociological exegesis is not a "theology-less study of the New Testament," but rather it is a relationship of "historical diachronic sequence" with "social synchronic interaction," as emphasized by John H. Elliott (1990:4).

However, it is noteworthy that Elliott focuses more on the social aspects of *Sitz im Leben* of the biblical documents in his social commentary on 1 Peter since so much has already been said about the “*historical criticism, Textgeschichte, Formgeschichte, Traditionsgeschichte, etc.*” (1990:4).

This field of study is represented by E. A. Judge (1960), Paul S. Minear (1960), John G. Gager (1975), Abraham J. Malherbe (1983), Wayne A. Meeks (1983), Gerd Theissen (1977, 1992), Bruce J. Malina (1981, 1986), and Margaret Y. Macdonald (1988) who help us understand the diverse social make-up of many New Testament churches and the tensions and dynamics in those churches which precipitate many of the epistles handed down to us in the New Testament canon. Significant among these studies and about which all basically agree is the realization that the “essential structure of the community” is not found in espousing particular theologies expressed in distinctive, exclusive doctrines or validated in obedience to morally exhausting dogmatic formulas. The “essential structure of community” is expressed rather

in terms of such simple constituents as faith and obedience, grace and forgiveness, hospitality and love. We should not overlook this important corollary: because the people of God must be defined in terms of such qualitative human relationships as are indicated by hospitality and forgiveness, these very relationships must be reconceived in terms of their sociological, ecclesiological, and ontological implications. To give a cup of cold water becomes much more than an instance of private morality; it becomes an event in the creation, edification, and redemption of human community. (Minear 1960:172)

When the Christian faith community is understood on these terms, rather than by conversion formulas, cultural norms, and cognitive categories (Hiebert 1978), it takes on a new dynamic of outreach and inclusiveness beyond the bounds of its own prior experience.

But the New Testament church is not the beginning of a community of God's people, of course. Paul D. Hanson (1986) has traced "the growth of community in the Bible" (subtitle) in *The People Called*. The nature of community among God's people originates in God's *shalom* which

describes the cosmic harmony that exists where the world and its inhabitants are reconciled with God. Israel described this state with its concept of covenant The qualities of the community living in harmony with God in covenant are variously described as prosperity, peace, and righteousness. . . . (1986:3n)

Israel was to be a witness and light to the nations--a witness of God's compassion, care, and covenant with humankind and draw the nations to God.¹¹ Often Israel forgot its mission as witness to the nations and turned its focus inward, thus becoming exclusive in its attitude toward the nations, although God often demonstrated love toward the nations as illustrated by Naaman, Ruth, Rahab, the widow of Zarephath, and others. Hanson (1986:375) shows how, both among the Essenes at Qumran and the Pharisees in Jerusalem, the community of God's people develops the notion of exclusiveness by focusing on "unswerving obedience to the Torah. Righteousness, as the God-given norm that guides the obedient one in every decision and action, thus was preserved with force in both parties." This was

no less important to Jesus and the disciples, but it was with a world-openness to “loving neighbor;” “going into all the world;” extending hospitality along the highways and byways of life to the poor, lame, and lowly; and proclaiming to them the good news of God’s reign. Out of this attitude of love and openness to all, inclusive community grows--not an all-condoning community, not an all-condemning community, but rather an all-welcoming community. Jesus’ interaction with all peoples demonstrated God’s *shalom* toward them all, a demonstration of the reign of God the disciples of Christ scarcely comprehended and only slowly, but ultimately emulated.¹²

On Kingdom Communities and Churches

The “leap” from proclamation of God’s reign to church is hardly a leap at all. Whenever people responded in hope to the preaching of God’s kingdom, communities of faith formed around the reconciling, inclusive nature of Jesus and his ministry. These faith communities, however, are not the kingdom come. Hans Küng says

the Church as the eschatological community of salvation lives and waits and makes its pilgrim journey under the reign of Christ, which is at the same time, in Christ, the beginning of the reign of God. Thus the promises and powers of the coming reign of God are already evident and effective, through Christ, in the Church, which so partakes in a hidden manner in the dawning reign of God. Thus the Church may be termed the fellowship of aspirants to the kingdom of God. (1976:134)

He points out further that the church is not a stage on the way to God’s reign, and there are no guarantees that one belongs to the kingdom simply because one belongs to the church. But he does see

the church as an

anticipatory sign of the definitive reign of God: a sign of the reality of the reign of God already present in Jesus Christ, a sign of the coming completion of the reign of God. The meaning of the Church does not reside in itself, in what it is, but in what it is moving towards. It is the reign of God which the Church hopes for, bears witness to, proclaims. (1976:135)

Snyder (1991:145-156), in a chapter titled "Building Kingdom Communities Today," tells how kingdom values "are not merely abstract ideas. Rather, they concern practical aspects of the church's life." For many Christians the church has "displaced the kingdom." The kingdom has been either equated with the church as God's kingdom on earth or it has been spiritualized and pushed into a future millennium or dispensation. As Snyder (1991:154) points out, "this was never Jesus' intent. The biblical picture is not the church *instead of* the kingdom, but rather the church as *witness to* and embryonic demonstration of the just reign of God." If the church is living in a "biblical kingdom consciousness" it will exhibit a sensitivity in the following five areas.

1. Kingdom consciousness means living and working in the certain hope of the final triumph of God's reign.
2. Understanding God's kingdom means that the line between "sacred" and "secular" is erased.
3. Kingdom awareness means that ministry is much broader than church work.
4. In kingdom perspective, concerns of justice and evangelistic witness are necessarily held together.
5. Biblically speaking, the reality of the kingdom of God means that we experience *now* the first fruits of the kingdom through the Spirit. (1991:154-155)

When church planters David W. Shenk and Ervin R. Stutzman (1988) speak of planting new churches, they see this as response to proclamation of the good news of God's reign breaking into our personal and corporate human history. They point out that foundational to church planting must be the primary influence of Christ's life and teaching on the kingdom (1988:131).

Scripture refers to the church in many terms which speak of community in its various dimensions, such as fellow citizens, members of the household of God, the structure of the holy temple of the Lord (Ephesians 2:19). Here community is spoken of in political, familial, and residential terminology, all exhibiting aspects of community. Other passages of Scripture tell of the church as an integrated body with its individual members functioning interdependently (1 Corinthians 12:12-28) or as the new Israel, the people of God (Romans 9-11).

When the New Testament speaks of the "called out ones" the word is used in reference to the church: the *ekklesia* which Jesus would build (Matthew 16:18), the congregated disciples in Jerusalem after Pentecost (Acts 5:11; 8:1; et al.). One is called out of the world and out of the former way of thinking by the gospel, not to a private, individualistic life of pious isolation, but rather one is called into the fellowship of believers in relationship to one another. One need only read Paul's greetings and references to the local and far-flung network of Christians in Romans 16 to understand how Christians are placed in relation to one another as they engage in a life of work and witness.

Swanson (1989:55), Thomas M. Finn (1989:79), and David J. Bosch (1991:172) also attest to the essentiality of belonging to the community of the disciples of Jesus for one's health and survival in Christian living. Only after incorporation into the new community can growth and maturity in faith and in godly living be achieved as Tippett's model depicts (1977:219) and as John Wesley's practice demonstrated (Snyder 1980:53-64).

If, as illustrated above (p. 35), the bounded set, with its rigid requirements for inclusion and prescribed characteristics of behavior prior to entry, prevents incorporation of the new convert, is it possible to have the true nature and essence of Christian community without the institutional church or formalized group? Would our only alternative in Basel have been to form new, "indigenous" subcultural groups with their own distinct character as new churches? Is there no other way to achieve participation in the Christian faith community in a context where the already existing divisions within Christianity work detrimentally in evangelism and where Christian sects proliferate, even to the dismay of many "nominal" Christians and to the confusion of most non-Christians in a "Christian" nation?

Whenever love and acceptance (which are necessary to affirm and nurture one in the new faith) are not experienced, does it become necessary to create new communities of faith in order for faith to survive?^{1 3} Maybe. Maybe not. Opinions differ at this point about what is best. But in either case, as Swanson points out, those who have encountered the gospel need an "intense, personal,

systematic support system" (1989:64).

Abraham J. Malherbe (1983:69) indicates that closeness, security, and a sense of belonging can be provided in closer household units which larger social structures cannot provide, including *sometimes* the larger formalized, structured church. Malherbe also argues, as well as do Theissen (1992) and Meeks (1983), that the social and cultural diversity within these household church units is one of the attractions which the Christian faith offered in contrast to the dominant Roman culture, divided as it was along class and economic lines. According to Malherbe (1983:41, 75-77), much of the church was from among "artisan and merchant classes" indicating a measure of "wealth and social status." Theissen (1992:214) maintains these persons were, however, themselves from the periphery of that upper class. But there was present also in the churches the lower class of workers and urban poor, which in the Corinthian church at least, soon became the majority and this diversity created or contributed to much conflict within the faith communities. The churches attempted to overcome ethnic, economic, and cultural barriers as these persons and communities, called by Theissen (1992:214) "diastatic structures," moved intentionally toward a fuller realization of the diversity of the kingdom of God on earth.¹⁴

Whereas Bright (1953), Ladd (1959, 1974), Küng (1976), and others elaborate on the kingdom of God theologically, the socio-historical method of interpretation helps explain the social make-up and dynamics of the early churches, as Malherbe (1983:7), Taylor

(1989:106), and Schottroff (1984:3-5) have argued.

Anthropological and Sociological Insights

One of the greatest assets to Christian mission in recent times has been the discovery of the usefulness of the behavioral sciences as applied to that undertaking, especially cultural anthropology and sociology. In order to understand the dynamics of culture conflict that occur when persons from marginal groups within a culture seek membership in a Christian group, these areas of study and research have been considered.

From Ritual Process

Victor Turner (1977) provides a generalized theory of ritual process which can be utilized in Christian discipling for creating a means of bonding between the new Christian convert and the Christian community, namely, that of proceeding from an old status through liminality to a new status. It is during the liminal stage of the ritual process that *communitas* or bonding occurs between people who are passing from the old status with persons who themselves have already been through the rites of passage, but have now once again intentionally reentered liminality in order to usher the neophyte into their new status as part of the "adult" social community. This liminal experience, usually concluded with initiation and celebration, bestows new status on the neophyte who has thus become a recognized, fully accepted part of the community. Required is, of course, that both parties enter into and share in the

liminal experience for bonding to occur before (re)integration into the new status takes place.¹⁵

Stage I: <u>Separation</u> from Old Status	Stage II: <u>Liminality</u> Transition/ Marginality	Stage III: <u>Integration</u> into New Status
Structure	Anti-Structure	Structure

Figure 5

Three stages of ritual process according to van Gennep (1960) and Turner (1977)

In chapter 3 of *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, Turner (1977:94-130) speaks of “Liminality and Communitas.” The “pedagogics of liminality,” i.e., what liminality teaches us, is that all humans are of “common stuff” regardless of their state or status prior to or subsequent to initiation from one state to another. In liminality all state, structure, and status are removed, leveled, stripped and all initiants are reduced to an equality of lowliness and total submission--“mutual commonality.”¹⁶

Liminality is symbolic condemnation of social status that would tend to separate one from the generic bond of communitas, and it condemns acting on one’s urges, lusts, or drives at the expense of others, whoever they may be or whatever position in the social structure they may hold. The experience of liminality creates a common and lasting bond which society does not know without *rites de passage* which take one through the developmental cycle of separation, liminality, and reincorporation.

These stages can become a part of the dynamic Christian conversion process (Tippett 1977) and discipling (Swanson 1989; McGavran 1955) in several ways. For example, before acceptance into the Christian community of faith there could be a time of catechesis as a period of liminality.¹⁷ Candidates for baptism could be taken apart (separated) in some way, given a time of instruction (liminality) before a public rite of baptism (re-integration). A symbolic separation from the former loyalties and preChristian ways, sins, and destructive habits by a public display might be used, e.g., burning of Jujus, smashing occult paraphernalia, confession of sins, and expressing a desire to follow Jesus. Some type of liminal stage could be created such as a retreat for instruction and by using a familiar rite from within the culture with new meaning so that this would not create confusion with the old ways. "Re-entry" by baptism or by congregational vote on one's readiness or acceptance into the faith community accompanied by appropriate symbols and by celebration of the new state. At new stages of Christian growth or development a similar process might take place with other symbols and rites appropriate to the occasion and related to the new Christ-like traits and function of the disciple.

The fundamental question raised by the theoretical framework of centered set theory is, "How much or what kind of prerequisites should be placed on the initiant before he or she is included in the new set?"¹⁸ Is inclusion and participation somehow possible before full integration occurs? And if so, does this delay or deter the decision to seek full integration leaving the convert non-committal in

relationship to the new reference group?

Since the research question of this project deals with marginal culture groups within society, another aspect of Turner's chapter three concerns us here, namely, attributes of liminal entities. The diverse phenomena in this chapter, such as monastics, mystics, hippies, small nations, millenarian movements, all have in common that they are all marginal, weak and lowly in social or political status, and tend to fall through the cracks of structured societies, whether local or global. Just as the world needs and benefits from such "types," for they often hold the line of moral integrity and social justice since they have little or nothing to lose (it is often this stance that makes them marginal in the first place), so the church needs the weak and marginal as reminders that it is not social status and economic power that impress God. Often Jesus said that the last and least shall be first . . . and if you want to be great in God's kingdom then learn to be the servant and slave of all. Jesus often said, ". . . Those who lose [give up] their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save [find] it" (Mark 8:35). Persons without social status and power often have a much greater sense of *communitas* since they are unimpaired by structure.

If the desired result of relationships in the Christian church among the disciples of Jesus is to achieve and maintain a sense of *communitas*, which I believe it is, while establishing and submitting to the functionally necessary social order within that community of believers, then how is it to be done? Among disciples of Christ there seems to exist a tension between the desire for mutuality on the one

hand, and the effort to function within institutional structures and according to assigned roles that deny mutuality and *communitas* on the other hand. Turner (1977) sees these two modalities of sociality as both essential (*communitas* and structure).

But do not the example and teachings of Jesus himself show us attitudes and behaviors that work for *communitas*? For example, his *kenosis* was the beginning. Though he was master and teacher, he called his disciples friends. He taught us to love one another “as I have loved you.” He washed his disciples’ feet. Jesus laid down his life “for his friends.” His teaching for his disciples was that they are to “humble themselves,” “take the lowest seats at table,” “be the servant of all,” and not aspire to positions of power or wealth. Even the leaders of his church are not to “lord it over the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made [them] overseers.” The gifts of God which give structure and functional roles to the church are just that, gifts of service and are for the building up of the body of believers, for the common good. These foundational truths and attitudes should regularly be demonstrated within the community of his followers, perhaps in planned, purposeful, public ways. This might be done liturgically, during seasonal or special celebrations, and as a way of living as the “priesthood of all believers” (1 Peter 2:9).¹⁹

But for Turner (1977:189), the liminality of rites of status elevation and status reversal are typical of religion. The high is brought low, the lowly is elevated. Even though in religion there are “higher” and “lower” functional roles, these serve each other mutually for the purpose of *communitas*.²⁰ With the coming of Jesus

it was said that every mountain would be brought low and every valley exalted, i.e., the terrain would be leveled and all persons and all things would be on equal ground and footing; there would be neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female, but we would all be one in Christ Jesus. Rites which portray or enact status elevation and status reversal bring each one to the common human denominator, while at the same time underlining the structural order within society.

The methods of outreach demonstrated in Figure 4 provided some of the elements of Christian community such as gospel witness and Bible study, worship, dialogue, prayer, and the common table, all with a reference to Jesus. But these stages of mission were voluntary and non-committal. There was no sense of formal identity or act of incorporation into a fixed body of persons or group. There was an identity with *Der Wendepunkt*, but even that was very loosely structured. This did not provide the new reference group (Swanson 1989:63), a new contextual entity (Tippett 1977:211), nor did it move converts to the postliminal state of full inclusion by a rite of initiation (1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Turner 1977; Finn 1989:76). The stages utilized by our outreach remained transitional stages, a sort of suspended liminality.

Could the ritual process theorized and illustrated by Victor Turner be applied here for the purpose of creating *communitas* among new converts and between them and existing Christian groups? Thomas Finn (1989)²¹ demonstrates how this process was used by the late second century Roman church to assure its survival

by integrating new converts through the ritual process into the church.

By application of Arnold van Gennep's theory on *rites de passage* (1960 [1908]) and Victor Turner's expanded application of the stage of liminality and the building of *communitas* (1977) to the "Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus" from the late second century, Finn shows how the ritual process of separation, liminality, and reincorporation contributed to the survival of early Christianity in Rome under the duress and dangers of marginality and persecution and, yet, remained a mysteriously (Eusebius 1, 1,2; Augustine 22,7-9) and rapidly spreading movement bordering on the miraculous (Harnack 1972:467).

The focus of Finn's explanation is on the period of catechesis of the new convert which he shows to be a liminal state between separation from the former life subject to the Roman gods and pagan life-style, and initiation into the new social order of the Christian community (1989:72; cf. Turner 1977:94-95, van Gennep 1960:65-81). This stage of liminality (a probationary stage) which, according to the "Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus" (AT) lasted at this point in time in Rome for three years, was comprised primarily of three rigorous and frequent exercises: (1) the inquiry, (2) oral instruction, and (3) exorcism (Finn 1989:72-76). The rite of inquiry was preliminary; the oral instruction was daily for a period of three years and followed by a second inquiry. If the catechumen was elected he or she was then prepared for Christian baptism, the rite of initiation and incorporation into community with new social status and roles.

Daily instruction then gave way to daily exorcism until the day of baptism on which then a final exorcism took place (AT 20-21 cited in Finn 1989:74).

The author concludes that the bonding and loyalty created by the extended stage of liminality, namely, three years instruction, and the strongly pronounced separation from the former belief system and life-style, contributed significantly to the survival of Christianity in the pre-Constantinian period of church history by the "development of an effective catechumenate, a powerful ritual process" (Finn 1989:80). I am not proposing this as a model; rather, I am demonstrating the usefulness of the liminal stage of ritual process for the purpose of integration into the Christian community.

Turner's theory concerning the ritual process, involving structure and anti-structure, provides a means of creating a bridge for the missionary or missionary group to accompany a seeker or new convert from the old state or old reference group into the new community. The shared liminal experience (*communitas*), where bonding occurs, assures that relationship and trust have been built between members of the community and the initiate so that a sense of belonging and acceptance enhance the incorporation of the new person into the social group and consequent identity with and participation in it.

From Institutionalization Theory

Early in this century Max Weber (1963 [1922], 1964, 1968) laid the groundwork for understanding what occurs when new

movements of any social nature arise, namely, institutionalization of the movement. Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966:17), though not denying Weber's concepts of the constitution of social reality, rely heavily on Emile Durkheim's (1950) analysis of the nature of social reality, adding the dialectical dimension of Karl Marx (1953). They draw also upon George Mead (1934) for social psychology (Berger and Luckmann 1966:195, n. 1) and Bronislaw Malinowski (1961) for an understanding of basic biological and psychological human needs as they translate into secondary social needs and how society in turn functions to satisfy those needs (Bohannon and Glazer 1988:274). They further combine key features of Mead's social psychology and Arnold Gehlen's (1950; cf. Berger & Luckmann 1966:195, n. 1) sociological theory of institutions thereby arriving at a synthesis to demonstrate how and why institutionalization occurs, for better or for worse.

Berger and Luckmann (1966) show how all social movements and entities tend to institutionalize themselves for the sake of stability, identity, and continuity. In order to do this, institutional boundaries are created to define the group. These boundaries become not only criteria of identity and inclusion, but necessarily boundaries of exclusion as well. How can the Christian community address this phenomenon when new converts come from a different cultural background and mind-set than the dominant "Christian culture" of church or fellowship group?

Churches, whether on small or grand scales, are institutions-- whether on the congregational or denominational level, whether

organized in loose associations or covenantal councils. The same is true for subgroups of the church such as youth groups or new, recently formed churches.

Institutions begin as movements around an idea or an ideal, religious or otherwise, and this is usually centered in and around a person--often a charismatic leader, according to Weber (1964:358-359; 1968:253).²² As Berger and Luckmann (1966:47-128) thoroughly explain, humans' "world-openness" [unboundedness] is preempted by the social order [boundedness], providing direction and stability for the greater part of human conduct. In other words, the intrinsic human desire for inclusiveness [centered set] gives way to the social pressure of exclusiveness [bounded set], thus creating distinct social groups and structures, i.e. bounded sets. Is this true also in Christian churches? Not only do religions function as cultural systems (Geertz 1973:87-125), but congregations create distinct cultures different from other congregations of the same religion or denomination (Ramsey 1989) and a denomination forms distinct cultures between its own institutions (L. Mead 1991:75). According to Berger and Luckmann, these human institutions are necessary for stability of social groups and a sense of identity and belonging (1966:50).²³

Clifford Geertz (1973:87-125) provides insight into "Religion As a Cultural System," which leads one to conclude that a religious unit such as a congregation or youth group also functions as a "cultural system" to which a new Christian convert must in most cases convert if he or she wants to be included in that group. This notion

has been well illustrated and applied to local congregations by Nancy J. Ramsey (1989) in a convocation address at the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary called “The Congregation as a Culture: Implications for Ministry.” She shows how congregations function as distinct cultures and develop local theologies. Also Loren B. Mead (1991) of The Alban Institute argues for treating congregations as cultures, for example, different from seminary cultures.

Charles H. Kraft (1973:39-57; 1979:239-245) speaks of “static churches” and “dynamic churches” in much the same way that Hiebert (1978) speaks of “bounded sets” and “centered sets.”

Whereas the static church is concerned with boundary maintenance for the sake of self-preservation, the dynamic church is concerned with movement toward its goal of spiritual growth and maturity in Christ. The former will likely be in decline or the throes of death, the latter will be vital and growing. The former spends time, energy, and resources focusing on the boundary by which it defines itself, and the latter focuses on the center of its existence by which it defines itself, including all others who define themselves by that same center; in the case of Christian groups the center is Jesus Christ. All other terms are descriptive rather than prescriptive.

From the Revitalization Model

Anthony F. C. Wallace (1956) gives a model which I believe, if in this instance *intentionally* applied, allows for the ongoing vitality of the faith community even when the social phenomenon of

institutionalization occurs, as it invariably does (Berger and Luckmann 1966).

By “intentionally applied” I mean that through the event of the preaching and the hearing of the gospel of the kingdom of God centered in and upon Jesus, certain things occur. Those changes are brought about by the working of God’s Spirit which, according to Scripture, teaches about the whole gamut of God’s interaction with us humans, namely, concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:7-11) and as motivator and equipper for mission (Acts 13:2; 2 Peter 1:16-21; Ephesians 4:11-16). It is also by centering our life and worship upon the presence and work of God in Jesus that our minds are renewed to discern God’s best (Romans 12:1-2).

In his 1956 article, “Revitalization Movements,” Wallace argues how once-vibrant cultures eventually reach stagnation or (1) an old steady state. Following this the culture experiences (2) individual and corporate stress due to internal or external conditions, or both. Stress, over time, leads to (3) cultural distortion, i.e., loss of a sense of purpose and direction. At this point the culture either collapses into chaos and disintegration or, as in most cases, it fights back against the stresses and, thus, experiences (4) revitalization. With the reemergence of a transformed, renewed culture (5) a new steady state occurs which is no more identical to the old steady state, but is a new, acceptable, viable culture.

Churches and other Christian groups may experience the same cycle of cultural stagnation and cultural revitalization that Wallace describes. Without manipulation of the receptor church audience,

however, cultural distortion occurs whenever, through preaching, cultural stress is created by what is heard. This leads to what Leon Festinger (1964) calls "cognitive dissonance," i.e., the mental and emotional attitudes that one develops when what one knows and what one does are at variance. This, then in turn, leads either to cultural breakdown and disintegration or cultural revitalization--to giving up, or to starting over with new and renewed impulses.

For the purpose of this study I want to focus on Wallace's six functions that take place during the fourth period, the period of revitalization of the culture. During the period of revitalization the culture goes through various functions which "reprogram the cultural computer" to make the culture operational in its new state. Just as when neophytes are integrated into the society and receive new status according to Turner's (1977) theory of ritual process, so too the culture is changed when it discards its old steady state (status quo) and adopts those things (some new, some old) that assure its revival and survival. The new, revitalized culture sees itself compelled to do six things.

First, it attempts to formulate a new code. What will be its code of conduct under its new set of circumstances, in face of the new relationships within the culture, and the dynamics brought about by new participants? Second, lines of communication must be established so that all are rightly informed and none are left ignorant and none without voice. How will the code and interpretation of the code be communicated within the culture? Third, if the old steady state was no longer working, then how does the new society need to

be organized so that it does not fall back into its familiar, binding rut? Fourth, all participants and all aspects of the culture have to be adapted to fit the new situation, discarding the old encumbering features and appropriating the new revitalizing ones. Next, cultural transformation has, by this process, occurred. It is unlikely to be the result of a planned, expected, fully controlled process, but will be something new, unexpected, and pleasantly surprising. Once these steps have been taken, recognized, and appropriated for what they are and the good they can bring, the sixth function happens, namely, routinization. Routinization results in stability and security, a new steady state.

As Berger and Luckmann (1966) have indicated, routinization is a step on the way and is very near to institutionalization. But is institutionalization, which is inevitable among societies, necessarily a bad thing? Does it arbitrarily lead to static churches (Kraft 1979:32, 37-41)? Is it possible to splice a “revitalization gene” into the “DNA molecule” of institutionalization?

Is it not possible, by the event of preaching and the bonding experience of planned liminality, to intentionally create individual and corporate stress within a church so that a certain cultural distortion occurs, a dissatisfaction with the status quo of the old steady state, so that the congregation seeks ongoing constructive ways to reform itself, creating a new, inviting, and acceptable environment for seekers and new converts?

From Theories of Culture Change and Change Agents

Just what role does the missionary, missionary group, or missionary church play in the conversion process, especially at the time of incorporation into the Christian faith community?

Bronislaw Malinowski (1961b) has done foundational work in *The Dynamics of Culture Change*. He illustrates from race relations in Africa how, when two cultures meet, the “contact situation is . . . a cultural reality” and may be regarded as an “integral whole” (1961b:14). Therefore, the contact situation itself can be studied as a culture which has arisen by the fact of contact between two otherwise distinct cultures. The representative(s) from each are changed by the contact, thus creating a new cultural entity. Malinowski relates this directly to the contact between a missionary from one culture and a host culture of another kind as has occurred, for example, in Africa.

This process, then, possesses three “columns of culture contact” (1961b:18) which have to be considered in order to understand the dynamic occurring when cultures meet. They are the culture of, in this instance, the missionary; the culture of the host; and the culture created by their contact.

Malinowski’s column of contact, also called the “order of transition” (1961b:64), may be compared to Victor Turner’s stage two of the ritual process, that of liminality. Both members of the “old status” structures and those of the “new status” structure enter into the anti-structure or threshold stage between the two steady states. It is during this liminal stage (Turner; cf. also Tippet’s period of

incorporation) or column of contact (Malinowski) that both parties are culturally changed before (re)integrating into the new structured status of society. But entering this stage three of ritual process means that the third stage itself is changed by their entry into it and internal adjustments have to be made within it to accommodate the newcomers who are now bonded in a new *communitas* of existence by which the culture is changed and revitalized (Wallace 1956).

Der Wendepunkt that was opened in 1975 on Brantgasse 5 in Klein-Basel can be used to illustrate Malinowski's theory of culture brokers. The Mitternachtsmission Basel, being an interdenominational street mission engaged in Christian witness and outreach represents Christian culture, is the first column. Although the lines of difference in our context may not be as distinct as Malinowski's encounter with African culture, the youthful street culture that loitered about the department stores, taverns, game rooms, and street corners after school and work can be compared to Malinowski's host culture. *Der Wendepunkt*, the place of encounter between the two cultures, represents Malinowski's "column of contact." It was here that the two cultures learned from one another and each was changed. We missionaries had affected change in many of our "clients" which we chose to call our friends. We ourselves were changed. Our intention was to be a cultural bridge between the street culture and the cathedral culture of Christian churches and youth groups. Having established a firm bridgehead among the shadow culture, it seems we never found a firm and lasting foundation in the church (cathedral) culture as Figure 4, p. 64

illustrates. We had been to some extent successful change agents among the host culture, but ineffective in our own sending culture. Had we built a one way bridge only? Or perhaps only one half of a bridge that reached to midstream and dropped people into the river to drown? Could it be that the cathedral culture had burned one end of the bridge?

Culture change, or the diffusion of innovations, takes place when elements or traits from one culture migrate to another (Malinowski 1961b:18).²⁴ Everett M. Rogers (1995:335-370) shows how the change agent provides the linkage between the “change agency” and the “client system,” thus functioning as bridge between the two cultural worlds across which ideas and materials flow. The role of the change agent, as described by Rogers, can be summarized in sequence as follows: (1) helps identify a need for change; (2) establishes relationship for information-exchange; (3) helps diagnose (identify) problems; (4) motivates the intent to change in the client; (5) opens optional courses of action to the client; (6) encourages and stabilizes adoption of a course of action [by the client] and helps client find ways to continue in the new action; and (7) creates a situation of non-dependence between the change agent and the client.

As Rogers points out further, this all must occur with an orientation toward the client. Any innovation which does occur through the advocacy of the change agent must take place by decision and through action of the client or receptor for it to be authentic or indigenous. The receptor, in this case, is the innovator

(1995:340-343); the change agent is merely an advocate of change (cf. Barnett 1953:291-328). Innovations cannot be imposed by the change agent or missionary and be, at the same time, indigenous or appropriately contextual. Malinowski (1961b:19) has observed that whenever pressure is directed and applied from the side of the donor culture there are “well-determined resistances on the part of the recipients.”²⁵ These changes can be, however, borrowed by the client, or receptor culture, and still be appropriately contextual or indigenous (Whiteman 1983:412). We must recognize, however, that any innovations which occur, either by way of direct advocacy or of adoption by the host culture, are not isolated units but part of complex systems and must be seen within the whole (Malinowski 1961b:18-26). If the innovator is isolated from his or her integral whole, there is danger of destruction of the personality (Malinowski 1961b:25). Is this what occurs whenever sub-culture persons are converted to Christian church culture? Is personality lost so that true meaning of Christian faith is not experienced and innermost transformation does not occur, but merely Christian forms borrowed or enacted according to the instruction or insistence of the church culture?²⁶

Darrell Whiteman (1983) in *Melanesians and Missionaries* has applied the theories of culture change to missionaries in Melanesia and shown how they function as “agents of change” and “culture brokers” (1983:411-451). They not only function as advocates in the sense of introducing and lobbying for new ideas or innovation, as indicated by Barnett (1953:291-328) and applied to Christian

mission by Alan R. Tippett (1977), where the missionary functions in direct advocacy by presenting the Christian gospel message, they also provide the means of communication from the host culture to the "sending" culture (cf. Malinowski's "column of contact"). While Tippett has explained conversion in terms of a dynamic process (1977:203-221) involving direct advocacy, Whiteman's *Melanesians and Missionaries* (1983:364-368) offers an explication of Tippett's model and explains conversion itself as innovation and documents how that change is integrated into Melanesian society, for example, by missionaries as the culture brokers.

In order, however, for two-way traffic to cross the cultural bridge, the broker not only represents the change agency to the client by introducing options for potential innovations, but the culture broker represents fairly the receptor to the change agency, i.e., the host culture to the church or mission and speaks on its behalf as well, or otherwise serves to "translate" or "mediate" for a spokesperson from the receptor culture back to the sending church or mission. In this way the missionary as culture broker eases the "transition for indigenes from isolation [alienation] to contact with the Western world" (Whiteman 1983:430). For the missionary to serve effectively in this capacity it is necessary for the missionary to become bi-cultural (Hiebert 1982; cf. McElhanon 1991). The missionary must be immersed in both cultures, his or her own and the host culture--understanding them both, speaking both languages, participating in both worlds--if indeed communication is to take place between the two at the meaning level (cf. Whiteman 1983:433-

440; Kraft 1979:147). The relationship of the culture broker to the host culture must be a partnership, never paternalistic. Partnership is based on interpersonal relationships of equality between advocate and innovator (Whiteman 1983:439).

Even so, Malinowski insists, the two cultures “impinge on each other. The impact produces conflict, cooperation, or leads to compromise” (1961b:26). Be it observed, however, that if the dominant Christian church culture functioning as a bounded set imposes its criteria of conversion and cultural morality on newcomers, it produces either conflict or else total capitulation on the part of the newcomer, hence causing a loss of personality, identity, meaning, and personal hope, reinforcing the conflict with and alienation from anything Christian (Malinowski 1961b:25).

Duane Elmer (1993) provides insights on dealing with *Cross-Cultural Conflict: Building Relationships for Effective Ministry*, the title of his book which recognizes the tension and potential conflict which arises when different cultures meet. He explains how cultural diversity originates in God, but that God’s intention for humans is unity in the midst of that diversity (1993:23-32). Important to unity is the willingness to listen to the other culture’s point of view and its reasons for being as it is, for viewing things as it does, and for doing things the way it does (1993:18-22). The problem, as Elmer defines it, is not that cultures are different, but that Western culture is so impervious and impatient with other cultures (1993:33-62). Different cultures hold different values, however, and they are “valuable” to that respective culture. In this study the cathedral

culture may be compared to the dominant Western culture and learn to treat the marginal cultural groups in its own shadows with respect and seek to understand their cultural values. That will mean giving up the notion of cultural or "value dominance" and adopting a more open and tolerant attitude toward those who are different. The fact that they are different does not mean they are of less value or less Christian; it means they are different. Of course, the gospel of Jesus and the kingdom challenges our values, but leaves our culture intact. Elmer points this out (1993:23-32), but recognizes this as the greatest threat to Christian unity and as a hinderance to evangelization because of cultural pride and ethnocentricity. Not only do we as Christians need to hear again the prayer of Jesus in John 17, but we need to model our unity after the unity of the diverse Trinity (1993:26-27; cf. Moltmann 1991) which is "marked by diversity, distinct functions and roles, yet perfect unity." The same is true of Jesus' disciples, Elmer states, and in their attitude toward cultural diversity in the body of Christ (1993:26-27, 28-31).

Key in dealing with cultural conflict, according to Elmer (1993:65-79), is the role of mediation and the mediator. This fits the role of missionary or missionary group as culture broker or bicultural bridge. The mediator may come from either culture, but will have standing and influence in both. In order to create understanding and for communication to take place in the face of cultural diversity someone crosses over or goes between.

Darrell Whiteman (1984) shows that in order to communicate the gospel amid cultural diversity it is necessary to divorce biblical

meanings from our own “contemporary cultural forms” and seek to communicate them in the relevant cultural forms of the host society (1984:278-279; cf. Dye 1976). The missiological principles of cross-cultural communication of the gospel apply as well in our cultural diversity in the Western world today, even among the subculture groups of our cities. So, as Whiteman concludes, “Thus the missionary’s task is one of enabling converts to understand the biblical meanings, not to simply mimic the missionary’s [church’s] cultural forms” (1984:284-285).

Church Growth Considerations

Because much of my review of the previous literature, at a cursory glance, could appear to be at variance with church growth’s homogeneous unit principle, the pertinent literature from this field pertaining to that principle must be carefully examined, especially in light of George Hunter’s (1987:175-176) recognition that the homogeneous church is only one of many forms of church which are all “penultimate” to the kingdom of God. He states that homogeneous churches are penultimate to “heterogeneous churches [which] more effectively model the kingdom of God and what the church is intended to be” (1987:175).

About Homogeneous and Heterogeneous Units

Is, then, the homogeneous unit principle of the church growth movement led by the late Donald McGavran called into question in light of the foregoing discussion and in the light of the nature of

kingdom of God communities as understood by this study?

According to church growth literature, homogeneous units are groups of people who share similar or identical cultural and social characteristics, thus having a strong affinity to one another. Church growth research has shown that most people are more likely to become Christians in groups that are more like them, remain attached to groups that are more like them, because people feel most comfortable among those who are more like them. Therefore, when evangelizing persons or people groups, either they are easier to integrate into groups with which they have the most in common or new churches are formed around this principle. Heterogeneous units, on the other hand, are diverse in their makeup in one or more ways, such as in language and ethnicity, race, education, socio-economic class and ages of its members, place of birth and residency. Persons are less likely to become Christians or to remain in such groups. For the sake of evangelism, then, it is believed it is better to missionize according to this principle so that the greatest number of people can be converted to Christianity.

Literally from page one of his seminal book, Donald A. McGavran, in *The Bridges of God* (1955) begins to advocate the recognition and use of the homogeneous unit in mission so that Christian movements might be started among peoples who may comprise only one part, but a unique part, of a larger social stratum or geo-political entity (1955:1-13). This view is held consistently by adherents of the church growth movement. Much of McGavran's remaining life's work was elaboration and expansion on this insight.

Almost all ensuing works from the church growth movement contain to some measure a defense of this concept. Indeed, perhaps more than any other, it has often been harshly attacked. Further treatment of this theme by McGavran is found in *How Churches Grow* (1959:30-54).

And then, in *Understanding Church Growth*, revised and edited by C. Peter Wagner (1990:163-178), it is reiterated that “[p]eople like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguist, or class barriers” (1990:163). This is true. But should race, language, or class (or any other human or cultural difference) be made a prerequisite for acceptance and participation in a Christian body? How can these boundaries best be broken down? We do live in a mosaic of cultural landscapes as McGavran and Wagner state (1990:53-63), but can congregations of God’s diverse people of the New Covenant in Christ Jesus become mosaics of God’s kingdom or do they remain isolated collections of blue tiles, purple tiles, yellow tiles, or pick-your-favorite-color tiles? As we worship, ultimately, around God’s reign (Revelation 7:9) will we remain in our familiar, favorite, and culturally comfortable groups? Or will we rather be integrated into one whole people who, as we mix and mingle together, reflect the rich imagination and diversity of our most gracious and understanding Creator God?²⁷

Is this alleged pragmatism found among church growth adherents indeed the way in which to begin evangelism and formation of Christian communities? Are Christian fellowships and churches supposed to be homogeneous units? Or are they to reflect

something more than that which is culturally familiar and comfortable? In some parts of the world that is a mute question, e.g., in remote rural or tribal settings. But in today's increasing multi-cultural urban environments it is a pertinent question, as McGavran admits (1990:261). McGavran (1990:261) recognizes that this strategy, while working best in monocultural and tribal settings, may not be the most advisable in the urban agglomeration of cultures. In the true urban melting pot, McGavran advocates that the best option is "from the beginning bring men and women of many ethnic, linguistic, and educational backgrounds into one new family of God" (1990:261). This kind of church he calls the conglomerate congregation (1990:261).

Even in multi-cultural cities, however, it has been argued that culturally and socially similar groups need to be identified and churches planted among them, as Peter Wagner (1979) has argued. Is this the desired and advisable solution in the shadow of cathedrals when a divided Christianity is sometimes cited as reason to avoid Christianity altogether or to look for more tolerant Eastern or New Age religions (Mitternachtsmission 1941; Dieter 1995; Franko 1995)?

Is there a way to transition from the application of the homogeneous unit in effective evangelism to a diverse, heterogeneous Christian faith community which more adequately reflects the kingdom of God (Hunter 1987:175)? Is there indeed a way to use the homogeneous unit principle to help a church become more heterogeneous? Do homogeneous units ultimately contribute to achieving or hindering incorporation of new converts into "our"

church? Were the “Christian church cultures” in Basel homogeneous units which culturally excluded those who were not like themselves? Was this the nature of Christian community in the early church? Should this be the nature of the church today? Is the kingdom of God counter-cultural and disruptive to socially, racially, and culturally bound communities?²⁸ Should the homogeneous unit principle be applied where there is an already existing Christian church culture? Or does it best apply in those situations where there is not yet a viable witness to God’s rule? Can a demonstrable unity in diversity be found in congregations?²⁹

George Hunter (1987:173-177) goes beyond much of the usual church growth thinking to a new dimension. While supportive of the generalizing strategy of McGavran, he advocates that homogeneous units, effective though they are for bringing persons into the faith, are only

penultimate to the church that is to be, and while homogeneous churches seem to be more effective at bringing people like them into faith and church, heterogeneous churches more effectively model the kingdom of God and what the church is intended to be. (1987:176)³⁰

But herein lies what I believe to be a flaw in the homogeneous unit principle.

There is an inherent danger of beginning churches on the homogeneous principle.³¹ They will tend to institutionalize on this level. Once a movement or group begins to institutionalize, as it does from its inception (Berger and Luckmann 1966), it is no longer apt to change since cultures resist change.³² Once a homogeneous unit has

formed, it immediately begins to institutionalize, as does any other social group. How will it then ever become the socially, ethnically, economically diverse group which more fully reflects God's reign in the world and to the world, as Hunter suggests and, I believe, Scripture makes clear? Would it not be better to shape the new church in its formative stages as a heterogeneous unit to reflect that kingdom of God before it institutionalizes as a homogeneous church unit? What should be the common ground for our homogeneity--the socio-cultural boundaries and reality of our human experience or our new allegiance and center of new life which is the rule of God in the world through Christ Jesus, in the world of our own hearts and lives? The only non-negotiable for identity as a Christian, the only "stumbling block" which cannot be removed, is faith in Jesus Christ and his revelation of God's love on the cross and through resurrection from the dead (Luke 9:22; 24:26, 46-48; Romans 1:16-17; 9:30-33; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4). McGavran points out that "people are deterred not so much by the offense of the cross as by nonbiblical offenses" (1990:168), i.e., cultural and social barriers.

George Hunter helps dispel several strategic myths which "frustrate the effectiveness of the Christian movement" (1987:36) and provides six "megastrategies" for reversing decline and engendering growth in churches. The following myths must be dispelled:

1. People are won when our evangelistic presentation is compelling.
2. People are usually evangelized by mature, theologically sophisticated Christian strangers.

3. The churches, worship services, classes, and groups our church already has ought to be able to reach all the winnable people.
4. A church grows by doing “its thing” and perpetuating ministries it is used to.
5. The approach that won “us” (or that “turns me on”) is the approach that ought to win “them.”
6. Churches grow as they wing it spiritually, responding spontaneously moment by moment to the Holy Spirit’s leading.

Not every myth is held by all churches, but most congregations hold at least one or more of them. On the other hand Hunter recommends the following “megastrategies” to help churches grow. These should also be useful not only in attracting persons, but also in incorporating and retaining new members.

1. *Identifying* receptive people to reach.
2. *Reaching* across social networks to people.
3. *Organizing* new recruiting groups and ports of entry.
4. *Ministering* to the needs of people.
5. *Indigenizing* ministries to fit the culture of the people.
6. *Planning* to achieve the future they intend. (1987:36)

All of these strategies, however, can be utilized by a local church congregation.

While recognizing that heterogeneous churches reflect more aptly the kingdom of God, Hunter admits that no congregation can be all things to all persons. He discusses (1987:173-175) how this creates a dilemma. On the one hand people are more likely drawn to churches which are culturally most like themselves, yet the kingdom of God reflects all sorts of diversity, including cultural diversity. Since, however, “no one local church can effectively minister to every people” (1987:175), he does advocate that any one local church can

be open to diverse kinds of people so that diversity of the kingdom of God is reflected or modeled, at least; but the churches that do even that are the exception. He does go on to suggest the possibility of the “conglomerate church” which offers culturally diverse ministries within the context of the one church congregation (1987:176).³³

Therefore, Hunter suggests a trade-off, i.e., to “sacrifice for now the ideal of a culturally inclusive church for the sake of, say, helping a disadvantaged people” (187:175.). At the lowest entry level of church that may be the reality, but should not from the outset the most disadvantaged people, or the most ethnocentric, or the most racially prejudiced, or most economically advantaged be conditioned to welcome the stranger? How do we, then, overcome the inevitable institutionalization of a monocultural church which consequently is, by the very process, made resistant to change? Are we torn between the “idealistic” and the “realistic?” In what way and by what means is the kingdom of God as expressed in faith communities realizable today? And what’s more we must also consider each context separately, e.g., rural or tribal (which are most likely to be monocultural) versus urban or conglomerate (which are likely to be multi-cultural), as McGavran suggests (1990:261). McGavran states that the conglomerate church is a weak option for growing churches rapidly, but does allow that

[o]nly in true social melting pots is it a significant option. There old segments of society are in fact breaking down. . . . There *conglomerate congregations are both possible and desirable*. There the best opportunity for growth may truly be that of bringing into one congregation converts of the new people being formed. (1990:261) [Emphasis added.]

In *How to Reach Secular People* (1992) George Hunter “contended . . . that we cannot do effective evangelism without understanding, and adapting to, the social, historical, and cultural context of the target population” (1996:25). So he begins his latest book, *Church for the Unchurched* (1996). This statement is pertinent to the considerations of this study in that no effective evangelism, church renewal, or church planting can take place in western Europe without adapting to the context of “cathedral culture” which always casts its shadows upon those who intentionally look the other way, upon those who casually pass by, and upon those who are devout Christian believers within the bounds of the state churches as well as those who participate in the faith communities of free churches and fellowships.

Hunter, always probing deeper, pushing for better understanding, and challenging churches to greater faithfulness in their witness to the world, especially to the secular West, calls for “apostolic congregations” which are strikingly similar to those churches of the New Testament or apostolic era (1996:28). He calls them apostolic because:

1. They believe they are the “called” and “sent” church to reach the unchurched “pre-Christian” population.
2. Their theology and message center upon the gospel of early apostolic Christianity, rather than upon the narrower dogmatism, or the more vague “inclusive” theism, or the conventional moralism found in many traditional churches.
3. They adapt to the language and culture of their target population in order to convey the gospel message meaningfully.
4. They all contain key features that make them similar to the

churches of early apostolic Christianity and found among apostolic movements throughout church history as experienced among the Anabaptist, Pietist, and Methodist movements of the Reformation and in many Third World churches today. (1996:28)

Ten top features identified by Hunter that characterize apostolic congregations are

1. A redundant approach to rooting believers and seekers in Scripture.
2. Discipline and earnestness in prayer, expecting and experiencing God's action in response.
3. Love and compassion for lost, unchurched, pre-Christian people.
4. Obedience to the Great Commission.
5. A motivationally sufficient vision for what people, as disciples, can become.
6. Adapted to the language, music, and style of the target population's culture.
7. Involvement of everyone, believers and seekers, in small groups.
8. Involvement of all Christians in lay ministries.
9. Regular pastoral care for all members with someone gifted for pastoral ministry.
10. Engaged in ministries to unchurched non-Christian people. (Hunter 1996:29-34)

After contrasting the apostolic congregation, as characterized above, with traditional churches and their maintenance goals and lack of innovative spirit to adapt to current cultural preferences (1996:36-54), Hunter then makes a strong case for the culturally relevant congregation in chapter three (1996:55-80). If the population is not engaged in its culturally relevant forms, it is not

engaged at all; it is not reached by the gospel. There may be some cultural conversions in form, but void of content and meaning.

Hunter points out from interviews with successful pastors in the U.S. that a congregation's strategy must be "‘homegrown’--not imported from another context" (1996:55). How true for western Europe! It is, however, as Hunter further emphasizes that "[c]ultural relevance may be the most important, the most controversial, and the most difficult of an apostolic congregation's features to introduce into the life of a traditional congregation" (1996:56). The price must be paid if congregations are hopeful of reaching the culturally distant and socially marginalized in the shadows of the cathedrals. "[G]ospel integrity calls us to cultural flexibility," Hunter declares (1996:56).

Hunter's section of chapter three that especially elucidates this study is that cultural barriers "keep people from faith" (1996:59-67). This he has called the "largest and most widespread barrier (that we have any control over)" (1996:59). Most people refer to this as the greatest barrier to be overcome. They do not want to become like church people (1996:59). The cathedral culture shuts out the shadow culture by insisting on its own cultural traits as though they are prerequisite to becoming a Christian and living the Christian life. Hunter (1996:60) reminds us that McGavran made this observation, too, much earlier.

Cultural barriers have always had to be removed in order for the church to co-exist and grow in its cultural context with converts from those contexts respectively. Hunter shows how the church has contended with cultural barriers throughout its history and that it

must do so today (1996:60-67). Especially, as we consider Jesus as model *of* and model *for* our mission and relevancy in the world the cultural barriers must come down in order to portray rightfully the good news of salvation and the coming of God's reign. If the church projects middle-class values as being particularly Christian, then those are the only persons who become Christians, i.e., the middle class (Hunter 1996:63-64).

In addition to the need for cultural relevancy, Hunter (1996:81-117) illustrates how the evangelizing, apostolic church functions through the small group structure. A church may utilize small groups in many ways and for many purposes, but the life of the congregation will be lived out in small groups such as New Testament-like house churches, Methodist-like class meetings, cell groups, Tender-Loving-Care groups, or base church communities and many other types of small group structures.^{3 4}

Another of Hunter's (1996:119-147) essential elements of an apostolic church is a mobilized, equipped, and involved laity. There are numerous models, he suggests, for doing this, but crucial are the willingness to experiment with new forms, to risk criticism and make mistakes, to reach out to unchurched people. The big question is, according to Hunter (1996:145-147), "Will traditional churches release their laity in ministry?"

As our post-modern culture moves more and more toward polarization and fragmentation, should the church of Jesus Christ reflect this polarization? Should it not, intentionally, from each unit's inception, work to be a force for reconciliation between socially

homogeneous units in church and society? Should it not break down dividing walls and by including that which is different? In a society that is experiencing increasing fragmentation and polarization, is the conglomerate church and integrated church a way to prevent and reverse this trend by breaking down “the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us” (Ephesians 2:14)? Is this perhaps at least one dimension of the realization of the kingdom of God? This creates a real tension between our mission to the marginalized and our church experience.

It must be recognized, however, that already in 1955 the missionary genius of McGavran spoke of conversion in terms of the “centered set” (1955:14-15), although he did not call it such. However, McGavran clearly states that people are to be disciplined. For McGavran this meant that the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ must be first preached and then believed. Those who believe are disciples, though not yet perfected. Missionary effort should be primarily in the effort of evangelism which calls for making converts or disciples. The Holy Spirit will, over time, perfect the converted, if disciples are taught what to expect (Cf. Swanson 1989; C. Peter Wagner 1987:51-55). This corresponds to the point of encounter and the period of maturation according to Tippett’s model of conversion as a dynamic process. For McGavran encounter and initiation or confirmation occur immediately.

Speaking in terms of centered sets in Christian discipling McGavran (1955:14) states, “a people is disciplined when its individuals feel united around Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour,”

experience a “reorientation of the life of the social organism around the Lord Jesus Christ,” and “Christ is placed at the center of the life of any community, once He is enthroned in the hearts of the persons who make it up.” Further, he says, “[in] discipling, the full understanding of Christ is not the all-important factor, which is simply that He be recognized . . . sole spiritual Sovereign.” Also belonging to the first stage of becoming a disciple, according to the father of the church growth movement, is that

discipling of peoples is often hindered or actually stopped because, in the very first stage, the church leader requires evidence of an ethical change or dedication to Jesus Christ which some Christians in the older churches have not yet achieved. (McGavran 1955:15)

This describes the bounded set of which Hiebert (1978) speaks.

Given the seemingly inevitable creation of institutions by social groups, including religious movements, what are we to do when attempting to incorporate new converts from subcultural groups (or any converts) into existing churches and church groups all of which, to some degree and on some level, are institutionalized, i.e., bounded? What should the period of incorporation involve for a convert in order to make the difficult passage from conversion to full membership and acceptance by a rite of initiation into the church? What should the period of incorporation involve for the church in order to make the difficult passage from conversion to full membership and acceptance in the faith community more attractive?

Could existing groups be penetrated by and for new converts? If the efforts being put forth by our mission in Basel, Switzerland did

not provide a new, identifiable reference group, what could have been the solution? We did not seek a solution in *opposition* to or independent of what already existed, nor even in *apposition* to the currently existing structures of bounded youth group sets and liturgically rigid church sets but rather in *cooperation* with them? Where could street youth who were serious about becoming committed Christians find "a place to feel at home" (Welbourn and Ogot 1967 cited in Andrew Walls 1982:97)?

In this instance, is the only solution to establish new indigenous, sub-culturally homogeneous units, as much missiological understanding and strategizing advocates (McGavran 1955, 1959, 1970, 1980; Wagner 1987, 1990; Hunter 1987, 1992; Lukasse 1990)? What is the attitude among Christians in continental Europe toward such strategies? Should they be tried there? Would they work? Who decides?

It was Spring 1967. There was a growing excitement and curiosity as young theology students in the lecture hall at the University of Zürich, Switzerland eagerly awaited the guest lecturer. Professor James Barr, a British scholar of ancient languages and of budding renown in England and North America, soon entered the hall with our regular Old Testament professor. It was an interesting lecture about how recent discoveries and studies were helping our present-day understanding of the Hebrew language of the Old Testament period. These new insights served to authenticate the translations of the Hebrew manuscripts which made up the Hebrew Bible and Old Testament Christian Scriptures, Barr maintained. I

found myself and my faith, which had been significantly influenced and shaped by those stories, authenticated as well.

On the following day the lecture given by the regular professor from the university was a stinging rebuttal of all Barr had said. Perhaps more painful was the way the professor derided and demeaned Anglo-American theological reflection in general. He considered it naive, simplistic, and superficial. In time I learned that this was the attitude of many Europeans toward North Americans, their faith, and their culture, especially those from the United States. Even if those attitudes had been formed by movies from Hollywood, about the Wild West and Chicago gangsters, or by the “ugly American” tourists with their cameras strapped around their necks and their pockets stuffed with “greenbacks,” it was an easy thing for my Christian friends and strangers alike to dismiss some of my most serious thoughts and sacred sentiments as “*typisch amerikanisch*.” This story illustrates the attitude in many European and Swiss circles toward American churches and church growth strategies.

Werner Ustorf (1989), professor of mission at Selly Oak Colleges, University of Birmingham, England admits an anti-Americanism in German missiology which, surprisingly, stems from the missiology of Gustav Warneck (1903), the so-called father of modern European missiology.³⁵ Although Warneck’s missions theory arose out of the Pietist tradition of Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf and the University of Halle (Ustorf 1989:214), it was, according to Ustorf, influenced and prejudiced by the politics of the time--also toward the Anglo-American missionary movement (1989:216). Whether or

not Warneck's criticisms of the Anglo-American missionary movement and its mission strategies were justified [and many of them could be], it set the tone for more recent attitudes toward missions originating in Great Britain and North America, especially toward the church growth movement of McGavran and Arthur F. Glasser (Ustorf 1989:214). On the other hand, however, Ustorf (1989:219) recognizes that North American missions history and missions theory is much deeper and more diverse than portrayed by Warneck and his followers in subsequent years. German missiology has begun to discover some of that richness and depth (Ustorf 1989:219).

Only recently, as European Protestant state churches have begun to address the serious problem of membership decline in their churches and the subsequent decline of their financial base through loss of church taxes levied by the states, has a church growth movement begun to emerge with its own literature.

In 1971 Swiss missiologist and ecumenist Walter J. Hollenweger brought together numerous essays about dynamic churches world wide in *Kirche, Benzin und Bohnensuppe: Auf den Spuren dynamischer Gemeinden*. These essays, originally published in the "Monatlichen Informationsbrief über Evangelisation," a publication of the World Council of Churches (Hollenweger 1971:13), portray churches which are sensitive to their cultural context, innovative, and dynamic. Hollenweger's (1971:9-13) purpose in this book seems to be two-fold. One, it is intended as a response to sharp criticism from traditional church circles about the validity of the

work of the World Council of Churches. It attempts to show that dialogue among the churches of the world is a way to learn from one another about how to be a relevant, dynamic church in one's own context. Second, it is an attempt to stimulate the thinking of churches and church leaders, not to imitate these models, but rather to seek ways to make church and the Christian gospel of hope relevant in their own cultural and political contexts, i.e., to find new ways of doing church so that people are turned again toward God and reconciliation in a fragmented and divided world.

Hollenweger (1979) continued to call attention to the need for missiological reflection in the churches of Europe. After he was called as missions professor to the University of Birmingham, England, he reports in *Erfahrungen der Leibhaftigkeit* how his exposure to missions, universities, and students from around the world has caused him to reflect on his own Christian experience and theology, expanding it and allowing its boundaries to flex according to different contexts.

There have been influences from abroad which have impacted the missiological reflection of some pastors and churches in German speaking Europe, both state churches and free churches. Free churches (see Chapter 1, n. 11) have always felt that their own lands are a mission field and have consequently started new churches wherever they felt there was need for one. That is one reason at least that these churches are viewed by many members of state churches as sects and cults.

Recent correspondence from a Methodist pastor's wife (Pfister-

Bienz 1996) in an inner Swiss city tells how people in the neighborhood of their church still feel the Methodists are a sect because they are not one of the three state churches of Switzerland. The Methodist church, legally organized and recognized in Switzerland,³⁶ a land of religious freedom guaranteed by law, is still viewed among many in the population as a sect from America. It has existed in Switzerland for almost 150 years and is part of the World Methodist Council and United Methodism, a movement numbering over 10 million members, more than the entire population of Switzerland, yet it is still viewed as a foreign sect by many.³⁷

Since the days of the Reformation there have been alternatives to the state churches.³⁸ There have been many spontaneous movements arise throughout Europe's church history. It is not a new phenomenon in Europe, but since World War II it has gained a higher profile due to the proliferation of North American mission agencies advocating evangelical missions to Europe. An example of this is Robert P. Evan's (of the Greater Europe Mission) 1963 book *Let Europe Hear!* which called attention to Europe as a mission field.³⁹

A veteran church planter of 25 years, Johan Lukasse (1990) of the Belgian Evangelical Mission, in *Churches with Roots: Planting Churches in Post-Christian Europe*, draws heavily on principles outlined by the church growth movement in North America. Lukasse argues that if a church is no longer scriptural at its foundation of faith, and if it is no longer exhibiting spiritual life, then it can be abandoned for other places of fellowship where these criteria are met. This is his case for starting new churches in Europe, in the

shadows of cathedrals. However, he does recognize that within some of the churches there are elements of both these criteria that can justify evangelical Christians staying involved so they can work for evangelism and church growth. Since most of Lukasse's book is based on the church growth movement out of North America and since church growth has only begun to be accepted in some circles in Europe, and fiercely resisted by others, it is questionable how useful it might be, especially among mainline churches. But that is probably not his target audience. (Cf. Werner Ustorf 1989:212-222, "Antiamerikanismus in der deutschen Missionswissenschaft;" also Edward Rommen 1985.)

OC International has been working alongside German pastors for several years in an effort to renew the Evangelical Lutheran churches in Germany from within. One means of this effort has been study trips to the U.S. for German pastors, exposing them to growing churches in this country and to church growth methods (Wollin 1991). This has not always been without opposition of some synodal bishops and local pastors (Wollin 1993a; 1995), but as a 1991 *Kongress für Erweckung und Gemeindeaufbau* held in Nürnberg, Germany indicates there is a burgeoning grassroots church growth movement in German-speaking lands of Europe. All the speakers at this congress were indigenous church leaders from state and free churches of Europe, with few exceptions, C. Peter Wagner of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California and Larry Christenson of Minneapolis, Minnesota among those exceptions ("Gemeinde Kongress '91," 7-11 November 1991) . A second congress was held in

September 1992 when Bill Hybels from Willow Creek Community Church was keynote speaker (Wollin 1993b:1). Wollin reports that a Manifesto was issued by the leaders of the congress confessing the sins of the Body of Christ in Germany. They include

- apathy towards the “lostness” of others.
- apathy regarding the disunity among Christians.
- apathy towards society’s less fortunate.
- apathy concerning Germany’s political/historical role throughout this century. (1993b:1)

There are also now indigenous, interdenominational church growth movements within these lands, such as the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Gemeindeaufbau* (AGGA) with its own publication, *Gemeindegewachstum: Zeitschrift für Pfarrer und engagierte Gemeindeglieder*; the *Geistliche Gemeinde Erneuerung* (GGE) among charismatics in the state churches; *Aktion Gemeindeaufbau*; and the *DAWN-Strategie*.

Wollin (1995), a national missionary trained at Fuller Theological Seminary and working with OC International, reports that church growth principles are not generally working within the mainline state churches, but that many new churches are being started by frustrated Christians and pastors from both state churches and free churches.⁴⁰ According to Wollin, about one-third of the new churches are comprised of new Christians, two-thirds being former members of other congregations.⁴¹

There is, however, a groundswell of Christians within state churches who are seeking renewal, revival, and missionary growth within their churches. But it is their intention, as far as possible, to

help bring it about without abandoning their history and their present relationships to those churches. They are recognizing that not all folks are Christians, not even in the *Volkskirche*. They are recognizing that without evangelization the church loses its vitality and declines. More attention is being given to this concern, at least in some circles of traditional churches, with a concern for the folks who are today distant to the churches as well as for the spirituality of those who are still “hangers on” (Seitz 1985). Some proponents of church renewal are risking the criticism of traditionalists by espousing a return to basic New Testament church practice, seeking new forms whenever necessary without denying where the church has come from historically. Those persons with a relationship to the state church desire renewal of their historic churches or at least the founding of new congregations within the parameters of that church or with a view toward it (1985:38-56; Wieland 1992, 1994; cf. L. Mead 1994; Hadaway and Roozen 1995). In other words, it occurs within the cathedral culture, in relationship with it, or in proximity to it.⁴²

Much church growth in Germany and Switzerland recognizes its relationship to the cultural matrix from which it is emerging. Joerg Knoblauch, Klaus Eickhoff, and Friedrich Aschoff, leaders in the AGGA and the GGE, give us a valuable resource of attempts that are being made to reevangelize their lands and churches. They have collected numerous essays and stories of churches in renewal or in early stages of conception and growth in *Gemeinde gründen in der Volkskirche--Modelle der Hoffnung* (1991). They provide models

from the experiences of state church pastors and leaders who are using available legal avenues to form churches and programs within the structures of traditional state churches. In some places this is happening with the blessing and financial backing of bishops and synods, in other places pastors or church members are counting the cost and breaking away to form independent churches without the confines and restrictions imposed by the church hierarchy (Cf. Kopfermann 1990). Other models are of free churches which are innovating from their own traditions to experiment with new ways of "doing church" in order to attract new segments of the society. Several movements are mentioned which have the goal of reaching whole segments of society with the gospel and to form new churches or house churches. These are all models from within the European context. They are not imported models from North America, although it is recognizable that "borrowing" has occurred. Cultural borrowing is, however, a valid dynamic which allows the result to have an indigenous outcome and not a foreign, imposed one.

Though it depends on each local church congregation what its attitude and outreach toward marginal cultural groups will be, it is disturbing that in this collection of essays and examples that little mention is made of the subculture groups in society. It may be taken for granted in these examples that so-called marginals are included as one among many target groups which need discipling and gathered into churches. Or it may be assumed by the authors that those who are in the shadows of cathedrals are like everyone else in society and will be reached by the same strategies and methods. But

is there sufficient awareness of cross-cultural dynamics to assure that this will be undertaken intentionally? Is it recognized that they too may have a significant contribution to make to the churches being formed or renewed? Will those who are “other”⁴³ be overlooked while church growers look for those who are most like themselves?

In a self-critical book, *Kirche-wo bist Du?* (1993), by Swiss Reformed pastor Wolfgang J. Bittner, the church in which Bittner is a popular pastor and theologian is challenged to “be the church.” After admonishing his denomination to return to its roots in Scripture and to live the life of faith as the New Testament churches did, carrying out its mission in the world and forming faith communities as witness to God’s saving deeds in the world that are relevant to meet today’s challenges, he questions the tendency he sees in the church growth movement in Switzerland and Germany. Though starting as an attempt to renew the existing churches, he sees more and more a breaking away from the existing churches to start new ones outside of the parameters of the traditional churches (1993:134). One has to ask the question, “Why is that happening?” Is it as Wollin (1995) and Rotach (1992:78) have said, i.e., that it is not working because of the hindrances placed in the way of those working for renewal (Wollin 1995) or because the “bulwark” of the institutional church is resisting any change or movement (Rotach 1992).

Bittner (1993:134) does, however, raise a question that may be pertinent to the debate over church growth in European lands. He maintains that the church growth movement becomes problematic

for Swiss when insights gained in mission lands where there are no Christian churches, or insights from lands in which there are only free churches, as in the U.S., are superimposed on European situations. Perhaps of greater concern to this study is the observation made by Bittner (1993:136) that in the thinking and planning of church growth proponents, “analogous to the processes in modern economics,” the weak and dependent are not being considered, because they cannot contribute productively to the process. Bittner says, “The way we treat and esteem the weak in our churches is an indicator of the health of our churches” (1993:136) [My translation.]. Because they cannot be productive and contribute to the growth process, they are marginalized by our churches rather than included as in a family (1993:136; cf. also Ernst Sieber 1993; Lyon 1994). In some instances there may be ministry carried out among the poor, the refugees, the addicts, the impaired, the people of strange customs and tongues. My research shows that there is (Cf. e.g., Schwenger 1992; Ebert 1992; Künneht 1992; Sieber 1993; Fürst 1987, 1994, 1995). But the question is, is it ministry *to* or ministry *with* the socially marginalized? Are they included in church life as responsible participant-members? What conditions might be put on them before they can be included?⁴⁴

In 1980 the President of the Church Council, the late Rev. Peter Rotach (1992), gave a challenging sermon to the Synod of the *Evangelisch-reformierte Kirche Basel-Stadt*. He reminded the Synod that the renewal of the church in the course of church history rarely came from out of the parochial structures and circles of the ecclesial

establishment. The churches had usually become too much a part of their cultural world to recognize their own needs when faced by foreign, culturally inferior monks who came with new and strange methods among them to convert the populace to Christianity. Francis of Assisi had first become an outsider before he challenged the church to follow Jesus and serve the poor. When the Reformation began in Basel (ca. 1523) the church establishment made up of the intelligentsia and wealthy chose rather to leave town than be confronted by Alsatiens and Swabians preaching Christian humanism. The pietistic revival (ca. 1750) was influenced and carried on in Basel mostly by outsiders. "The church structures, as good and democratic as they may be, have often proved themselves to be bulwarks that resist all renewal The church, which in its Declaration explicitly calls itself 'semper reformanda,' often has difficulty to be set in motion" (Rotach 1992:78). [My translation.]

In closing his sermon, Rotach (1992:79) pointed out to the Synod that, world wide, the pentecostal churches have a much greater impact than the Swiss Evangelical Reformed Church.⁴⁵ "We forget also that worldwide these renewal movements that place the Holy Spirit in the center--the charismatic movements--are in powerful revival and are bringing new life into many churches" (1992:79). [My translation.] He then admonishes the Synod and church to show tolerance, not a tolerance of indifference, but one of openness to all that God can do through outsiders and marginal groups (1992:79).

Tolerance is the recognition that the people of God are still

underway, that the people of God stand neither on the right nor left, but they move forward. In all its differences and diversity it is called to the one goal, unto the day namely, when renewal of the church is no longer needed because it is fulfilled: "I will create a new heaven and a new earth, see I make all things new." (Rotach 1992:79) [My translation.]

Perhaps the renewal and church growth movements in German speaking lands of Europe are still too recent to have addressed all problems, considered every factor and social dynamic, and answered all questions. Nevertheless, there is movement again. There is the call to conversion and participation in community which was really never silent, but in many circles its cry was only weakly heard. But what impact will these movements for church renewal and church growth have on the marginal? Will the groups that are reaching out to the marginalized be included in the churches? Would the inclusion of the socially marginal not enrich the church and contribute to its renewal and growth as communities of the rule of God in the world? Is indeed that not the real identity of the church itself?

On Assimilating New Members

No one has given more attention to the assimilation of new members into the church than Lyle Schaller, church growth researcher and editor of the Creative Leadership Series for Abingdon Press. He addresses "both the process and the problems in assimilating new members into a [church] congregation" (1978:Foreword). In his 1978 book, *Assimilating New Members*

written admittedly for a North American context and from a North American Christian's point of view, Schaller helps us look at the problem of inclusion and exclusion by congregations and how these might be overcome.

Schaller recognizes that every congregation has a "glue" that holds it together, i.e., a common task or project, its identity as a homogeneous unit along ethnic lines, socio-economic class, other shared cultural traits, a shared crisis, generational factors, and other commonalities that make the group homogeneous (1978:24-35). These Schaller calls "organizing principles" (1978:36). If a person can identify and participate with the church, then one develops a sense of belonging; if one does not find access to those who bear the identity of the group, then one feels excluded from participation and either remains as an inactive member, moves on to another church in hopes of participation and a sense of belonging, or else one drops out of church all together. The stronger and more clearly defined the identifying traits of a congregation are, the more difficult it is for those who are different to gain participation in that church--the lines of inclusion become at the same time lines of exclusion (1978:37).

Schaller deals with this dilemma matter-of-factly. After attempting to identify the kinds of people who may be excluded from a church, not intentionally or by design but *de facto*, he names several things that keep people from joining some particular churches.

A chapter on "The Dynamics of Inclusion and Exclusion" (1978:69-98) may be the heart of the book. In this chapter Schaller

discusses the dynamics of the “us-them syndrome” (1978:83-85) and “responses to pluralism” (1978:86-93). The usual response in churches to these situations has been that churches divide into homogeneous churches along the lines of inclusion-exclusion or these groups are divided into separate ministries within the same congregation. As our culture becomes more pluralistic⁴⁶ many congregations are becoming intentional about being more diverse, according to Schaller (1978:89). While the former solution, i.e., the homogeneous group, is the easiest to realize, to manage, and contributes to more rapid growth, the latter solution requires more and better trained staff and also often more resources in order to offer the diversity of programs and services needed by a culturally pluralistic congregation and “requires a revision of the traditional system of church governance and decision-making” (1978:89-94).

Schaller’s book is obviously a book on management and organizational strategies applied to church congregations. Though useful for that purpose it fails to answer the deeper underlying question. While dealing with the *what* and *how*, it does not satisfactorily address from a biblical perspective the question *why*. Schaller thoroughly deals with the materialistic and mechanical dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in churches, but does not adequately address the motivational questions. It is probably not the intention of the author to do so, but what is needed here is what Clifford Geertz (1973:6-7, 9-10), borrowing a concept from Gilbert Ryle (1949), explains as “thick description,” i.e., the motivational factors behind a behavior or action. But what greater motivation

than the motivation of faith informed by God's self-revelation (John 14:9, 12; Romans 4:13-22; Ephesians 1:15-23; Hebrews 11 et al.)? If one accepts that the kingdom of God is a reality, then one has faith that this is true and is worth our effort to pray for and work for its coming. This belief shapes our values about what is important to us and this in turn determines our behaviour, i.e., what we do or choose to perform.⁴⁷

In the concluding chapter, "The Price of Growth," Schaller (1978:124-128) challenges churches to "count the cost" of growth, most crucial of which, he says, is the attitude of members (1978:125). If the congregation is to grow, the congregation must be, among other things, willing and ready to assimilate new members, wherever they may come from culturally. Schaller notes:

Perhaps the most subtle item on this list is the need to avoid turning the Christian faith into a cultural religion. This is a centuries-old problem and one which Jesus faced repeatedly. Cultural religion becomes exclusionary, concerned with its own self-preservation, and is blind to the real implications of the gospel. Sinful man, however, often tries to turn Christian churches into temples of a cultural religion. (1978:127)

Internal adjustments must be made to accommodate the newcomers, make them feel accepted, and allow them to participate with access to decision making (1978:125-127).

Summary Remarks

Using the research findings, using tried and existing models of intervention among socially marginal groups, examining experimental models of churches and mission among subculture

groups, and using knowledge and insights gained from all the areas of study reviewed here, some models are suggested for reaching and including subcultural groups in Christian faith communities. These models could hopefully help churches incorporate new converts from subcultures into the church by overcoming cultural barriers-- churches that want to model the kingdom of God, but which avoid heterogeneity because of the potential cultural conflicts it may create--while themselves experiencing revitalization and new dynamism.

To use the imagery of bio-genetic engineering: I attempt to splice a "revitalization gene" into the "institutionalizing DNA molecule" of Christian movements. Just as in genetic engineering, however, the procedure must be *intentionally, skillfully, and carefully* carried out, in obedience to the Lord of life as told of in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures and by the power of the Holy Spirit of God at work in the community of faith. Also, as in the field of medicine, there is the danger of rejection, however. What could be life-saving for an organism is sometimes rejected by it to its own self-destruction. Hopefully, that will not be the case in our story. Through this, and other proposed models of intervention,⁴⁸ renewal of the churches might itself become institutionalized resulting in dynamic churches rather than static, culturally bounded ones.

As missiology now recognizes, it is our mandate to make disciples, which goes beyond and involves more than calling for a decision to believe in the gospel. A decision must be reached (Tippett 1977), but a disciple must be made by incorporating that

convert into the church which is a reflection of God's kingdom present in this world and by bringing him or her to maturity in Christ.⁴⁹

Notes

1 . In order for the church to be the church which Jesus builds and to which Christian Scripture testifies, it is therefore a missionary or apostolic (Hunter 1987:16, 19-38) church whose mission is carried out through the participation of all its members, the priesthood of all believers (Küng 1976:479-485). This premise is assumed in this study. This review, therefore, does not include various theologies of mission. For these see Roland Allen (1962), *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?*; Peter Beyerhaus (1971), *Missions: Which Way?*; Johannes Blauw (1962), *The Missionary Nature of the Church*; David Bosch (1980), *Witness to the World: The Christian Mission in Theological Perspective*; (1991), *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*; Roger E. Hedlund (1991), *The Mission of the Church in the World*; J.C. Hoekendijk (1964), *The Church Inside Out*; Lucien Legrand (1990), *Unity and Plurality: Mission in the Bible*; George W. Peters (1972), *A Biblical Theology of Missions*; Donald Senior and Carroll Stuhlmueller (1983), *The Biblical Foundations for Mission*; Johannes Verkuyl (1978), *Contemporary Missiology: An Introduction*; Gustav Warneck (1903), *Outline of a History of Protestant Missions*. Cf. Hans-Werner Gensichen (1985), *Mission und Kultur: Gesammelte Aufsätze* for essays on the development in mission in recent years; Ferdinand Hahn (1995) on "*Geschichte des Urchristentums als Missionsgeschichte*."

2 . Geertz (1973:93) explains how religion can be viewed as a cultural system displaying cultural patterns that serve as models. The symbols within this system model "relations among entities, processes or what-have-you in physical, organic, social, or psychological systems by paralleling, imitating, or simulating them." Geertz explains further how the term "model" has two aspects of symbolic meaning--an "of" sense and a "for" sense. These become models *of* "reality" and models *for* "reality." He concludes that "they give meaning, that is, objective conceptual form, to social and psychological reality both by shaping themselves to it and by shaping it to themselves" (1973:93). In this sense, then, I view Jesus as model *of* and model *for* God's mission and the Christian's life, a

concept which, I believe, is founded in the biblical witness about Jesus and Christian discipleship.

3 . For further theological discussion on the kingdom of God see John Bright (1953), T. W. Manson (1963 [1931]), Werner Kümmel (1969:24-32, 41-49), Joachim Jeremias (1971), Catherine LaCugna (1973:292-296, 377-411), et al. The discussion by Klappert (1976:372-390) in *Dictionary of New Testament Theology* vol. 2. on *basileus, basileia, and basileia tou theou* is both elucidating and thorough in its explanation of the NT use of kingdom of God and of Christ and provides exhaustive bibliography to the subject. See also Schmidt's (1933:573-595) treatment of the *basileia tou theou* in *Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament*.

4 . Albrecht Oepke in *TWNT* 3:661 (*kenoo*) explains how the person, Jesus, who came into the world in the flesh was the same preexistent Jesus who was in the form of God, an existence he gave up to take on the form of a servant, flesh in this world. He did not exploit or abuse the preexistent nature of being, but gave it up willingly to become like one of us humans to live, serve and die in this world. His nature was the same, but the manner of being was different.

Cf. Jürgen Moltmann (1991:118-122) regarding "The Kenosis of God" and "Trinitarian Incarnation." In this discussion Moltmann presents mutuality within God rather than a trinitarian hierarchy, thereby elevating the "outward incarnation" because of the presupposed "self-humiliation" of Christ in order to meet men and women in a form understandable to them. God is "self-limiting" in order to become the incarnate and crucified Son. Through inward self-limitation Jesus became outwardly de-limited. It is through this same attitude of *kenosis* that we are also true to the image of God as persons and as people of God. Cf. also Catherine LaCugna (1973) for further discussion on this topic.

The explanation provided by Victor Turner (1977) shows how *communitas* develops in the ritual process whenever a person enters into liminality (a shared threshold experience, anti-structure, uncertainty) with others by giving up status, entering into their uncertainty, and assists in ushering them into new standing and

elevated roles of identity and function, i.e., empowering them for participation in community. As we shall later see this dynamic has powerful implications for Christian mission.

On the use of the concept of *kenosis* in mission literature (see Works Cited) extensive bibliography has been collected by Daniel N. Harmelink (1995), D. Miss. student at Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, IN.

5 . For further discussion on what is meant in Christian Scripture by "kingdom of God," and for discussion of how that kingdom with its values and relationships is reflected by the nature of Christian community see additionally John Bright (1953), *The Kingdom of God* ; John G. Gager (1975), *Kingdom and Community*; Andrew Kirk (1983), *Good News of the Kingdom Coming: The Marriage of Evangelism and Social Responsibility*; Hans Küng (1976), *The Church*; Carver T. Yu (1987), *Being and Relation: A Theological Critique of Western Dualism and Individualism*, especially his Chapter 6 on "Being as Being-in-Communion in the Biblical Tradition: A Viable Option for Cultural Reconstruction.

6 . Fiorenza (1983:110-130) recognizes in the proclaiming of the *basileia* of God by Jesus the kingdom and holy nation of Israel which is the dominant ethos in the life of Israel. Jesus' preaching and praxis are a continuation of this theme. God's reign is for all persons and peoples--individually and collectively regardless of ethnic origin, social status, or cultic practice. The "basileia vision of Jesus" is "the praxis of inclusive wholeness" (1983:118) which includes at table those who were previously, under the Pharisaical priesthood, unworthy, unclean, and uninvited (1983:120-121). She goes on to point out that Jesus' followers were a discipleship of women, as well as men (1983:130), and a discipleship of equals among women and men (1983:140).

7 . For a thorough discussion of the tension between Christ and culture see H. Richard Niebuhr (1951), *Christ and Culture*. French social historian, Jacques Ellul, calls for a similar understanding of church and the kingdom of God, or radical Christian discipleship in this world in his 1986 book *The Subversion of Christianity*. Ellul sees

Christianity being subverted when the dynamic movement of God's Spirit became institutionalized in a power-wielding hierarchy of church and state. In this it lost its center, namely, (1) "the revelation and work of God accomplished in Jesus Christ," (2) "the being of the church as the body of Christ," and (3) "the faith and life of Christians in truth and love" (1986:11). When the church lapsed into "moralism" it established boundaries of existence which had to be maintained and protected at all cost, even to the cost of its own true life and identity. This loss of center and establishment of moralistic boundaries marked for Ellul a subversion of Christianity by its institutionalization and has contributed to its demise in the Western world. This seems to be consistent with Hiebert's centered set and bounded set definition of Christian groups (1978).

8 . Fukuda (1992) maintains that in Japan more than fundamental allegiance to Jesus Christ as Lord is necessary for true conversion to take place. Unless additional moral and doctrinal boundaries are defined there exists the danger of dual allegiance to gods (kami) and Christ at the same time. Does this view, however, make recognition (or denial) of cultural and cognitive categories necessary before one can be a Christian (Hiebert 1978:24-26; cf. Teeter 1990:306; Kraft 179:119)?

9 . These personal characteristics and traits are considered in some Christian circles as uncharacteristic of a true follower of Christ and therefore not tolerated in those circles. Difficulties arise, however, when attempting to theologially base arguments against such values from Scripture. John Wesley (1984:353-375) in a sermon, "The Great Assize," explains his views on "sinless perfection." Wesley held Christian perfection to be "perfect love" and not total sinlessness. It was, according to Snyder (1980:177, n. 18), "a perfected love relationship with God and persons, based in part on human will." Furthermore Snyder adds, "Wesley defined sin, when speaking of perfection, as the voluntary transgression of the known will of God; so for him the many imperfections and mistakes flowing from human finiteness, incomplete knowledge and so forth were not sin." Therefore, according to Wesley's view, one can conclude that values held by Christians at different stages of growth and perfection

will be different and inclusion in the Christian community is not based on uniformity of appearance and behavior. The problems this creates for churches is discussed on p. 157.

10 . The question arises concerning the sharing of and participation in the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's table. None of the parachurch ministries, youth groups, or missions familiar to me in Basel administer the sacraments. These are the purview of the churches, and, in most of the churches, of the ordained clergy. This suggests another reason the parachurch ministries, youth groups, and missions should be embedded in a congregation of the Christian church in order to grant access of all persons of faith, including the marginalized, to the "means of grace." John Wesley's practice was not only to gather seekers and converts into classes, bands, and societies, but also to require that they attend the Anglican Church where they could receive the sacraments and thus grow in their faith (Wesley 1989:37-94; cf. Snyder 1980:115-124). The Eucharist, especially when combined with a common meal in the house church (Meeks 1983:75-110; cf. Cullmann 1950:17-34), could provide a place of bonding with the Christian faith community for persons who are otherwise socially marginalized. In the cultural context, however, the administration of the sacraments belongs to the church(es) and whatever group is not recognized culturally as a church and administers the sacraments is quickly labeled a sect that is usurping the place of the church. Some "ecclesiolae in ecclesia" have formed themselves into churches, e.g., Pilgermission St. Chrischona, and do administer the sacraments. Others, e.g., the Salvation Army and Blue Cross, do not.

11 . For further explication of this see the various theologies of mission mentioned in note 1.

12 . Cf. Norman Gottwald (1979), *The Tribes of Yaweh* for further discussion of this theme; also Nicholas Thomas Wright (1992), *The New Testament and the People of God*, especially pp. 444-464, "The Early Christians: A Preliminary Sketch."

13 . This is the kind of question that gives rise to the many

liberation communities as outlined by Letty Russell (1993), communities that often find no acceptance in traditional institutional churches, but faith communities that find their identity by their orientation toward Jesus Christ (1993:96-110). Russell considers the possibilities of *Church in the Round: Feminist Interpretation of the Church* which includes men if men are willing to participate at the “kitchen table” with women (1993:96). She offers feminist interpretations of such topics as leadership, community, mission, justice, hospitality, and spirituality. Within an interpretive framework of “centered sets” these possibilities must be considered.

14 . See also Gager 1975; Malina 1981, 1986; Kraybill 1990:204-230, 267-273. Margaret Y. Macdonald (1988:61-71, 149-154), while setting boundaries for inclusion/exclusion in the Pauline sect along ritualistic lines and belief systems, recognizes the diversity of those bodies, whether in Corinth or in Ephesus and Colossae. Their identity is found in the shared ritualistic experiences and belief systems, not in their social and economic homogeneity. However, Macdonald does point out the tensions created by Paul when he speaks of the church as “a third race” or “third entity” (1988:32). While wanting to identify the church as something distinct from the world with boundaries of inclusion and behavior, he saw it more as a “recreated humanity” rather than one exclusionary group among others (1988:32).

Gerd Theissen (1994), in an article *Die Einheit der Kirche: Kohärenz und Differenz im Urchristentum*, discusses the things which contributed to the unity of early Christianity and the things that put tensions on the unity of the church. He concludes that the “content of Christian faith,” namely, its central focus on Jesus Christ, its sharing of common sacraments, and its shared sense of values, fostered unity among the Christians. However, their diverse interpretations of those central themes strained their relationship to one another. This is similar to Hiebert’s (1978) theory of “centered sets” and “bounded sets” regarding Christians’ primary source of their identity. Miroslav Volf (1995) offers a discussion on “*Christliche Identität und Differenz*” in which he raises the question of Christian uniqueness in modern society. He seeks for social identity and social differentiation, much as Theissen does in the early

church. For a discussion of how this dynamic plays itself out in India today, see E. C. John (1994). See also Wolf Kroetke (1994) for perspectives on the possibility of unity in today's Germany.

15 . During the Wesleyan revival in eighteenth century England, the marginal who were encountered on the streets (pre-evangelism) were enlisted in classes and bands where they were evangelized in one-on-one relationships, bonded to the Christian community, and formed into societies. They were required to attend the Anglican Church to receive the sacraments as means of grace for Christian growth (Wesley 1989:37-94). Howard Snyder (1980:53-64) offers a thorough discussion of the development of Wesley's societies, bands, and classes and their significance for Christian discipleship.

16 . As Chapter 5, "Humility and Hierarchy: The Liminality of Status Elevation and Reversal" (Turner 1977:166-203), shows, persons from the new status level who enter into liminality with initiates also give up their status, reversing their roles, and become submissive to the newcomers, serving them while instructing them and modelling for them the meaning of roles and status when the newcomer is integrated into the new social structure.

17 . A treatment of this use of liminality by the late second-century Roman church is discussed by Thomas M. Finn (1989:69-89). See also a discussion of the current practice of catechism in the church by Hans Küng (1978) in *Signposts for the Future: Contemporary Issues Facing the Church* and Peter R. Monkres and R. Kenneth Ostermiller (1995), *The Rite of Confirmation: Moments When Faith Is Strengthened*.

18 . The only prerequisites for participation in John Wesley's classes was "the fear of God and the desire to flee the wrath to come" (Wesley 1829-1831(8):250). Inclusion and participation of non-Christians in these meetings as a liminal (threshold) experience was essential before full integration could occur.

19 . For further discussion of this theme see Hans Küng

(1976:465-495, esp. 473-485).

20 . Note here Jürgen Moltmann's (1991:114-122) treatment of mutuality within the Trinity or the "open Trinity" in *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God*. Here Moltmann maintains that mutuality is the predominant characteristic of relationship within the Trinity and that role reversal or changed role occurs in order to achieve God's purpose toward creation. Any hierarchy is merely functional and temporary.

21 . This is illustrated by Finn's (1989) explanation of Turner's theory which he applies to *The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus* in order to show how the experience of liminality creates a sense of community among the participants and ushers the initiants into the new status thus accomplishing integration of new converts into the faith community.

22 . For further reading on institutionalization of religion see Malinowski (1965:102-112), Geertz (1973:87-125), O'Dea (1966:85-93), Fiorenza (1983:76-84), and Malina (1986:112-138). Margaret MacDonald (1988) offers a treatise on institutionalization in the Pauline churches and its effect on community building, community stabilization, and community protection.

23 . With regard to established boundaries for the sake of group identification, membership criteria, and group discipline the following show how these are necessary for the church and subsequent fellowship groups: Howard A. Snyder (1980:53-64), Kenneth Tollefson (1990:315-328), and Donald A. McGavran (1990:123-130, 163-178).

24 . See also H. G. Barnett (1953), *Innovation: The Basis of Cultural Change* and Everett M. Rogers (1995), *Diffusion of Innovations*.

25 . It is my judgment that the closer the recipients in our story got to the "donor culture" of churches and youth groups, the greater the pressure became to adopt certain behavioral innovations,

triggering resistance mechanisms in the youthful new converts. These were usually not given time to adopt or appropriate changes for themselves. There was the case of Stefan, for example, mentioned at the beginning of chapter 1. After his theophany in a jail cell of the Lohnhof city prison in Basel, it was not enough to indicate a conversion experience that he put laces in his shoes, cut his hair, and placed a band-aid over the tattoo on his forehead--all indicators that something significant had happened, all done of his own volition to show that there had been a turning in his life. But I must say, without rancor or accusation, that for the bounded Christian groups these were not sufficiently "Christian" to authenticate his conversion.

26 . Cf. Charles H. Kraft (1963:179-187), "Christian Conversion or Cultural Conversion," and Wilbert R. Shenk (1994:8-13), "Encounters with 'Culture' Christianity."

27 . When C. Peter Wagner (1987:95-112) discusses "the kingdom of God and mission" in chapter five, "The Meaning of Mission," in *Strategies for Church Growth: Tools for Effective Mission and Evangelism*, he speaks of how both evangelism and social responsibility should be part of our mission. It is not only the responsibility of the Christian to save souls, but also to care for bodies by ministering to the needs of the whole person. Wagner does not, however, address the question of what those communities of Christians look like or what the essence of those communities is. See also C. Peter Wagner (1979), *Our Kind of People: The Ethical Dimensions of Church Growth in America*; (1990), *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest*; George G. Hunter III (1987:173-179) in *To Spread the Power*; (1992:66-68, 83-87) in *How to Reach Secular People*.

28 . Tom Yoder Neufeld reflects on his Mennonite experience in "Christian Counterculture: *Ecclesia* and Establishment" (1989). He concludes that his church tradition no longer offers much alternative to the cultural status quo of Western socio-economic existence and North American cultural values. It has lost its sense of its own history and "called-outness," not into seclusion, but as prophetic voice in today's unjust and complacent world.

29 . On all levels the church has often sought to demonstrate its unity and diversity. On the world level Oscar Cullmann (1988) in *Unity through Diversity* speaks of the unity of the church demonstrated through its diversity. In mission, Lucien Legrand (1988), *Unity and Plurality*, recognizes the plural ways the greater church can do and does mission, yet with a unity of purpose and witness. Abraham J. Malherbe (1983), Wayne A. Meeks (1977, 1983), and Gerd Theissen (1977, 1992) argue the case for social diversity of the early churches at the congregational level. Even though this cultural diversity often caused conflict in the churches, it was an attraction to many who were disillusioned by the monolithic, yet unsatisfying and disintegrating social and religious cultures of their day. Could not this understanding and portrayal of Christian faith community attract those who feel themselves already marginal and divergent to the dominant culture, of which the church culture is seen to be a part? Could not the local church congregation be the place of spiritual, social, and economic integration of all kinds of persons?

30 Cf. John 10:16; Acts 1:3, 6-8; 2:5-13, 17, 41-47; 6:1-7; 8:1b-5, 26-40; 10:1 - 11:26; etc.; Romans 16:1-16; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; Galatians 2:11-14; 3:23-29; Ephesians 2:11-22; 4:1-16; et al. Revelation 7:9 depicts the ultimate goal of our mission with the scene of "a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne" If Christian community is to reflect the kingdom of God to the world, should this not be the make up of the local communities of faith, as nearly as possible? Abraham J. Malherbe (1983:61, 83, 87) argues for the social, economic, and racial diversity of the early church as normative and representative of the young Christian faith community. This is one of the things which set it apart from other organizations in Roman society and made it attractive to newcomers; it afforded an alternative to the world. Gerd Theissen (1992:251-287) argues from the basis of integration theory that the class consciousness of Roman society did indeed create conflict among the early Christians, but the challenge was to overcome these differences within the church communities on the basis of the common faith [i.e.,

on the basis of the centered set, not the bounded set which drew lines of social, ethnic, and economic differences]. If Jesus has indeed torn down the middle wall of division between human differences (Ephesians 2:11-22), should we not also be about tearing down walls that divide humans by making that a part of the good news of the kingdom, which Jesus also proclaimed, from the outset of our evangelism efforts so that new converts know from the start of their Christian journey that they are part of something different from the world's stratification and discrimination? When Jesus called his first disciples to follow him they were a diverse lot, but had in common the call of the kingdom and the intention of following Jesus. It is true they shared the same macro-culture, but came from very different micro-cultures--fishers, women, tax collectors, and Zealots, e.g.!

31 . According to Floyd V. Filson (1939:109-112), "The Significance of the Early House Churches," the significant identity of those churches was not the social composition of New Testament churches in the first instance. Filson argues that house churches divided into homogeneous units caused strife and division among the churches of a city. Is this evidence of an early form of adversarial denominationalism? Cf. Malherbe 1983; Theissen 1992; Birkey 1991.

32 . Hans Kasdorf (1980:147) illustrates the process of church institutionalization which has occurred and which describes much of the current situation in Euro-America. Furthermore, as in the case with most so-called "cultural Christians," Kasdorf explains that "to repeat a creed [boundary?] as a confession of faith without both the appropriate Christian nurture and true conversion . . . leads to nominality and institutionalized Christendom, which by its very nature, is a type of neopaganism" (1980:158). Kasdorf suggests it is easier to revert from Christianity to post-Christian neopaganism than to convert from pre-Christian paganism to true Christian discipleship though the former may be a longer process over time (1980:157). Also pertinent to this discussion is Charles H. Kraft's (1979:37-41, 315-327) treatment of "static" versus "dynamic" models of the Christian church.

33 . For a working example of how one church, Bear Valley Baptist Church in Denver, has done this see Frank R. Tillapaugh (1982), *Unleashing the Church: Getting People Out of the Fortress and into Ministry*. In this description of the Bear Valley Church Tillapaugh shows how diverse groups make up one church congregation.

34 . For a thorough discussion of small group and cell-based structures for churches see Dale E. Galloway (1993) who gives a model for the small-group church; Ralph W. Neighbour, Jr. (1990) presents a model for the cell-based church; Vincent Donovan (1990:108-110) speaks of the decentralized church in which base church communities play a key role; and Terry Virgo (1985) who describes the house church movement in Great Britain. Del Birkey (1991) proposes the house church as practiced in the New Testament churches as a missiological model for today as heterogeneous units that “nurtured a healthy social integration of Christianity” (1991:70) and “provided a fertile seedbed for the most revolutionary equalization of racial, class, and sexual distinctions brought about by the Christ event” (1991:71). In the New Testament it was the house church, according to Birkey, that “strengthened the concept of corporate solidarity in Christian conversion” (1991:73).

35 . To trace the history of German missions (which often overlapped with Swiss missions since they shared a somewhat common language and many common Christian faith traditions) see Hans-Werner Gensichen (1985:189-202; 1985:214-231).

36 . In some cantons in Switzerland free churches are still attempting to gain the same rights and recognition as state churches. They are currently recognized as associations, but this does not assure recognition as churches and therefore carries with it the stigma of “sect” among many of the people in government and among the general population (Cf. “Freikirche verlangt Anerkennung” in *idea magazin* 1995(1):31).

37 . Methodism was first introduced in Switzerland by Swiss emigrants to the United States where they found their traditional

Christian faith revived by encounter with the Methodist evangelists and churches in that land. They wrote their relatives in Switzerland that they should get to know this church. In 1856 the first Methodist evangelists came to Switzerland upon invitation of their own people and found many receptive to their preaching. Ten years later the Evangelical Association began their work in Switzerland. The two united in 1969 (Handschin 1988:n.p.).

38 . A biblicist group of Anabaptists arose near Zwingli's Zürich (1525). The persecution of Anabaptists by the Reformation church could not hinder its spread (Pfister 1961:1611; Blanke 1962:1957). Together with other similar movements these are known today as Swiss Brethren, Hutterites, and Mennonites, the latter named after the Dutch Anabaptist reformer Menno Simons (Fast 1962:602; van der Linde 1960:1461).

39 . Not only evangelical Protestants, both from within Europe and from abroad, see contemporary Europe as a mission field. It is recognized among Roman Catholic missiologists as well ("Missionsland" 1992:177-178).

40 . Among many in both state churches and free churches there is the serious question of whether the church can survive as a state church. Part of the debate questions whether the free churches offer an adequate model for a complete restructure of state churches because after three or four generations they have become like the state churches in many respects, with the same dynamics and same problems in a smaller framework (Berggoetz 1992:41; Studer 1995:8). Some have already abandoned the possibility of adequate reform within the state church (Kopfermann 1990) and have bid "Farewell to an Illusion." Others call for major changes (Bittner 1994) and hope for its rebirth and survival (Meyer 1995:24-25; cf. also Marshall 1996: 74-76). Dietrich Werner (1993:6) maintains the transition to a *Freiwilligkeitskirche* (volunteer church) is unavoidable.

41 . My research revealed the same numbers from a newly founded church in Basel, Switzerland, the *Evangelische Gemeinde*

Basel, an eight year old independent church. Its membership is made up of 1/3 transfer members, 1/3 former nominal Christians, and 1/3 new converts. All of its founding leadership are trained in church growth strategies, some of them at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California (Doerpfeld 1995).

42 . Christian Associates International, headed by Linus J. Morris, has begun planting what Morris (1993) calls *The High Impact Church: A fresh approach to reaching the unchurched* in several European metropolitan centers (Geneva, Amsterdam, Zürich, Paris). This model seeks to plant churches among international, English-speaking communities in major cities along the lines of a “seeker-friendly” church, similar to the Willow Creek or Saddleback Valley churches. The intention is that some nationals will become Christians in these churches and then return to their own cultural groups to begin churches.

This presents several possible problems, however. The national becomes a Christian in one particular religious culture in a foreign “trade” language. Since religious groups create their own cultures (Geertz 1973) and begin to institutionalize those cultures from their beginnings (Berger and Luckmann 1966), it becomes necessary for converts in one culture that is foreign to them be trained in cross-cultural communication and evangelization before they can return to their own indigenous cultures and convey religious meanings in their respective cultures. If those same persons have previously had negative religious experiences in the indigenous culture, it is possible they will try to impose the new-found religious culture upon the culture of their fellow citizens. It remains to be seen if this transition can be made by these churches in order to reach out to the average European. As widespread as it sometimes appears to the English speaker, most Europeans still do not speak English, especially not at a level to lay hold of religious meanings at a deeper level. There is the inherent danger in this approach that persons may be made converts to “culture Christianity” (Kraft 1963; Shenk 1994).

43 . See Paul G. Hiebert’s (1996) discussion of “our Others” and the attitudes toward them in Christian mission and the social

sciences. Dieter Werner (1993:12-13) declares that the "principle of mission" is "crossing boundaries and demonstrating solidarity" with the foreign and the other "in the Spirit of Jesus." Earlier (1990:194) he describes this same phenomenon as the "life principle" of the church, especially as "the social reality of early Christian churches from the perspective of Luke." [My translation.]

44 . One example of ministry *with* the poor, addicted, and marginalized is the story of pastor Ernst Sieber (1987) in Zürich, Switzerland. In his book, *Menschenware--wahre Menschen*, he tells about ministry among the alcoholic homeless of Zürich. Today, Sieber holds a seat in the Swiss Federal Parliament where he is an advocate for the marginalized. He also heads a vast social work ministry which serves homeless, alcoholics, drug addicts, AIDS patients, and others of low social standing.

There are other instances of ministry with the marginalized and aliens such as *Rehovot--Jesus im Fremden*. Pastor Klaus Fürst (1995) of St. Matthew's Church in Basel, Switzerland includes foreigners in ministries of evangelization and social responsibility.

The *Offene Kirche Elisabethen* (Felix 1988; 1995) in Basel, Switzerland also includes various interest groups in dialogue about matters of faith and participation in celebration of life as it centers around the God of creation and Jesus Christ. Other examples could also be cited, but these illustrate that, in some places at least, ministry *among* and *with* the marginalized does occur. However, in most churches, both state and free, the focus is on the dominant middle class or else on those who are most "like us."

45 . Note, too, that church growth studies show that of the twenty-four best attended church worship services (with 300-1850 in attendance) in Switzerland in 1988, nine are pentecostal or neo-charismatic churches. Thirteen of the twenty-four hold, either on a Saturday or Sunday, a "charismatic style" praise service (Institut Koinonia 1991).

46 . The notion of the United States as "melting pot" has been largely contested by McGavran and Wagner (1990:163-178) with reference to Michael Novak (1971), *The Rise of the Unmeltable*

Ethnics.

47 . For a discussion of the impact of worldview on behavior see Loyd E. Kwast (1992). In this discussion Kwast shows how the questions (1) What is real? (2) What is true? (3) What is important? and (4) What do I do? are the essential elements of ones worldview. If, therefore, the kingdom of God is viewed as “real” (i.e., realism, realizable) in the present (Jones 1940; Kümmel 1956; Ladd 1974) and yet fulfilled in the future, this is a powerful motivating factor in the Christian life. The Christian both prays and hopes for the kingdom to come (“thy kingdom come”) and works for the kingdom to come (“thy will be done”) on earth (now, in our time), as it is in heaven (yet to come, in the future eschaton). See also Andrew Kirk (1983).

48 . This term is borrowed from organizational development (OD). In OD Burke (1982:8-9) the methodological model of diagnosis, feedback, discussion of data and planning, and implementation is called “making an *intervention*.” For the purpose of intervention OD has developed several models according to particular categories and typologies (1982:224-229). There are individual interventions, group interventions, intergroup interventions, and large system changes which can be undertaken in the development and design of organizations (1982:230-324). In static, traditional church institutions interventions at all levels may be necessary in order to achieve revitalization of the whole organization (cf. Wallace 1956).

49 . See Allen J. Swanson (1989), “Decisions or Disciples? A Study in Evangelism Effectiveness in Taiwan,” for a discussion of this topic. Most church growth theorists and practitioners call for the same goal in evangelism. See C. Peter Wagner (1987:51-55), Hunter (1987:96-99), Arn and Arn (1982).

CHAPTER 4

Missionary Perspectives of the Shadows: Description and Analysis

Returning to Basel after a twelve year hiatus, I was overtaken by many surprises. Arriving at the main railway station, riding through the streets by bus and tram, walking along the clean-swept sidewalks in neighborhoods where my family and I once lived, picking my way through the crowded pedestrian zones of the inner city, or sitting in a smoke filled tavern hoping to see a familiar face from former times, many thoughts flooded into my memory, triggered by the sights, sounds, and smells surrounding me. Sometimes I found myself choking back the emotions that overwhelmed me, sometimes I allowed them free flow. But almost always I found myself comparing, contrasting. Then and now.¹

If my memory served me correctly (and many sources, conversations, and interviews confirm that it did), several observations can be made, on the surface, at least, before we begin to probe deeper.

One of the first impressions in the city was the increase of ethnic and racial diversity among the people on the streets and in some neighborhoods. From the newspapers and magazines at newsstands, languages overheard in cafes, a multi-lingual church service, and the more obvious differences of skin color and facial features it is noticeable there are many Poles, Turks, ex-Yugoslavs,

North Africans, equatorial Africans, East Asians, Indian Sikhs and Tamils.

The proliferation of ethnic eating establishments has kept pace with this increase. There are Turkish eateries and coffee bars, a variety of Asian restaurants (Thai, Chinese, Vietnamese, Indian), and Balkan snack bars and shopping bazaars--all more prominent and numerous than before.

This immigration has brought, understandably, diverse religious faiths to the city to an extent that was not there in previous years. For example, there are storefront meditation centers for Bhakti Yoga, a Tibetan Buddhist bookstore and meditation room, Islamic centers and provisional mosques, some meeting in Christian churches. One of the largest sections in many bookstores is the section for New Age books and, indeed, some shops offer exclusively New Age literature, music, crystals, and paraphernalia.

I do not place a value judgment on these phenomena. They are observations I made. They do create tensions for many Swiss, whereas today one in every seven residents in the nation is foreign. According to demographic studies by Heitz and Simson (1989), 20% of Basel's population is now foreign. It was reported to me that by 1995 that number had grown to 25%. The Reverend Klaus Fürst of the Evangelical-Reformed Church, St. Matthew's Parish, and president of the association "Rehovot--Jesus im Fremden" (1995) reported that Klein-Basel² is now made up of 40% foreigners and the St. Matthew's Parish in Klein-Basel where he is pastor is now 67% foreign, most of whom are Turkish. Other quarters show similar percentages of

Tamils, Turks, and Italians (Peter Gumbal 1995).³

Another observation that testifies to the presence of a large foreign population and its growing frustration in Basel is the spray-can graffiti, much of it in strange languages, nationalistic slogans, and ethnic symbols; partly political and revolutionary; some artistic and some vandalistic; but almost every available surface was in some manner defaced with spray paint.

Even the styles of dress seemed to be screaming, "Notice me!" There were stark contrasts between rich, classic Swiss business attire, both male and female, and bold and bawdy alternative styles with black clothing from "tip to toe" with oxblood colored hair and highlights. It seemed that the gap between haves and have-nots is growing and statements of identity in clothing and appearance are more extreme than ever. More people were wearing furs (or faux furs) than I remember, there were certainly more American cars on the road, and new construction was everywhere; bridges, businesses, and residential houses. Although Switzerland has the lowest human suffering index in the world and is among the world's wealthiest nations (Camp and Speidel 1987; Sonderegger 1995), poverty within Switzerland and within Europe is growing. As the prosperous middle class is declining, the wealthy upper class remains stable while increasing in wealth, and the lower class is increasing at an alarming rate (Boerma 1989; R. Wenger 1995). Prices for goods and services are exorbitant. It was reported that in the last ten years the cost of living has become so great that most families are no longer able to exist on one income and more people are living at the

“Existenzminimum” and it is impossible to support a family with minimum wage (R. Wenger 1995; Luc and Ruth Wenger 1995).

Without a doubt there were more people out and about, traffic was heavier, everyone was in a hurry, and people displayed more stress.

This is what life looked like when I first arrived and began roaming among the shadows of the cathedrals. What does this mean for the Christian missionary groups and churches in the city?

The description and analysis is presented in three parts according to the three sample populations interviewed. Part I deals with the views of missionaries from the Mitternachtsmission Basel concerning their task of evangelization among marginal groups and their attempt to integrate them into existing churches. Part II reveals the attitude of marginal, lower class working people about the cathedral culture and their relationship to it. Part III gives insights from the cathedral culture itself and its attitudes toward the marginalized people around them.

Bridging Cultural Tension: The Missionary as Bicultural Advocate

The Mitternachtsmission Basel is not the only evangelistic outreach in the city of Basel. It is only one of many and in fact is very specific in its vision and goals to reach out to that part of the marginal shadow culture encountered in the night, on the streets. But it is the one with which I am most familiar and to which I am closest in relationship and shared experience. It does, however, experience some of the same dynamics and problems in its task as do

many other Christian ministries and churches. Therefore, it provides me the practical setting out of which this project has sprung. The mission and its co-workers have been very helpful in carrying out my research.

From the Archives of the Mission

Classified Advertisement

“Urgent! Wanted: a place to live. I need shelter and am sometimes very fragile. Love and a sense of security are strangers to me. I have several house pets; I hope it is permissible to bring them along. My bird, can you accept it? The elephant that sometime acts like it is in a china shop? Sometimes my spider spins huge webs. So you see, I have several strange quirks. Do you have a place for that which is unusual and for some surprises? If so, I look forward to getting to know you. Often I have doubts: Can anyone love me? Is there hope for me?”

Integration--a big word? Does it really require so much? Can I not just bring along one more chair, so that people with such deficits can find a place. Why is it so difficult for us to offer places in the family, in the church and to have a genuine response to this want ad?

Is it not so that people experience through our love that God has not given up on them, that God has hope for each one of us?

Dear readers, this really is my concern at present. Thank you that I may share this with you and ask you to pray that people can find a place where they can be accepted and loved--with all their “house pets.” (Stoeckli, May 1993:7) [My translation.]

This story illustrates the mission’s concern with integration of “marginal” persons, those who are different from ourselves and often

at the edge of the “normalcy” of our familiar comfortable existence. With increasing frequency the request is made for prayer by the co-workers of the Mitternachtsmission Basel (MMB) that the people served by the mission might find integration into Christian churches or fellowships (“Freundesbrief” June 1980; August 1981; June 1982; September 1985; September 1991; May 1993; February 1994; November 1994; February 1995; August 1995; November 1995).

During my tenure with the MMB I remember saying often to our president at that time, Luc Wenger (1972-1978), *“Luc, mir fehlt eine Gemeinde im Rücken” [für die MMB-Arbeit]* (Luc, I miss having a church to back us up in our work). Although every co-worker, whether full or part time, is expected to be a part of an evangelical church of each one’s free choice, and although the MMB has the spiritual and financial support of numerous churches in and around Basel, the Mitternachtsmission as such is not embedded in or at home in a particular church (“Mitarbeiterreglement der Mitternachtsmission Basel”, September 1974; “Freundesbrief,” February 1982); nor does it conduct its own worship services as an organized church, but rather seeks to demonstrate unity among the Christian churches in Basel by introducing the persons it serves into already existing churches of the city (“Leitbild der Mitternachtsmission Basel,” November 1992).

For the first couple of decades of its existence, the MMB⁴ did not seem to concern itself much with introducing people into churches. It was assumed that would happen once persons came to faith and converted from a life of dissipation to a life of sobriety,

social integration, and economic productivity (Herren 1995). It saw itself as “the church out in the streets” (“Freundesbrief,” Pentecost 1962) whose purpose was to seek out those of both sexes who are at risk from alcohol and prostitution or who have already fallen victim to those vices (“Statuten der Mitternachtsmission Basel,” 2/I, June 1972). The outreach would continue to take place primarily at night through one-time or occasional encounters, followed up with home visits during daylight hours (“Statuten,” 2/II). The connection between Mitternachtsmission, gospel witness, and church would follow automatically in a predominantly Christian culture, according to early testimonies (Herren 1995; Jul Stücklin 1995). Sometimes midnight missionaries did invite people to church and would pick them up or arrange to meet them there (“Freundesbrief,” September 1968; December 1969) and occasionally there were those who would make their way to a Christian group meeting on their own (“Freundesbrief,” March 1944), but archival documentation from 1940 through May 1955 made no mention about church integration of contacts, seekers, or converts. That does not mean it was not a concern or that it did not occur; it probably did in some cases. It does not seem, however, to have been a strategical issue.

Sister Sophie Maurer (1995) told me that it was Berta Albrecht who began to emphasize the need to integrate those whom the mission served on the streets into Christian faith communities before any long-term change or rehabilitation could occur with them (cf. “Freundesbrief,” June 1980; August 1981; December 1981; September 1991). She came to the MMB in 1958 and, according to

the testimony of Sister Sophie, was persistent in inviting people to church with her, picking them up at their door, accompanying them on the way, and taking them home with her for lunch afterward. It was my privilege to have worked along side of Berta Albrecht for eight years. I, too, experienced her as a woman with a burning, driving zeal for the spiritually lost and socially marginalized, yet a woman of great compassion and enduring patience. After her arrival, mention is made more often of efforts to facilitate the incorporation of people from the night milieu into churches and youth groups ("Freundesbrief," September 1980; February 1995; November 1995).

Even though it has been recognized for a long time that mission and church, church and mission belong together in God's strategy and this has been sought after from both the side of the Mitternachtsmission Basel (and other parachurch ministries) ("Freundesbrief," June 1967; "Leitbild," November 1992; "Jahresbericht für 1992," May 1993) and from the side of the state church and some free churches in Basel ("Freundesbrief," Pentecost 1961; Pentecost 1963) it has never met with much success ("Jahresbericht" 1953; 1956; 1966; 1985; 1990; "Freundesbrief," March 1942; June 1980; September 1980; September 1991; November 1994).

Research in the MMB archives showed that from its beginning, emphasis was given to both evangelism and diaconal ministry. The fact that the original founders, Fritz Herren and Traugott Schelker, were *Stadtmissionar und Diakon* (city-missionary and diaconal

minister) respectively (J. Stücklin 1990:3) illustrates this well. Throughout its history, this has remained its approach to mission. It has utilized soup wagons, shelters, a coffee house, a *Tee-Mobile*, and countless other means of practical ministry. However, none of these means have been ends in themselves. They have all served as a means of witness to the centrality of its message of God's love to humankind manifested in the person of Jesus Christ who came "to seek and to save that which is lost" (J. Stücklin 1990:4; "Statuten der MMB" 2/II). Often this dual approach has been questioned, especially when co-workers seemed to be overwhelmed with moving furniture, cleaning apartments, supplying groceries, going to government offices on behalf of clients, struggling with clients' addictions. In the "Jahresbericht 1956" (annual report), the mission reconsidered use of the "three 'S's: soup, soap, and souls." It concluded: "soup and soap should be the exceptions in our ministry." But these two sides of the same coin--evangelization and diaconal ministry--have always continued as part of its work ("Leitbild," November 1992). It is commendable that the MMB has always held both evangelization and social responsibility in healthy tension in its praxis. Is this not itself a reflection of the kingdom values of God's reign as revealed in Jesus of Nazareth? I think so!

From its beginning and continuing into the present, its central message has been "deliverance from sin" and consequently "health" [of body, soul, and spirit] through "faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God" according to evangelical understanding (J. Stücklin 1990:4, 27; "Statuten der MMB" 2/II, June 1972; "Leitbild," November 1992). In

the 1984 annual report of the mission to its supporters, President Andreas Stücklin said, *“Unser Ziel ist und bleibt: nicht nur Frauen, sondern auch Maennern, aller Altersstufen nachzugehen, damit sie Heilung erleben, primaer an ihrer Seele und wenn es Gott schenkt, auch am Leibe.”* (Our goal is and will remain to be: to pursue not only women but also men of all age groups, so that they experience healing, primarily of their souls, and if God grants it, also of their body.) [My translation.]

The most current presentation of the goals of the MMB, according to transparencies (see Appendix 2) given me by Johannes Vogel, full-time staff missionary of the MMB (1995), are to “lead people at the margin of society to Jesus, to help them out of addiction, prostitution, etc., and *to integrate them in churches*” [Emphasis added]. These goals remain consistent with those developed through the years as expressed in the following way:

Since mission has as its prerequisite a sending and supporting church, it is important that contact between the two is always sought after and strengthened anew. (“Freundesbrief,” June 1967) [My translation.]

The historical documents of the Mitternachtsmission give some insight on the perspective of those hearing the evangelistic message and receiving help from the mission. For example, it is reported in the “Freundesbrief 3,” 1941:

Only few know nothing about God. The war is turning many away from God. How can a just God allow such a war? The Christians are no better than worldly people. How can the Pope, as head of the Catholic Church, bless cannons? Why are there so many divisions in the Christian religion? How can

anyone believe when the Christians themselves are not united among themselves? Where is divine truth and justice? How hard it is to answer these questions! [My translation.]

I use this quotation to illustrate the rationale behind the effort to work within the framework of already existing Christian churches and structures in order to promote unity and cooperation among the various Christian groups in a given place, and in order to overcome the notion of a divided and warring Christianity that is so widespread in Western Europe among those who have turned their backs on the churches.

Another attitude often encountered is expressed in the "Freundesbrief," August 1972, and, as later interview results show, is still very much at issue: "A young man was in a cloister for six years and knows only the church dogma. Therefore, he can hardly grasp that life with Jesus means freedom." [My translation.]

The archives of the Mitternachtsmission Basel shed light on the issues of this study out of the historical past and recent present. What is the current experience of those working with the mission among some marginalized groups in the society of Basel? Following the format of the semi-structured interview protocol that was used to elicit their experiences, their responses are given here.

From Past and Current Mission Practice

Seventeen interviews⁵ were conducted among persons who have worked with the Mitternachtsmission Basel in its outreach to the marginalized shadow culture of that city. The median age of

these Midnight Missionaries is 49.7 years. They range from 35 to 83 years old, two of whom were there at the MMB's beginning in 1940. One of these, Ruth Herren, was wife to the now deceased co-founder and city-missionary, Fritz Herren. The other is Jul Stücklin who has written a brief history of the MMB (1990).

Among those interviewed were eight men and nine women. Of these, nine had served or currently serve full-time. Some of these have served or now serve as volunteers with the mission. Eight have only served as volunteers, but some of these for more than forty years. Full-timers worked an average of 6.25 years as missions staff and the volunteers average 21.8 years each with the mission. The combined years of experience of those interviewed is 259 years during the period from 1940-1995. I have excluded myself and my wife from these interviews. For eight years (October 1974 November 1982) I was full-time staff with the Mitternachtsmission Basel and my wife, Barbara, was involved in many of the same ministries as a volunteer.

Church affiliation of these co-workers with the MMB reflect the diversity of churches⁶ and Christians in Basel which support this parachurch mission.

- 1 Free Evangelical Church
- 2 Evangelical Reformed Church, Basel-Land
- 2 Evangelical Methodist Church
- 1 Evangelical Reformed Church and Chrischona⁷
- 1 Christian Assembly of "Closed Brethren"
- 3 Evangelical Reformed Church, Basel-Stadt
- 1 Evangelical Reformed Church and Stadtmission
- 1 Action Biblique

- 2 An independent Christian youth group
- 1 Evangelical Baptist
- 1 Mennonite
- 1 Basel Christian Fellowship (an English-speaking, international, interdenominational church)

Present occupations of those interviewed from the MMB represent diverse backgrounds and skills, also.

- 3 MMB full-time staff
- 1 Social pedagogue (Bible school grad., 3 yr.), former staff
- 1 Housewife (former Kindergarten teacher and now a religion teacher in certification process)
- 3 Housewife (no outside vocation)
- 1 Diaconal minister with professional degree, former staff
- 1 Sanitary engineer (ret.)
- 1 Housewife (former emergency room nurse)
- 1 Delivery man (Bible school grad., 2 yrs.), former MMB intern
- 1 Deaconess (Religious order), former MMB staff
- 1 General contractor (architectural draftsman)
- 1 Missionary with addicts (Bible school grad., 2 yrs.), former MMB staff
- 1 Chemistry lab technician (Bible school grad., 2 yrs.), former MMB staff
- 1 Mechanical engineer (factory owner)

To gain insight to the mission's self-understanding of its task and how that task should be carried out, the following information was gathered. Generalized statements of their responses which often reflect the same ideas and perceptions have not been individually documented.

Evangelization and Incorporation as Strategies. While only two persons, namely the two who go back farthest with the MMB (Herren 1995; J. Stücklin 1995), responded that the mission's strategy was to spread the gospel primarily through one-time or occasional encounters in the night in order to "point the way" to God, the overwhelming majority (12 of 17) said the gospel was spread best by establishing trust through personal relationships which require an ongoing effort by the missionary. This occurs first by personal contact and conversation regarding needs and concerns of life followed by efforts to help meet those needs. Five emphasized specifically that practical helps involving many home visits and much time are essential to the gospel witness, although they feel this help is often exploited.

The consensus among them is that only after trust has been built can invitations to commit to a Bible discussion group, church, or some kind of rehabilitation program follow. Entering into dialogue is one level of human interaction. Entering a relationship as quite another. In most of these cases establishing a personal relationship means accompanying the person to social services offices, doctors appointments, picking them up for church attendance, and inviting them to lunch or coffee afterward. Any attempt to pass them off to others in a church or group has not worked.

Also deemed very important to the conversion-integration process of successful mission are small groups, such as home Bible study groups including activities and programs of a social and entertaining nature, or retreats at locations away from the city.

These are preferable to church worship services which are too structured or too long for most marginal people. Church attendance or any association with church reminds many of negative church experiences, therefore they avoid contact with the church. It has been the experience of several missionaries that most marginal people who want to have Christian contact view the Bible discussion group or small cell as "church," and feel they do not need the larger church beyond this level since they are in touch with God, learn about Jesus, and have fellowship with Christians in this setting. Most do not move beyond this stage. However, some of those interviewed feel it is important for midnight missionaries to facilitate contact between the client and Christian churches and groups, or in some cases with Christian drug rehabilitation programs.⁸

Current mission experience shows that most of their small groups are comprised of people struggling with alcohol, emotional problems, or other social and economic issues. These persons are sometimes regarded as socially retarded or as social misfits. It is almost impossible to assimilate drug addicts into groups of any kind.

One former MMB staff missionary, now director of a "low-threshold" residential home for drug addicts, has found some success in bringing the residents together in groups as a prerequisite to their residency in the house, but few other conditions are placed on them except that they hope to get free of drug addiction and reenter productive society and that they are willing to grapple with the Christian faith.

Some of those interviewed emphasized the importance of

physical presence in the night milieu where the mission, through encounter with the milieu, can appeal to or awaken spiritual longings within persons in the shadow culture. Throughout its history the MMB has used various means to this end, i.e., overnight shelters, coffee house, a “*Tee-Mobile*.”⁹ One person interviewed, however, felt this was not a relevant issue.

Ten of the seventeen admitted that the past and present strategies to bring people from the street culture into existing churches rarely if ever worked, and then sometimes only temporarily and partially. One staff member of the MMB knows of only three persons in ten years who started going to church, of whom only one remains today!¹⁰ For marginalized persons and those who have developed asocial behavior, experience suggests it is a life-long struggle to integrate them into church or mainstream society.

Another responder sees this as a long, slow process that in most known cases is still in progress with an uncertain outcome (Baumberger 1995). Often I heard the expression, “Our work is a ‘sowing in hope’.” The oldest responder told of only one woman in forty years who found a church home in the *Stadtmission* (Herren 1995).

Another pointed out that former “users” are the best bridges for others into the Christian group because they show more understanding than “good, well-behaved” Christians.

These are the positive cases.

The reasons given why efforts to introduce night people into Christian churches failed were that (1) most of the persons

encountered on the street at night are alcoholics, drug addicts, or “psychos” and lack the desire and will to be changed; (2) the volunteers on which the mission relies to help do not have the necessary endurance to stay with such cases and all the work falls back on the full-time staff who are already overloaded; and (3) church integration of our clientele is not the goal or purpose of our work. This point contradicts the recent “Leitbild” of the MMB and the prayer requests of staff members. Therefore, there is ambiguity within the mission itself about its own mission strategies, i.e., between full-time staff and volunteers.

Barriers to Incorporation. Among those I interviewed it was immediately identified that the two milieus, street and church, belong to different worlds. The two worlds clash. The familiar with the strange; the dominant middle class with the marginalized lower class. The social disparity is vast: manners, language, suspicions, shyness and social retardation due to experiences of rejection, and fears on both sides--fear of commitment¹¹ on the one side and fear of the personal and social problems on the other. The midnight missionaries also told me that many church goers feel spiritually, morally, or perhaps sometimes physically threatened by the presence of socially marginal people.¹²

Several interviews pointed to a lack of relationship to persons in the church or group on the part of the person from the non-church culture. The missionaries recognize that both missionaries and church members have different expectations from the persons from

the margin than these are willing to commit to. Sometimes there is even conflict between the street missionaries and the church culture over those persons the missionaries try to bring to church, creating a hesitancy to expose their friends from the shadows to the cathedral culture.

Some from the street culture, however, respond favorably to personal recognition from the pastor or greeter, free admission to Christian events (concerts, films, fairs, and sometimes to evangelistic preaching events), especially if they are followed by the prospect of food and socializing.

Another response that I received was that many people from the night scene are under spiritual oppression due to drugs, drinking, gambling, cards, prostitution--especially those using drugs. Feminism and individualism were also given as reasons for rejection of the gospel witness and "Christian life-style."

The opinion was also voiced that the mission has lacked a local church as its point of reference for showing an example of Christian community. If the mission were embedded in a church, some workers say they would have felt more freedom to invite and take people to church with them. Since there is no relationship of the client to those in the churches, the missionaries could not pass them off to others for "care and keeping" even though they themselves feel over extended by the many cases with which they contend. The midnight missionaries are the only personal contact with anything Christian or with God for most of their friends from the shadows. The missionaries feel that a readiness on the part of the church to

deal with the problems and issues of the marginal people in society is lacking.

Also brought out in response to my inquiry was that normative, Christian expectations often deter participation in the Christian church or group. Standards are set too high and made too strict. There seems to be no “wiggle room” for the newcomer, no freedom to come as they are, to be themselves, or to define their own religious experience. They are expected to conform to the group’s cultural norms from the outset, which are considered, by the group, to be inherently Christian. Otherwise they are made to feel unaccepted and unwelcome.

My interviews revealed, however, that many persons from the shadow culture hold the same or similar moral and ethical values as church-going Christians because they are part of the prevailing culture. On the other hand, these same people many reject some of the cultural norms imposed by many well-meaning Christians who think their personal preferences and choices about living are inherently Christian and valid for all persons of faith. This is the type of “moralism” referred to by Ellul (1986) that, he believes, undermines vital, Spirit-driven Christianity. It seems to me there has been an institutionalization of personal piety which has become the measure of whether or not a person is a true follower of Jesus.

Something as simple as the time of Christian worship services was mentioned as a hindering factor, i.e., on Sunday morning, too early (often at 9:30 a.m. in some churches).

One dynamic which seems surprising was brought out by some

who had experienced it. When, as a missionary, they brought guests to a Christian group meeting, they themselves felt torn between the guests and the group. When accompanied by guests they themselves felt greater group pressures to conform to group expectations than when unaccompanied. Added to that was the sense that the missionary him or her self was being isolated by the Christian group because of identity with and acceptance by the guests from the street--a "guilt by association." There seemed to be an unspoken jealousy or rivalry from the Christian group leadership toward the missionary who brought the guests in some cases. There seemed to be no compassion or understanding toward the street youth who came and no belief in the genuineness of their intentions. Though it remained unspoken, both the guests and the missionary felt suspected and rejected by the group and its leadership!

Church Culture as Barrier. The missionaries of the MMB recognize and applaud the fact that some churches have tried innovations with:

1. worship style
2. worship time
3. live-in communes
4. foreign-language services
5. support efforts of individuals to reach marginals
6. creating Bible study groups for these people, inviting them, (although providing rides could have helped even more)

However, they also recognize that churches create their own cultures with their own order and standards of conduct, and

newcomers are expected to conform to them in order to gain acceptance. This issue elicited a flood of responses, some of which were emotionally charged.

The two most frequent responses to this were that (1) churches do not accept others as they are. The newcomer must first change to be like the group in behavior, appearance, vocabulary, and lifestyle. (2) Christian leaders or pastors exhibit a negative attitude toward the newcomer. Some of the missionaries feel they see in pastors and group leaders an attitude of suspicion and defensiveness toward outsiders from the social margins, treating them as intruders. There seems to them to be a lack of transparency and vulnerability on the part of leaders who should rather display an openness of love and forgiveness toward all. Many Christian structures continue to use worldly standards of leadership (corporate hierarchy) and not servant-leadership.

Other barriers to church exist also, though it is doubtful if any of them are intentional. Some of these, as stated by the missionaries, are:

1. self-fulfillment, i.e., inward focus
2. high threshold for entry and participation
3. making inflexible moral boundaries necessary for conversion and inclusion
4. setting goals for them too high and in the wrong places
5. exclusive cliques, even excluding other Christians, and especially non-Christians or newcomers
6. pushing for a commitment to church before the gospel is comprehended or the decision process is complete
7. taking a programmatic approach rather than treating persons as individuals
8. a need for things in church that interest marginals, also in

worship services

9. an over-organized church that closes out the common, marginal, and average person whose lives are usually less structured
10. inability to get out of its own comfort zone to encounter the "other" (der andersartige); content with status quo
11. have to take initiative one's self (even as a Christian) to find acceptance in a church
12. geographical distance to an accepting church too great

These factors block participation in churches and Christian groups and contribute to an extremely high attrition rate among those who do try. Sometimes Christians seem to exhibit more fear of innovation than faith in the work of the Spirit.

Some midnight missionaries admit that charismatic churches are more likely to reach out to marginals, but here, too, the words and example of the leadership determines whether or not that occurs. The charismatic groups do not appear to have such a rigid framework. The emphasis is not always on form and teaching, but on life, love, and acceptance in Jesus. Pentecostals are also socio-economically closer to most street people and marginals. However, the MMB chooses not to work with pentecostal or charismatic churches ("Jahresbericht 1982 der Mitternachtsmission Basel," April 1983).

Some informants believe they see this positive dynamic in the Salvation Army, but not in churches, whether state churches or free churches. However, Major Neil K. Bannister (1995) states that the Salvation Army in Switzerland has itself become middle class and no longer has appeal to marginalized people. Even though it still has

that reputation it is not penetrating that social milieu with the gospel. It may do ministry *to* the marginal, but no longer *with* them.

The full-time MMB staff feel the churches need information and training from them, but do not feel enough a part of the church or included in it. It was said to me, "Churches have a guilty conscience, but don't know what to do about it. We could help" (A. Stücklin 1995; Baumberger 1995; Stoeckli 1995). The missionaries feel a responsibility to educate the churches and to acquaint Christians with strangers from the society and demonstrate how to lovingly relate to them, but feel they as missionaries who are not embedded in the church lack the invitation and opportunity to do so.

Missionaries as Bridge. It was most often recognized that this can only happen through personal relationships. Occasionally volunteer co-workers have functioned as bridges between MMB clientele and a church, but this has not worked well because the necessary relationship and trust have often been lacking. If there is no relationship, there is no response.

In order to function as a bridge between the two worlds one has to be actively engaged in both places, but as things now stand the time and energy, as well as the willingness by the church, are lacking. For example, guests from the margin rarely see MMB workers leading in worship in church or being recognized in church and view them as observers like themselves. (This is unfortunately the way many church worship services are conducted, namely, with minimal congregational participation of laity.)

Some small groups which have been intentional about including marginal people and integrating new converts have provided temporary solutions, however.

Frequently I heard the response that the midnight missionary was sowing in hope and praying that God would give the increase. The missionaries pray for wisdom and discernment about whom to invite to church and about where a person might feel most accepted, as if all cannot be invited to church and as if those might not be readily accepted in any or all Christian churches. This, unfortunately, is the reality it seems. It is widely admitted that socially marginal people do not respond positively to pressure. One can only make aware and invite. Along with the invitation must come a willingness to accompany persons to church and spend time with them afterward. Often false impressions of church have to be explained and hurt feelings have to be consoled.

One response stated that the missionary must view the mission as an "incarnational journey" with a person from start to finish, with all that that may involve. However, some say about their mission, "We are a missionary work, not a church. We need churches behind us in areas of evangelization, care giving, and receiving and integrating newcomers, but the latter is primarily the responsibility of the churches themselves" (Stoeckli 1995).

On the other hand it was said that practical help opens a door to evangelize among marginals as well as creates a window on the faith and spirituality that is often already present in them. Praying with them is important since many feel unworthy themselves to

pray. There is no sense of a forgiving God of love and mercy. Many of the marginal people are not irreligious or godless even if they are misguided and live, by even their own standards, ungodly. However, the sense of guilt is often so overwhelming that all hope of forgiveness or relationship with God is lost.

One volunteer admits that he has not functioned well in leading persons into the church “for the above negative reasons; my own expectations were too high and I lacked understanding for these people” (A. Stücklin 1995). He felt he had not been successful because he had lost patience with them. Somewhat despondent he asked, “Has this city turned from God and been rejected by God?”

Effective Missions, Incorporation Strategies, and Missionary Bridges. Surprisingly, some of the workers were not familiar with what had been done by their predecessors, at least not in a reflective manner.

There was the feeling among some that there was a “blessing and effectiveness” to the work of some of their co-workers in taking people to church and engaging them in dialogue afterward over lunch. Reference was made to a particular Bible study led by a woman teacher whose “revivalistic preaching” brought results.

Some saw in the Wendepunkt coffee house “a starting point, a bridgehead for the gospel” among marginalized youth.

However, there was a stark admission of the difficulty of working among today’s prostitutes, many of whom are immigrants and illegal aliens of many cultures and tongues, creating tremendous

stress among female co-workers of the mission (Baumberger 1995; Stoeckli 1995; A. Stücklin 1995).

“Who besides the mission could effectively do this kind of work?” I asked. The responses were many and rich in ideas.

1. Churches should be doing this work.¹³
2. We need churches to start support groups as bridges between the MMB and guests, to be intentional and strategic about reaching out to newcomers. Churches need to create small groups designed for socially marginal people, but participate with them in the group. Most small groups in churches are designed and constituted to maintain the status quo of the church and its socially homogeneous makeup.
3. We need more Christian therapy stations like Das Angebot,¹⁴ Zum Weg, Fischer-Haus, Haus Spalen. Experience shows that if therapy is completed, the chance of staying in church or group is much greater. The workers in these therapy stations are natural bridges to their churches.¹⁵
4. Some converts desire and seek contact with other Christians, but not with churches. Christians must take the initiative toward these persons; rarely does the newcomer know how or where to begin.
5. Christians must take people seriously as they are and where they are in life, treating them as responsible persons, not as irresponsible. Treat them as participants, not as consumers; view ministry as “with” them, not “for” them (Andreani 1995). This attitude among most Christian groups is rare.

6. One person interviewed raised the following issues spontaneously. "How can we build a bridge between the two worlds? We are living in two different worlds. Is it wrong to start homogeneous churches" (A. Stücklin 1995)? Johannes Vogel of the MMB staff suggested that homogeneous units should be started *within* the local church, but not separate from it (1995).

7. Some seemed resigned to the prevailing social attitudes and to the missionary status quo as they perceive them.

We in the West are at the limits of our human abilities and capacities. There is a social soberness and pessimism among folk and state. There is economic uncertainty and rising unemployment. What shall we do? (A. Stücklin 1995)

In addition, there is the outlook that it overextends the missionary to ask him or her to serve as bridge to a church and it overextends the church to expect it to be able to cope with the socially marginalized (J. Stücklin 1995).

Summary of Findings

In an increasingly fragmented society, missionaries and missionary groups who work among the socially and economically marginalized recognize the need for persons converting from this milieu to be incorporated into Christian faith communities for Christian discipling. Previous attempts at incorporation of converts from shadow culture into churches have rarely met with success. Sometimes there was no strategy to enable incorporation. Whenever it has been intentionally attempted, it has depended on personal relationship between the missionary and the convert. Even in these

cases, however, the attempt has met with difficulty. Often churches erect barriers that prevent or discourage newcomers from finding a place of acceptance in the midst of Christians. Sometimes those barriers are logistical and external. Most often, however, they are attitudinal and unspoken. Presumably they are unconscious and unintentional. Sometimes they may only be perceived by the newcomer.

The missionaries feel that churches have developed their own cultures and exhibit culture traits that all participants are expected to possess and exhibit. These may be prescribed by the group or they may be unspoken, but readily perceived by the newcomer. Anyone who is different or does not share the same cultural values and personal habits does not belong. Churches and Christian groups often expect "too much too fast" of others and expect too little change or adaptation of themselves.

The missionary who works among the marginalized could serve as a culture broker or bicultural bridge between the shadow culture and the cathedral culture. Many of these missionaries are frustrated, however, because they are uncertain about the church's receptivity toward the socially marginalized. They feel if the churches were more strategically intentional in mission, and if the churches were more willing to become culturally diverse and accepting of strangers, they feel their mission would not be so difficult. The missionaries are willing to serve the churches by providing education and training about relationships with the unchurched strangers in the shadows of their own cathedral culture. Only in this way can the missionaries be

effective bridges between the two worlds.

Analysis: The Missionary Culture of the Mitternachtsmission Basel

From research among the archives of the Mitternachtsmission Basel (MMB) and from interviews held with full-time staff and with volunteers with the mission, four general conclusions can be drawn for analysis. First, its evangelistic presentation is Christ centered and can be interpreted as “centered set” evangelism. Second, most full-time and volunteer staff of the MMB view churches as unintentional “bounded sets.” Third, midnight missionaries see themselves as culture brokers or bridges between the shadow culture and the cathedral culture. Fourth, there is general consensus among the mission workers that support groups and small groups are key to integrating marginal people into faith communities of the Christian church.

The Mitternachtsmission Basel in Tension

Though it can be observed that boundaries have been drawn for its own self identity and for definition to its constituent members (Berger and Luckmann 1966), the MMB is, at the same time, in some respects a “fuzzy set” (Zadeh 1965; Hiebert 1978). It does not neatly or completely fit into the categories of a purely centered set or a clear-cut bounded set either. In some ways it is almost a contradiction of itself. The MMB, as do most Christian works and churches, lives in the tension between the spoken central focus of its message and its own, usually unspoken, boundaries of self-definition

and evangelical identity.

The Midnight Mission had its beginnings in the *evangelische Stadtmission*⁶ and its co-founder and first full-time missionary, Fritz Herren, was trained at the *Pilgermission St. Chrischona*⁷ (J. Stücklin 1990:3-5), both works standing in the Pietist tradition of Reformed Christianity. Also, the MMB has declared itself non-charismatic and, though recognizing charismatic Christians as part of evangelicalism, chooses not to enter into any formal co-work with them (MMB 1983:1) while at the same time admitting that pentecostal Christians are socio-economically and culturally closer to many of the marginalized clients of the MMB (Stoekli 1995; Bider 1995; J. Stücklin 1995). It has from its beginning seen itself as an outreach arm of Protestant churches in the city of Basel to people encountered on the streets in the night who live at the margins of an otherwise ordered Swiss society--people who are usually lower working class, sometimes unemployed, on welfare or disability insurance; people who are at the margins of society because of life controlling problems and substance abuse. Increasing numbers of these socially marginalized people are foreigners, prostituting or working without papers (Baumberger 1995; Stoekli 1995; cf. Fürst 1995; *Mitternachtsmission* 1995d:12-13). Foreigners have been a challenge for the mission since the earliest years of its existence (J. Stücklin 1990:8).

However, some boundaries that cannot be documented easily are the raised finger of moralism,¹⁸ the shaming tone of voice, and the well-meaning, oft spoken "thou shalt not . . . you must . . . you

should . . . you ought.”

The boundaries of the Mitternachtsmission Basel, however, are not defined by denominational doctrines or distinctives. The church affiliation of the seventeen persons from the MMB whom I interviewed demonstrates that it is interdenominational (See above, p. 152; cf. Mitternachtsmission Basel 1961). These boundaries are very flexible for the staff and volunteers. In this respect its co-workers are only obliged to participate in churches that stand in the best of evangelical Christianity's traditions: *sola gratia, sola fides, sola scriptura* (MMB 1974). The “spiritual position [of the mission] is laid down in the Statutes as follows: Evangelical fundamentals of faith according to God's Word, the Bible” (J. Stücklin 1990:27; Mitternachtsmission Basel 1972a). [My translation.] As mentioned above, the mission's institutional boundaries are somewhat more rigid excluding any co-work with charismatic churches at the institutional level.

In its evangelistic work on the streets, at the *Tee-Mobile*, in the *Samstags-Club*, on retreats, for the *Weihnachtsfeier* (Christmas celebrations), and during various small groups the presentation of the gospel is Christ-centered. There is a call to repentance accompanied with the invitation to accept Jesus as Savior and Lord, thus receiving forgiveness of sins and being reconciled to God (1984). This was the case at the *Wendepunkt* as well during the time of its existence (1976a; 1976b; 1977, et al.). These indicate a centered set approach to evangelization and Christian conversion, but do the expectations that the missionaries themselves place on a new convert

remain centered on Jesus or do they become focused on the boundaries of a Christian life style, so-called moralism, once the Christ-centered gospel has been presented?

I have observed that many missionaries begin too quickly to ask for a faith commitment or to speak of transformation of the convert's life, i.e., a change of life style. They voiced that they are hesitant to take people to their own church sometimes for this same reason, based on negative reactions from the church members, typifying the bounded set of my interpretive framework (Hiebert 1978). This call to commitment or pressure to moral conformity may erect again a barrier to the new convert or prospective convert and place a burden on that person before he or she has time to experience the Holy Spirit's work in his or her life. There seems to be no awareness of conversion as a dynamic process over time (Tippett 1977). It asks too much too soon. The seeker or new convert either turns away or reverts, thinking the Christian life is too strenuous or impossible for them. Even if the seeker or new convert decides to visit a church or Christian group, he or she then experiences more pressures to accept the group's criteria of conversion and cultural norms, which are barriers to the incorporation of that person into the Christian faith community (Hiebert 1978) because expectations that accompany the group's understanding of conversion have to be met as well as mental assent to particular creedal conditions which define the group's Christian identity, hence its boundaries. These criteria are often culturally conditioned behavior patterns or otherwise consist of categories of

knowledge concerning the Christian faith. Feeling thus overwhelmed the newcomer becomes discouraged and reverts to the old reference group (Tippett 1977; Kasdorf 1980).

This experience of the missionaries of the Mitternachtsmission, who themselves may be products of their respective cathedral cultural environments, leads them to conclude, in the second place, that the churches of which they are members and where they try to integrate converts from the social margin are “bounded sets” of Christians (Hiebert 1978). For these churches, in the opinion of the missionaries, the fact that their client has declared allegiance to Jesus Christ and begun a Christward movement in his or her life is insufficient grounds to include them in their Christian set (Vogel 1995; Bürgin 1995; Stoeckli 1995; Brodtbeck 1995; Herren 1995; Maurer 1995; Diefenbach 1995; Andreani 1995; Heer 1995; A. Stücklin 1995).

The tensions experienced by the MMB and the churches of which they are all individually a part, both its full-time staff and its volunteer co-workers, are not unlike those tensions in churches of the New Testament period described by Malherbe (1983), Meeks (1983), Theissen (1977; 1992), and others of the socio-historical school of interpretation. There were tensions and conflicts among the Christians of different social and economic classes, different standards of morality, and different religious customs, although it did not seem to be a question of conversion as it was a question of belonging to a particular church group. They belonged, however, to one church in a city, even though that one church was comprised of

many house churches (Romans 16; Colossians 4:15; Filson 1939; Malherbe 1983). As the letters to the churches show there were problems and conflicts in those churches (Cf. 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, James).

From the earliest days of the church (Acts 10:1-17; 11:1-18; 15:1-33) and before (Mark 9:38-41; cf. 1 Corinthians 12:3) there was resistance to anyone from outside the culture of “our” religious experience, even when the central focus was the same, namely, the reign of God in and through Jesus Christ (Matthew 3:2; 4:17; 10:7-8; Luke 4:16-21, 42-44; Galatians 2:11-14).

The churches of which the midnight missionaries themselves are a part are perceived by them to be culturally bound by middle class values and preferences. Though most of these same churches say they are open to the guests of the Mitternachtsmission, praxis indicates they are actually closed to the integration and participation of socially marginal persons, at least until they change and accept the group’s way of acting and thinking, thus becoming “like one of us,” i.e., converting to the culture (Kraft 1963; Shenk 1994). A long time volunteer participant in the Mitternachtsmission readily admitted that “the churches are just too strongly shaped by middle class cultural standards” (A. Stücklin 1995). It is expected that Papayya confess more than his allegiance to Jesus Christ, rather than to gods, in order to be a Christian (Hiebert 1978). Papayya, or Stefan, or Philippe, or Ari, or Elli is expected to know more than he or she knows in order to become part of “our” faith community. “They have to conform to the standards we have created as a church. Otherwise

they are not accepted and, rightly, do not feel accepted” (Bürgin 1995).

While doing research in Basel, Switzerland during January and February of 1995 it was necessary to cross a bridge that was under construction between the place where I was living and other parts of the city where much of my work was done. The construction firm that was doing the bridge construction had erected a large sign at both ends of the bridge, *Glanzmann schlaegt Brücken* (Glanzmann builds bridges). “How appropriate,” I thought to myself.

The third area of concern expressed by the missionaries I interviewed was their desire to serve as a bridge between their socially marginalized clientele and the Christian churches and groups. Indeed, they are in a unique position to do so.

As a missionary arm of churches they have in effect been sent out by the churches, indeed by the Lord of the church himself (Phil. 2:7; Matthew 28:18-20; John 17:18; Acts 13:1-3) into the shadow culture of the streets and taverns surrounding the cathedrals, whether state churches or free churches. Being also a member of one of the church congregations in the city, they are familiar with and participants in both worlds, both cultures. The midnight missionary has become a bicultural person (Hiebert 1982), and thus has the opportunity to function as both culture broker (Malinowski 1961) and change agent (Barnett 1953; Rogers 1995; Whiteman 1983) between the shadow culture and the cathedral culture in order to communicate the message of God’s reign through Jesus Christ and to help gather those who declare allegiance to Jesus Christ (Hiebert

1978; Tippett 1977; Snyder 1977) into the Christian faith community.

As Turner (1977) has shown, the person (in this case the missionary) coming out of the normative structure of a society (in this case the church) and entering into the liminal stage with persons coming from the other end of the social spectrum (in this case the marginal person from the shadow culture), has, in the course of ritual process, the opportunity to create *communitas* with that person and in due process introduce them into the new social status (in this case the Christian community) with its new relationships. It is by the shared liminality, i.e., shared experiences of uncertainty, shared service, shared ideas, shared hardships and dangers, shared visions and hopes, that *communitas* is built between those coming out of an old reference group and those coming from out of the "new" reference group to join them in the liminal experience and accompany them at (re)integration into the new social order (Turner 1977; Tippett 1977; Kasdorf 1980). In this way the missionary serves as culture broker, bicultural bridge, and change agent. Contact between the cultures is established (Malinowski 1961), ideas and information is exchanged with some one familiar with both worlds (Hiebert 1982), and some of the new information is adopted bringing about change (Barnett 1953; Rogers 1983; Whiteman 1983).

But in order for this to occur, the church needs to be involved in the setting apart, laying on of hands, sending out, providing spiritual and financial support, welcoming of the stranger, instructing and initiating, receiving the newcomer into fellowship and

communion in an attitude of celebration. This is a point of frustration voiced repeatedly by the missionaries and the missionary group. They long to be recognized by and involved in the churches to which they belong. This would not only validate their ministry, but would make it more credible to the shadow culture and to the cathedral culture. A bridge must have a bridgehead on both sides of the stream in order to span the stream and have adequate support to carry the loads crossing it. These bridges must also carry two-way traffic. Not only should we hope that we could accompany more people from the shadow culture across that bridge into Christian community, but we would hope that more Christians from the comfort zone of their own cathedral culture find their way across the bridge into the culturally rich, but seemingly threatening world of the shadows.

Hunter (1992:113-117; 1996:32; cf. Snyder 1989:252) calls Christians to be a "lay apostolate" in a new "apostolic age" (1992:35-36; 1996:23-24) that will only have impact in our secularized western world if we become intentional about being "apostolic congregations" (1996:26-34; cf. Bittner 1993:101-102). The apostolic church takes seriously its call by God, sent to the lost in the world with the good news of the kingdom of God that is already breaking into human history through Jesus Christ (Kümmel 1956; Ladd 1959, 1974; Kraybill 1990). The apostolic church thinks and acts cross-culturally by kingdom values, even in its own lands that are comprised of numerous subcultures and marginal groups (Hunter 1996:55-80) in order to communicate the message of God's rule.

Tradition-bound and culture-bound churches are not ready to welcome non-traditional and culturally different people into their midst (Hiebert 1978; Schaller 1978:83-85). The missionaries I interviewed feel strongly they could serve their churches by providing training in cross-cultural sensitivity and understanding for persons from the marginal cultures living in the shadow of the cathedrals--large or small, state or free. Churches that derive their identity from the center of their faith, viz., Jesus Christ and God's kingdom, are willing to flex at their boundaries and include others who have turned toward and are moving toward that same, common center (Hiebert 1978). On that basis, newcomers could participate while being instructed and incorporated into the faith community (Tippett 1977; cf. Finn 1989). The missionary, who is in relationship with both cultures and the people from both cultures, serves as the vital link between the two. But the missionaries need the personal and group support of other Christians who will be involved in mission to the socially marginalized. The missionaries need to be more involved in the training and sensitizing of their churches for welcoming the newcomer and for modeling participation in the faith community. Training may take place through the exchange of information and strategies. Sensitivity, however, will be fostered through prayers of repentance, confession, and intercession so that the love of God is "poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us" (Romans 5:5). Only in this way will there be mutual ownership of mission, shared responsibility for the missionary task, and a common purpose in extending hospitality and

inviting incorporation of the strangers into our midst. Though not intended at the beginning of its mission, it has become a priority of the MMB that seekers and converts be introduced and incorporated into Christian groups. This denotes a paradigm shift. Have the churches been helped to realize this shift? Have churches been kept apprised of MMB strategies? Have indeed the MMB and its co-workers, most of whom come from pietist and evangelical traditions and “only” Bible school training, been intimidated by university educated pastors and traditional state churches? Is there an emerging post-modern paradigm where all Christians and churches, both “great and small,” whose lives are centered on Jesus Christ, can live and work together to realize God’s reign among us from the margins to the center and back again from the center to the margins of our society (Cf. Aebischer 1992; Corrodi 1992; Schubert 1992; L. Russell 1993:25-29)?

In addition to personal relationships, the missionaries see small groups or support groups as key to inclusion and integration of subculture persons into Christian community. Indeed, this fourth major concern of the missionary culture is the only one, they say, that has worked for them among people from marginal culture groups (Vogel 1995; Bürgin 1995; Ryser 1995; Brodtbeck 1995; Maurer 1995; Heer 1995; Stoeckli 1995; A. Stücklin 1995), but even here sometimes the conditions for acceptance and participation are too strict (Andreani 1995; Diefenbach 1995; Herren 1995). Whether a state church, free church, youth group, or house group, each circle of Christians forms its own culture to the exclusion of others,

depending on whether it is centered or bounded (Hiebert 1978; cf. Geertz 1973; L. Mead 1991; Ramsey 1989)--depending on whether it accepts and includes a person on the basis of repentance and commitment to a life oriented toward Jesus, or whether other conditions for conversion and inclusion in the Christian set are laid down along cultural lines and cognitive categories. Where does, however, a new convert feel included and "at home" in the church?

Small groups, called house churches by Malherbe (1983:60), Meeks (1983:75-77), Filson (1939:106), and others, provide the basic unit of the Christian faith community, though it should be pointed out that the house church includes more than the nuclear Christian family (Meeks 1983:30; cf. Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 2). While basic to the church and probably prompting most of the Pauline correspondence in the New Testament, these writings

reveal that those groups enjoyed an unusual degree of intimacy, high levels of interaction among members, and a very strong sense of internal cohesion and of distinction both from outsiders and from "the world." (Meeks 1983:74)

At the same time, however, "the intimate, close-knit life of the local groups was seen to be simultaneously part of a much larger, indeed ultimately worldwide, movement or entity" (Meeks 1983:75).

Small groups, or house churches, viewed in this way, however, can be considered by host and all participants alike as "church" rather than something less than church or merely a way station between two worlds. As we shall see, church must be redefined in a cathedral culture dominated by one concept of "church."¹⁹

Simultaneously, state churches, free churches, parachurch ministries, and missionary groups, according to the missionary culture I interviewed, need to work together as one, providing multiple “ports of entry” into the nurturing fellowship of believers for all who come, regardless of origin, background, experience, or stage of developmental growth as a Christian. McGavran (1955:14-15) says we first make a disciple, then the Holy Spirit perfects the disciple over time (Cf. Swanson 1989; Wagner 1987:51-55). Will the church(es) allow the Holy Spirit to perfect the converted according to God’s kingdom values or will Christian faith communities continue to insist on their own forms of culturally conditioned Christianity as the standard for all?

Notes

1 . In *Basel: Mosaik einer Stadt* Rudolf Suter (1957:13-15) says that Basel is a unique city--simple and complex at the same time. It is a city at the margin, at the margin of a political union and sometimes at the margin of the times, and yet it is at the center of significant events--liberal, modern, progressive, bold on the one hand; conservative, tradition-bound, hesitant, pondering on the other. The contrasts are many, but most noticeable are *Mission und Fasnacht* (mission and Mardi Gras). Basel is home of one of Protestantism's oldest cooperative missionary agencies, the Basel Mission, as well as the world renown three days of revelry and ribaldry, the Basler Fasnacht. It is difficult to get an objective picture. Who can best understand Basel, Suter asks, the outsider or the one who grew up there? The outsider is perhaps more objective, but for the outsider it is hard to find the connection; if it is difficult for the Basler, then how much more so for the outsider! Basel can only be properly understood in its complexity. Every attempt at description is an oversimplification and reductionistic, giving a distorted view. The Basler loves Basel; and the foreigner who has lived there loves it, too. But it is almost a love-hate relationship. Indeed, Robert Wenger (1995), a practicing psychiatrist, has described Basel's collective personality as "schizoid"--at the same time warm and cold, friendly and suspicious, pietistic and liberal, traditional and progressive, loyal and non-committal--hearing conflicting voices that invoke contrasting behavior.

2 . Klein-Basel (Lesser Basel) is the part of the city on the right bank of the Rhein River where historically the hand-workers, millers, fishers, and gardeners lived. It is connected with Gross-Basel (Greater Basel) by a number of bridges, the first of which was completed in 1226 (Alioth, Barth, and Huber 1981:12). The story is told "on the street" that when this bridge was first built the people on the Klein-Basel side built their half of the bridge out of stone; the residents of Gross-Basel built their part of the bridge out of wood, so that in the event of invasions from the North the bridge could be burned. The regions to the north of Basel were ruled by numerous

germanic nobles who were sometimes known to enrich their coffers by raiding and plundering neighboring cities (Heusler 1915:31-32). Also, at this point in its history Klein-Basel was still a possession of the Hapsburg Dynasty of Austria (Heusler 1915:38-41) and under separate jurisdiction than Gross-Basel, although economically dependent on it. Today, some people in Klein-Basel who tell this story about the bridge as historical fact feel this expresses the attitude of the socially and economically better situated citizens of Gross-Basel, the bourgeoisie, toward the working class neighborhoods of the lesser, somewhat marginalized part of the city.

3 . For a discussion of how the massive recent influx of foreigners into Europe impacts countries demographically and culturally while presenting both challenge and opportunity to churches see Jacques Audinet (1992) and Jacques Gaillot (1992). Cf. also Range (1993) who describes immigration of political and economic refugees in today's Europe.

4 . The *Mitternachtsmission Basel* (Midnight Mission of Basel) was begun on November 24, 1940 as a branch of the *Evangelische Stadtmission Basel* (Evangelical City-Mission) and did not form a separate non-profit parachurch ministry until 1972 (J. Stücklin 1990:25). The Stadtmission was an evangelistic arm of the Evangelical-Reformed Church (ERK) and focused its outreach on working class people in their neighborhoods in or near industrial complexes at the edge of the city where the state church was not able to provide adequate services and care. Sometimes the Stadtmission maintained "chapels" where it held regular worship services and Bible studies and provided some social services or served as facilitator for those services provided by the state or church. This movement began in Glasgow in 1826 and by 1885 it was in seven Swiss cities (Brandenburg, *RGG* 6:322-324).

5 . Because of the open-ended questions in the interview protocols used in this research, summary descriptions of the responses to any particular question are not documented individually unless a direct quote or reference is cited. All interviews were conducted from 17 January-6 March 1995 in the

city and vicinity of Basel, Switzerland by me personally. Samples of the interview protocols used in these surveys are found in Appendix 1. Two further inquiries were made by personal letter with responses in October and November 1995. These are all listed among References Cited.

6. The churches in Switzerland which are called "state churches" are the Roman Catholic Church (RC), the Evangelical Reformed Church (ERK), and the Christian Catholic Church (CC). They are the historical pre-Reformation and Reformation churches which are recognized by the state and for which the state levies church taxes. They are otherwise not subsidized by the federal or local governments. All other churches are considered "free churches" and are legally organized as associations or corporations.

7. The *Pilgermission St. Chrischona* near Basel, Switzerland is a Swiss missionary society with branches in Germany. It was founded in 1840 by Christian Friedrich Spittler who also established the *Basler Mission*. Chrischona stands from its beginning in the Pietist tradition and began as a Bible school and preacher training seminary for young men who did not want to or could not study theology. Many of its graduates have gone on to serve in church and mission throughout the world, as well as in homeland missions in Switzerland, Germany, and Alsace in particular (H. Staub, "Chrischona," *RGG* 1:1679-1680). Fritz Herren, city-missionary and co-founder of the *Mitternachtsmission Basel* was a graduate of St. Chrischona.

8. A surprising attitude exists among both missionary groups and the shadow culture, neither of which would do away with historical, traditional churches. Missionaries I interviewed want the small groups started by them embedded in church congregations. Persons from the shadow culture assert they would consider participation in church services if these were more relevant and interesting to them. Even those who have left the traditional church, however, still recognize it and feel somehow, at least culturally, influenced by it and affiliated with it and others choose for the same reasons to remain members (Erika 1995; Robert 1995; Manfred

1995; Berti 1995; Pierre 1995; Louis 1995; Cathi 1995).

9 . After several years of a “located” coffee house, *Der Wendepunkt*, the MMB now operates an RV which has been converted into a “driving tea room.” Parked with permission on a public square in the night quarter two nights per week, the side of the RV opens up to expose a small bar for serving warm drinks or soft drinks, small tables and chairs are set up in front, and passers-by are invited to sit and have conversation. In this setting contact is made, the gospel message is shared, and help with life’s issues is offered. Interviews revealed a different dynamic occurring than what we experienced with *Der Wendepunkt* (Baumberger 1995; Stoeckli 1995; Vogel 1995). At the *Tee-Mobile* there may be only a few guests at one time due to size and public location. In the coffee house we often experienced as many as 20-50 guests at a given time and on some special occasions more, though space was limited. We both experienced many of the same guests repeatedly and have ongoing relationships through that contact. It was reported to me that many of the Tee-Mobile’s repeat guests are chronic alcoholics and emotionally disturbed people who sometimes disrupt and vie for the attention of the missionaries. In the 6 1/2 years of *Der Wendepunkt* we hosted over 600 youth. Numbers for the Tee-Mobile are not available.

10 . Among these few who made a transition to a church fellowship some are now deceased, e.g., Frau Haari, Frau Sauter, and Frau Schweitzer regularly attended a Saturday Bible study and prayer group and would occasionally attend a Sunday morning church worship service if picked up and accompanied. Currently active in church and parachurch ministry is a former guest of *Der Wendepunkt* who has been included in the interviews, Zeno Steuri. Others are unknown to me.

11 . All social entities and institutions of society are having difficulty achieving commitments today, says psychiatrist Robert Wenger (1995). Whether it is sports clubs or churches, all are finding it difficult to get people to join. On the other hand, the “fitness centers,” where one pays a monthly fee and comes and goes

individually at one's own discretion, are growing. This gives one more freedom and flexibility, but contributes to even more isolation and loneliness. Wenger also maintains, that not only do many people today avoid the commitment of marriage, but more and more people are avoiding the once popular practice of "cohabitation" as sexual libido is dropping among a "chronically depressed" consumer society (cf. Ernest Borneman, "Der Verfall des sexuellen Begehrens: Notizen zur pluralistischen Sozialisation," *Sexualmedizin* 16/12 (Dezember 1994):353-359). According to Dr. Wenger, the consumer society increases intolerance between people, impacting relationships at all levels. Believing that personal needs and wants should be immediately met and satisfied, one is disappointed with partner, neighbor, or friend [fellow Christian ?] leading to more disillusionment, mistrust, suspicion, and depression. According to Dr. Wenger, comparisons of the *Diagnostic Statistical Manual (DSM-III 1980 and DSM-IV 1994)* indicate that severe mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia, manic/depressive disorder, and neuroses, are not on the increase, but cases of the less severe disorder, depression, are accelerating at an astounding rate. He also see this in his practice. (Cf. "schizophrenia" 1980:186, 1994:282; "manic-depressive" 1980:217, 1994:341; "anxiety" 1980:225, 1994:399, 408; "personality disorder" 1980:319, 1994:636, 643; "depression" 1980:218-224, 1994:339-350; Robert Wenger 1995).

12 . Some Christians attribute asocial and immoral behavior to demonization of a person, thus feeling spiritually threatened by association with them unless one has a "call of God" to ministry among them. Others feel that the presence of the socially marginal who have "unChristian" values could pose a threat, especially to the youth. Physically some feel the threat of theft or bodily harm if addicts or prison releasees attend their groups.

13 . This would reverse a trend started very early in the life of the Christian church with the rise of missionary bands and monastic communities. Ralph Winter (1992:B45-B57) explains how "sodalities" developed as faith communities or task forces which required a deeper, second level of commitment beyond the commitment to be a Christian or member of a "modality," whether at

the congregational or denominational level. Many mission agencies and parachurch ministries function as sodalities. Over the years these seem to have drifted, in many cases, away from identity with churches and have functioned independently from them, though often financially dependent upon them, especially within Protestantism. Today many missions themselves as well as missiologists call for a return of the purpose and practice of mission to the churches. If sodalities need to exist as "task forces" of the church in mission, then they need to be embedded in a church congregation or cooperative effort of congregations.

14 . According to the "Freundesbrief" of the Mitternachtsmission Basel (November 1995:4), *Das Angebot*, a home for drug rehabilitation that was started, funded, and operated by Christians from Basel, closed its doors in 1995.

15 . It must be noted, however, that neither staff of the Mitternachtsmission nor workers with the parachurch ministries I interviewed could show much evidence of successful integration of converts from society's margins into churches. One midnight missionary spoke of three persons in ten years who had made the transition from the night scene to church and only one of those remains today (Vogel 1995; see also n. 9 above). A volunteer co-worker with the mission for forty years knows of one woman who found a church home (Ryser 1995). All the others have to be "carried and cared for," she added. The Christian social worker with the therapy station, *Das Angebot*, reported that of fifteen persons who had successfully completed the therapy one is in church and one is in Bible school, although all clients had opportunity to become acquainted with a church that was open to receiving them and the staff of the therapy home was intentional about being a bridge to the church (Gutmann 1995). In her opinion what was lacking in their situation was a support group in the church that included therapy home staff, clients, and church members. Such a support group has now been started in a Methodist congregation in Klein-Basel that involves staff from the Mitternachtsmission, church members, and guests from the marginal culture (Nussbaumer 1995b; cf. Mitternachtsmission 1995d:3-4).

16 . See chapter 4, n. 4.

17 . See chapter 4, n. 7.

18 . See Ellul (1986) in Chapter 3, n. 5 on “moralism” as the subverting factor of a dynamic, vital, Spirit-led Christianity.

19 . Even the use of the word “church” in context of the cathedral culture of Western Europe has a unique twist. *Kirche* may refer to the church building, the state church, or, in rare cases, the people who belong to the state church. Most free churches refer to themselves not as *Kirche* but as *Gemeinde* (congregation), in order to differentiate from the state church. The Methodist church, as a free church, is an exception to this, calling itself the *Evangelisch-methodistische Kirche*. My experience and interviews show, however, that most people think of any and all Christian churches, state and free alike, as *die Kirche*.

CHAPTER 5

Perspectives from the Shadows: Description and Analysis

What are the people on the street saying, those touched by Christian witness and ministries of service, but alienated from church of any kind? What kinds of barriers do people on the outside of cathedral culture encounter whenever they attend a Christian worship service or youth group? How do they describe the cathedral culture?

From among the Shadow Culture

To try to answer questions about the encounter of non-participants in church with church culture, personal interviews were conducted among people who are not involved in churches and who are in some ways marginal to the mainstream of the dominant culture with its accepted norms and expectations. For these interviews a semi-structured personal interview protocol was used (See Appendix 1). Responses to those interviews are given here by following the sequence of the interview instrument.

Of the eighteen persons¹ interviewed from this social stratum, twelve are male and six are female. Their average age at the time of the interviews was 33.4 years. Two of them are single and live alone. Twelve are married to their first spouse; one is divorced; and three cohabitate with a person of the opposite gender.²

The couples in this group have a total of nineteen children, all in two-parent homes and adequately provided for. These children range in ages from newborn to eleven years.

Families of Origin

All the persons in this group were born in Switzerland and hold Swiss citizenship, although five of them come from parents of another nationality or from nationally mixed homes, i.e., one of the parents is from a country other than Switzerland. One member of this group holds dual citizenship. Seventeen of them were born in the city of Basel.

Eleven fathers to members of this group are Roman Catholic (RC) and eleven of the mothers are also Roman Catholic, but not necessarily of the same home. Some of the families are confessionally mixed. Six of the fathers belong to the Evangelical-Reformed Church (ERK) and one to the Free Evangelical Church (FEG). In addition to membership in the ERK one of the fathers attended the Salvation Army with his spouse and another, though a member of the FEG, was active in the *Blaukreuz* (Blue Cross), a Christian abstinence movement which works for the recovery of alcoholics and for getting anti-alcohol legislation passed.

Eleven mothers are Roman Catholic, five are members of the ERK, one is in the FEG, and one was very active in the Jehovah's Witnesses until her death, refusing blood transfusions to save her life.

Eight of eighteen of the fathers have left the church. Of the

seven who are still members only four are active or otherwise involved in Christian works, according to their offspring. Three do not attend church at all and two only occasionally. Three are deceased.

Not one of the mothers of the persons interviewed have left their church, even though only six of them are actively involved in church or other Christian works. Three never attend a church function and three others attend only occasionally. Five are deceased.

Of the eighteen persons interviewed, sixteen of them were baptized in the same church as one of the parents; one was christened in a related Protestant church; all of them as infants. One, however, was later rebaptized as an adult believer. Only one person interviewed has never been baptized.

Between the ages of 14 and 16, fifteen received confirmation in their churches. As mentioned, one was never baptized, therefore not qualifying for confirmation. Another was christened but refused confirmation out of rebellion to parents and church, as well as out of honest conviction that it would be hypocritical to do so, not being a Christian believer. This same person was later rebaptized as an adult believer. The one remaining person said he just never got around to it.

Faith and Its Origin

When questioned about their present relation to the Christian faith, those answering gave similar but different responses. Two

described their relationship to the Christian faith as "good." To them to be tolerant toward others and others' beliefs is to be Christian--to be Christian means being tolerant of others. They admitted they are "christian" in an ethical sense and their sense of fairness has been shaped by the Christian stories.

All but three expressed a faith in God, or "Something." Of those who expressed faith in God, three of them did so without any reference to Jesus and two others said they believed in God, but not the "God" that is portrayed in church. One of these said he prayed daily in his thoughts and has had his children christened, but has since then left the church in order to avoid paying the stated-levied church tax. This same person is now seeking a way to have his two children included in religious instruction in school and included in confirmation preparation in the church so that the children will not be socially stigmatized among their peers.

All the others recognize there is a special relationship between God and Jesus and that a person's faith should somehow relate the two. Four described their faith as "real, but critical" [questioning]. Another said he had faith in God through Jesus Christ, but at the same time questioned all religious authority, referring to religious authority for him as "ambivalent."

One confessed personal faith, but not like the parents' faith. The parental faith was described as something between personal and cultural in its meaning. One other claimed faith to be strictly personal and private.

Twelve of eighteen say they have no relationship to any church

or Christian group. Only two are active in a church or prayer group of any kind. Four others hold membership in a church or feel connected in some way, but admit they are inactive and may only attend a worship service or meeting occasionally.

Although two claimed they do not know what the Christian gospel is and another says there is no role in his life for Jesus since no one can take away anybody's guilt--each one must take responsibility for each one's own actions, nine out of eighteen understand that the Christian gospel has to do with Jesus. It has to do with forgiveness through Jesus as God's gift, his resurrection, his example for living, and the message of early Christians about Jesus. For some the gospel means going to heaven and experiencing no more pain or trouble.

While two persons equated the Christian gospel with the Bible "from A to Z" or the story about Jesus told in the Bible, ten of them only made reference to moral teachings of the Bible or added the observance of moral teachings to faith in Jesus as necessary to the Christian gospel, such as the ten commandments, the golden rule, the sermon on the mount, love of neighbor and tolerance of others, godly values, "a morally good thing."

Only one response made any reference to church as a part of the gospel, the good news, along with faith and hope.

Although two persons claimed to have comprehended the Christian gospel by the age of eight years, most (10) were between the ages of 17-25. Two were thirty; one admitted that faith had developed during a process over several years. Two said they did

not know when they understood it and one honestly replied that he still did not comprehend it.

While four respondents said they came to understand the meaning of the message of the Christian faith through the ministries of the Mitternachtsmission Basel (women's outreach or Wendepunkt youth outreach), the majority (10) heard the gospel much earlier, either from parents or another family member, or otherwise during religious instruction at church or in school. Again several (5) said they came to understanding by way of a process from childhood and reflection on life's experiences. Only one, who today rejects the Christian message, claims his decision is based on "self-reliant reflection" on what he has seen and heard in his lifetime thus far. It must be said, he experienced much internal religious strife in his family, the father being Roman Catholic and the mother Jehovah's Witness.

Of fifteen who responded to a question about the point in time they came to an understanding of the Christian gospel, eleven (11) referred that it came as the result of a process of hearing, experience, and reflection. It was experience that caused them to reflect on what was heard and not the hearing that shaped their experience. Two recognized the prayers of family members as instrumental in their coming to Christian faith. Another sees attendance of a Bible study group where no pressure was applied to adopt the Christian faith as a safe place to hear and freely accept the gospel message as truth. As with the last question one admitted he still does not grasp the Christian gospel.

When I asked interviewees about the person from whom they first heard the Christian story, I received more specific answers. From the eighteen who were questioned twenty-one responses were given, i.e., some gave more than one response. Only one of these makes reference to any of the midnight missionaries. (From a previous question four recognized the aid of midnight missionaries that helped their understanding of what they had previously heard.)

All eighteen responses refer to persons or instruction received during childhood as instrumental in hearing and understanding the content of the Christian message. Parents and church, priest, or Sunday School were mentioned an equal number of times (six each). Only one person was not sure from whom the gospel was heard for the first time.

Surprisingly, only four persons had negative memories of religious instruction in the Christian faith as a child though all eighteen were forced to attend some form of church or school instruction in Christianity either during catechism, confirmation preparation, or religious instruction in school. Ten from the group remember these as positive or normal experiences from their childhood. Only one referred to an abusive situation from an instructor who would strike the pupils on the back of the hand with a ruler as punishment. Another reverently remembers the instructional prayers of his mother. (My experience with this same group from 1974-1982, when they were 13-23 years of age, tells me this question might have been answered differently if it had been asked then.)

Factors Affecting Faith

Out of the sixteen in this sample population who responded to this question, ten made conscious decisions to accept or reject the Christian claims between the ages of eleven and eighteen. Two feel they have always had faith and three are still undecided or open to the possibility of Christian faith. Only one was 30 years old before making the decision to make Christianity her own.

When questioned about their motive for accepting or rejecting the gospel, some of those questioned gave more than one response. These total twenty responses or related responses. Whatever else may have influenced them, two say experience and reflection on what they knew from the Christian story motivated them believe it. Some other responses seem to have come from the same motivating influence as well as through the discovery that faith in Jesus gives security and hope in life. Another was seeking fulfillment in life and found it in the Christian faith.

Others came under the positive influence of Christians and their example. This included, for example, a parent, midnight missionaries, or the environment of a Christian orphanage during childhood. Two made reference to Christian drama or films as significant influences in their lives. One became a believer in Jesus and the power of God through deliverance from alcohol, but this same person senses no need for church as he knows it and cannot conceive of church being anything other than what he is familiar with.

After encounter with the Christian gospel and reflection on it, not all choose to believe it, however. A number of those interviewed, though holding some Christian views and claiming a morality shaped by Christian teachings, have chosen not to believe in Jesus as otherwise significant or relevant to their lives. Again there were more responses than the number of persons counted in this category. Of five who had said they rejected the Christian claims regarding Jesus of Nazareth there were eight responses about what motivated their decisions.

The most frequent response of those who personally reject the notion that the Christian gospel is necessary or could be helpful in their lives was the indictment that Christianity was “boring, uninteresting, and delivers nothing they need.”

This indictment was followed by emotionally charged rejection of the Pope, the church’s dogmatism, and threats of eternal punishment if one does not accept and conform to the church’s pronouncements. (As referenced above, in eleven of the homes either father, mother, or both parents were Roman Catholic.) Others found the church was primarily out for money, the state-levied church taxes being cited as the prime example for this accusation. Some reference was made also to the church’s wealth and the world’s poor. One person’s experience was that if one does not pay the church tax, the church will not provide any services.

It was conceded that Christians were usually loving people, but this was not convincing enough to lead to personal Christian faith. Another called for a gentler, kinder Christianity, citing the

inconsistency of a father's professed personal faith on the one hand and a profligate personal life on the other hand while severely laying strict morality on his children. Though sectarian, the mother's faith was recognized to be "a gentler, kinder faith."

While five persons found nothing attractive about the gospel as they understood it or did not know what they thought, most found some aspects of the gospel to be attractive. Most frequently, love of one's neighbor and tolerance of others were highlighted as attractive characteristics of the Christian gospel as defined by many in this population.

The example of Christians who appear to have a grip on life and relationship to each other was also held in high esteem. Some felt, however, that this is widely lacking today among many Christians.

Forgiveness of sins, peace, joy of living and worshipping (especially as expressed in Black gospel music), and Christian faith as a way to face life after death were important factors that make Christianity attractive. For one person the inner help to overcome a slide into alcoholism drew him to Christian faith.

Other observations that were made by this sample population was that although Christianity looked good "on paper and in films," it is not realistic ("realizable"). Sometimes persons felt caught between heaven (a "pious" mother) and hell (a drunken, abusive father). One claimed that his personal convictions have much in common with the content of the Christian gospel, but they are not dependent on it.

While again five responses remained neutral about this

question or did not know what they thought, over half of the total responses to my inquiry regarding the least attractive aspects of Christianity named legalism, pressure to conform, forced confirmation instruction and church attendance, intolerance and absolute truth claims, and sectarianism as deterrents to a positive response to the Christian message. Also mentioned were hypocrisy of Christian neighbors, the apparent injustice of God (i.e., eternal damnation for good-living unbelievers and eternal salvation for “death-bed converts”), as well as the “sterile irrelevance” of Christianity.

This group of responses indicates the influence of a Christian cultural environment that has infused these people with some Christian stories, values, and sense of being cultural Christians, but with much ambiguity and without conviction and commitment. They display a good amount of religiosity and hold the person and example of Jesus in high regard.

Incorporation into Cathedral Culture

Since “coming of age” at the time of confirmation by the church (14-16 years), eight of eighteen have seriously visited or attempted to participate in a Christian church or group of some kind. Ten others have not.

Six respondents had somewhat positive experiences with the Christian groups they were familiar with. Responses were divided among things such as finding a caring, healing family; a new reference group; a net to catch me when I fall; a sense of belonging

because of a common faith, but enormous pressure to conform to the group's norms. It was pointed out that two homosexual friends who frequented the same group were especially "stressed" by the group due to pressures put on them. Some referred to a positive experience in the Wendepunkt, a distinctly "Christian" coffee house with a central focus on the person of Jesus, but without rigidly defined boundaries of behavior or institutional identification. For one, participation in a house group lost its appeal so he dropped out. Reasons were not given.

Ten who did not participate in any Christian group, even after visiting various groups, chose not to do so for ambiguous reasons. Four say they do not know or have not thought about their reasons. Some say nothing drew them to a group or kept them in church. Most admit they quit church after receiving their confirmation paper, although they feel the youth work of the church is important. Feeling marginalized by the group was also mentioned as a negative experience in Christian groups.

The recognition of the need for a new reference group and new friends was an important reason given by those few who sought contact with Christian groups. Emphasis on Jesus and acceptance by the group were contributing factors, although pressures to conform to group standards did admittedly exist. Relationship to the missionaries who led them into relationship with the group or who provided them with the group experience was also important.

Lack of interest, of course, kept some from seeking incorporation into a Christian group and just as many choose not to

know why. One admitted an interest, but lacks the “kick” to follow through on it. Another couple see Sundays as the only time to catch up on sleep and spend time together as a family in play and visiting relatives.

Pressure (*das Muss*, the must) applied by Christian groups is a negative factor often mentioned by those choosing to remain distant to church or Christian groups. In answer to this question, blame for alienation from the church is again placed on the Pope and church taxes, as well as on an impersonal, triumphalistic church that is after one’s money. (This seems to be an easy, all-encompassing answer to justify lack of interest or involvement in church.)

The years of participation in religious instruction or confirmation and catechism classes are not counted for the purpose of this study about voluntary participation in Christian community because they are by design temporary and arbitrarily end when completing school or receiving confirmation sometime around the age of 14 to 16.

Only three of the persons interviewed who have intentionally participated in Christian groups still currently do so. Two of them, now married to each other (in fact they met at church), participated in one group for ten years before it divided and was, for the most part, absorbed into other groups, or else the disillusioned members dispersed. This couple has now been part of a new group for three years. Another person has consistently attended a women’s Bible study or, more recently, a church to which she was introduced by a midnight missionary who took her and attended with her.

Responses to my question about whether or not there was interest in participating in a Christian group were evenly divided, nine answered yes and nine answered no.

When asked what kind of group they would like to be a part of, most of the persons interviewed had a certain expectation of what a Christian group or church should be like. They would wish for a friendly, relational church that is intergenerational and that includes and provides for children. The atmosphere should be relaxed and without pressures to act, perform, or dress in a particular way, but should at the same time be lively--both the music and the people, however, not hectic and "hyperactive."

The wish was also expressed that the church would not be too strict in its interpretation of the Bible or too pious in its attitudes and behavior, i.e., it would be tolerant of long hair (on men), smoking, some drinking, and choice of music styles. The group would hopefully serve as a net or support group whenever one falls or is weak (tempted).

Five who responded either did not know what they would hope for, could not imagine a likeable group of Christians (!), or else found this question irrelevant for them.

In addition to three who did not know what it would take to interest them in joining a Christian group, or else did not care, several other thoughtful responses were given. Though there was no one overwhelming response, several of them expressed a desire for relevant topical or thematic Bible studies or sermons which address contemporary issues. These should be presented in a lively fashion

and should not be too long. The desire for the opportunity to talk back in a group setting was expressed by several, also, but without pressure to conform in interpretation or to conform to the usual cultural norms. Christian faith and living should be “somehow” countercultural rather than supporting the cultural status quo, addressing not only moral issues, but also political and social concerns. It was also said that the biblical story should be retained, but made relevant to contemporary life; “change the people, not the story!”

The worship in an appealing Christian group should be lively, with lots of singing and movement. It should also contain variety and be accompanied by personal testimonies. Ecumenical services at the neighborhood level was a desire expressed by some.

Opinions of churches in general range from disinterest to a biblical explanation of the church as body of Christ in the world: the church has little impact in the world; church is optional; it is okay if you need it--I don't at the moment; I'm not interested--I'll just pay my church tax and stay in the church, but not attend. Others focused their criticism on the tax and wealth issues again. For example, there was opposition to the church tax and the feeling was voiced that the church was just after peoples' money. This was usually said along with remarks about the Pope and the church's wealth which should be given to the poor rather than continue to take from the poor. It was said in this context that the church should be more Christian and less political. At least, this is the perception of those interviewed.

Some simply find church and Christian meetings boring and

irrelevant to their lives. While some observers are confused by Christian churches that war among themselves as in Ireland, in ex-Yugoslavia, and in other places, some in less violent ways, but just as confusing none the less. Even those who hold positive convictions about church and who participate in it and serve it voiced hurt about the criticism from non-Christian friends that the church is so divided that it is untenable.

However, some who do not take part in church feel it has a role to play in society, contributing to stability and peaceful coexistence. Some view its social service programs in positive ways.

One observation was made that the decline among mainline churches was perhaps good. The church may become healthier because of it. Another finds the church in positive transition and that it is becoming more relevant and friendlier, more ecumenical and more human. "That's good," one said. Another stated that "diversity is good; it is a shame when we fence ourselves off from one another. We need different types of Christians, but all of us with Jesus as the center."

Someone who finds the church boring, with no life, and with no "buzz" finds that different kinds of churches are okay, but ideally we could have all kinds of people in one church.

One woman summed it up in this way: "Church is good if you know the people who are glad to see you, and if the sermon calls us to faith and repentance."

Only two had no opinion about church membership and only two felt that participation in a group is necessary for being a

Christian. Fourteen others felt it is not necessary.

Though most (14) felt it is not necessary, most of these same ones (10) feel it is advantageous to take part in a Christian group in order to be a Christian. Two said it depends, one did not know, and one said he did not need a church in order to keep the Ten Commandments.

Thirteen of those giving a response about why it is advantageous as a Christian to take part in a Christian fellowship circle expressed a need to talk about problems and concerns and, especially if alone and despairing, to be reminded of God and built up in faith by others. They would find this kind of experience enriching, to work together among like-minded folks.

One does not want the pressure and stress of a group; one wants only a "private" faith; and one, again, does not know.

In apparent contradiction to the opinions expressed above eleven responded that it is possible to be a strong Christian alone. Only five felt it was not possible to be a strong "Solo-Christ" (solo-Christian).³ One had no opinion either way.

Those recognizing the difficulty of living a Christian life alone admit that even with strong personal faith and convictions, a person needs like-minded persons as faith partners with whom things can be shared and to whom one is accountable. Without the strength of numbers, temptations can become overwhelming and there is also the danger of a lack of balance in one's own beliefs and practices.

Even those who claim one can be a strong Christian without any accountability to a group admit, however, that it is not or would

not be easy. You become your own standard, they said. In a group there is more opportunity for correction, but often there is too much admonition and too little encouragement in most groups. One felt that the official church is unnecessary, but one could seek out other Christian circles for strength and encouragement.

Several felt one can live a good life, read the Bible, reflect, pray, treat people nice at work, at home, in the music association “without someone standing over you telling you what to do or what to think” (their view of church). This is possible whether you are a Christian or a Buddhist, one said. Another admitted, however, that alone there is the lack of dialogue or mutual support. As another stated, “Most just don’t have the will power to do it alone, not even hermits.”

Seven persons were asked if anyone had ever tried to help them into a Christian group and then they were asked to describe this experience. Six out of seven had had this experience.

Two felt genuine concern from the missionaries introducing them to the Christian group, providing a positive example and taking time for them. One referred, in their experience with midnight missionaries, to the freedom from pressures to conform. Another felt pressured, however, after there was a personnel change within the mission.

Some others had the experience among Christian groups that there were attempts at coercion to commit to the group and to conform to its boundaries. One woman made the remark

Things would be different today if the pressure had not been

there; I would still be in church. Christians must allow for free will to be exercised in order for a person to be at peace with him or her self as long as others are not harmed by one's choices. (Erika 1995)

“Any change that might need to take place must come from within me myself,” another observed.

Five out of the seven who were asked this question replied that they would perhaps go to a church service or Christian activity today with someone they know. It is always an advantage to know someone as a bridge to the group, they stated.

Summary of Findings

An overarching concern of this population group which summarizes most of its observations about Christians, Christian groups, and churches as seen from within their own experiences, was expressed by one of them in the following words:

A concern I have is to know myself regarding my own religious understanding; to see myself in what I do, in what I say, and in how I live. In our society much of “the religious” is attributed to religious mania (fanaticism), but I am tolerant with everyone as long as they are not legalistic or intolerant. (Dieter 1995)

In this statement there is a call for the right of self-definition in matters of faith, even matters of Christian faith, in how that faith is expressed in word and deed. Religious fanaticism, including Christian fanaticism, that pressures a person to conform to its boundaries of identity in order to be Christian are rejected. This is, however, not to be confused with a radical, counter-cultural Christianity which has a

certain appeal to those who already feel marginalized by a dominant middle class culture, including a dominant middle class cathedral culture. Legalism in all its forms is rejected. Imposition of middle class, cultural religious standards on a social stratum already marginalized by a middle class culture is not acceptable. Tolerance, acceptance, and mutual respect are the operative words.

Analysis of Findings among the Shadows

What can the shadow culture tell us about ourselves, the cathedral culture of Christian churches? What would they like the church to be so that they could be a part of it if they choose?

Growing up from birth in a cathedral culture, this population of lower class and lower middle class, working “thirty-somethings” definitely possesses a Christian memory. Its memory is, for most of them, of a positive experience of Christian religious instruction during childhood, whether in the home, school, or church. During the years of confirmation instruction (14-16 years old) most of them resented and rebelled against the forced participation and pressures to conform to the teaching and moralism of their respective churches. Upon receiving confirmation most never returned to church (cf. Küng 1978) and as adults of legal age, most of them have officially declared their resignation from the church in order to avoid paying the state-levied church tax (Cf. Heitz and Simson 1989; “Evangelische Synode sagt ja zur Offenen Kirche.” *Basler Zeitung* Nr. 143, 22 June 1995:n.p.).

This is not, however, an irreligious group. Its spirituality is

ambiguous, but has been influenced strongly by the Bible stories and teachings of Jesus, as frequent references to the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, the Golden Rule, and love of neighbor indicate. Faith among them is ill-defined, believing in God or “something.” Jesus definitely “has something to do with it,” but just what is generally not clear or consistent. Forgiveness, peace, and a sense of well-being do come from thoughts about Jesus and prayers to God which many of them admit to.

Though not able to speak favorably of “the church” or church authority, most of these persons spoke favorably of the Christians they know personally. Participation in a community of Christians is not necessary, in their view, to be a Christian, but it surely would be helpful to maintain and strengthen one’s faith and moral life. Most see church as they know it as irrelevant to their lives, boring, not useful, disruptive to their life rhythms, and interfering with their life style. Those who have attended Christian youth groups and churches felt pressure to conform, i.e., to act, perform, and dress in culturally appropriate ways to gain acceptance by the group (Cf. Hunter 1996:62-64). What then is their vision of a relevant, interesting church of which they could conceivably be a part?

The “thirty-somethings” I interviewed feel the church should be a friendly, relational, intergenerational church that includes children. The atmosphere of church should be relaxed and tolerant, without pressure to conform in any way to a standardized group definition of what is acceptable for being a Christian. Neither should it be too “pious,” but rather tolerant, diverse, and ecumenical with

relevant sermon topics that retain the Bible stories but applied to contemporary themes and concerns, whether social or political, with opportunity for talkback afterwards. Above all the music should be lively (with a preference for some Black gospel music). Variety and personal testimonies could enhance a church's worship service. George Hunter (1996:55-80) makes a strong case for culturally relevant congregations, contrasting them with the way secular people experience traditional congregations. His description fits precisely with the views held by this sample population of unchurched thirty-somethings in Basel, Switzerland. He recognizes, however, that "[c]ultural relevance may be the most important, the most controversial, and the most difficult of an apostolic congregation's features to introduce into the life of a traditional congregation" (1996:56). Adding to that, he challenges, "that gospel integrity calls us to cultural flexibility" (1996:56), and any strategies for making a church fit the cultural context have "to be 'homegrown' --not imported from another context . . ." (1996:55). This view, held both by the unchurched and by scholars who study church growth, is consistent with the exegesis of the socio-historical context of New Testament churches reviewed in the literature of Chapter 3 (Malherbe 1983; Meeks 1983; Theissen 1977, 1992; Filson 1939). It may come as a shock to many churches that its cultural values and the values of the kingdom of God are not necessarily identical (Kraybill 1990; Snyder 1977), especially when gospel integrity, which by its very nature involves proclamation of the good news of God's reign,⁴ and cultural relevance often calls us as apostolic

Christians to swim against the dominant cultural values of mainstream, traditional Christianity.

As the summary quote in the preceding section indicates, there is the strong wish for self-definition of one's personal faith experience and expression of that faith, even if it is a critical, questioning faith. All in this population who have reflected on their faith experience see it as a process of growth and development, not a closed matter. Only two of the eighteen persons from the shadows of a cathedral culture treated their decisions as final, irrevocable, and closed issues.

In an era of individualism and fear of commitments, however, there was the desire expressed for relationships, relationships that could possibly lead one into Christian community. Hunter refers to these kinds of people as "pre-Christian" (1996:15).

This sample population of people, whom I first knew as rowdy, rebellious, at risk teenagers (See chapter 1; cf. Liebkind 1989; Kegan 1982), are now hard working, some of them hard living (Sample 1993; Arbuckle 1990), all but two of them unchurched (Hunter 1992, 1996), working class people. Reflecting on their experiences with churches from their childhood through early adulthood, they have aptly described the church, with no knowledge of the interpretive framework of this study, as "bounded Christian sets," as Hiebert (1978) has called them. These are churches that largely define themselves morally and culturally by traditional Catholic, Reformation and Pietist standards of worship and conduct, i.e., by the cultural and cognitive categories of the periods when those

movements arose and began to institutionalize (Hiebert 1978; Berger and Luckmann 1966).⁵ The cultural and cognitive barriers erected by those churches have repelled any attempts or desire on the part of this population group to attend or participate in those kinds of churches, i.e., churches with rigid boundaries from which the church takes its identity. Those boundaries which determine who belongs to the set are, at the same time, boundaries of exclusion to anyone who does not meet the group's cultural and cognitive criteria regardless of one's allegiance and orientation toward Christ (Hiebert 1978).

The church this group describes as attractive and interesting is precisely the kind of church Hiebert calls a "centered set" (1978). In the centered set, everyone who has turned and is moving toward the center of Christian faith, viz., the person of Jesus Christ and the coming of God's kingdom in him, is included and invited to participate. Repentance, or change of allegiance, and the intention of following Jesus includes one in the Christian community whose boundaries are flexible, extending outward to include all who have turned Christward, regardless of the moral distance from the center or amount of biblical knowledge one has about God or about any doctrines the church may hold dear. While it is true that all who are moving toward Jesus Christ are being changed into his likeness (not "our" likeness) by the transforming work of the Holy Spirit (John 13:35; 14:26; 16:7-15; Romans 8:26-29; 12:1-2), there is no distance from that center too great that one cannot start and from the outset participate in the community of believers.

I conclude from the findings among this population group that

they, hypothetically at least, are not averse to a Christianity that is friendly, culturally relevant, socially diverse, intergenerational, lively but relaxed, that is tolerant and respectful of others' ideas and life styles, and does not impose restrictions and standards without mutual consent. Relationships are important bridges for contact with and entrance into new Christian groups. In short, this inquiry shows that this part of the shadow culture in Basel, Switzerland is opposed to a "bounded Christianity," but would consider a Christian faith community that is modeled on the "centered set" (Hiebert 1978). What I sense from my interviews and the descriptions of the Christianity derived from them is a longing for *shalom*, the kingdom of God among human beings in which justice, mercy, and peace reign (Kraybill 1990; Snyder 1977).

Notes

1 . In this section I have attempted to give a composite of the interviews conducted. The names of the eighteen persons I interviewed have been changed in order to assure anonymity. They are known to me and recorded accurately on the interview protocols. I give them here fictitiously with their true age at the time of their interview in the order in which they were interviewed: Max (36), Georg (31), Xavier (34), Corrine (32), Dieter (33), Berti (32), Louis (32), Pierre (32), Cathi (34), Maurice (31), Manfred (32), Theo (34), Elli (36), Robert (35), Franco (33), Dominique (33), Erika (34), and Maria (38).

2 . One of the married persons lives in an unusual agreement. This person is married to the spouse solely for tax advantages allowed married couples, but cohabitates with a different person. Should a marriage to the second person become desirable, which is probable I was told, the spouse, who also agrees to this arrangement, will be divorced.

3 . This reference is taken from a song in Swiss dialect that is familiar in many Christian circles. It is a song written by "Anonymous," and contains the phrase *Warum goht's denn nit als Solo-Christ? Warum cha's allei nit goh'? Weil Du ganz allei verlore bischt und D'r niema helfe cha.* (Why is it not possible to be a solo-Christian? Why is it not possible to go it alone? Because completely alone you become lost and no one can help you.)

4 . Matthew 3:2; 4:17; 9:35; 10:7; 16:19; 24:14; Mark 1:15; 4:11, 26, 30; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 6:20; 9:2; Acts 1:3; 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31; Romans 14:17; 1 Corinthians 4:20; Colossians 4:11; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; 2 Thessalonians 1:5; et al.

5 . Hunter (1996:36-42) has described ten primary goals of traditional churches as (1) be religious, (2) believe like us, (3) behave like us, (4) have an experience like ours, (5) become like us,

(6) be good citizens, (7) share our politics, (8) support the institutional church, (9) preparing people for heaven, and (10) administer the sacraments. These are not wrong in themselves, nor bad, nor irrelevant, and necessarily to be dispensed with, but they do not reflect, according to Hunter, essential Christianity. It is undesirable and impossible to clone Christians, he adds (1996:44-53) and gives us ten “pins,” as in bowling, for which the Christian aims. We are all different, but all a part of the same game, so to speak. The ten pins, beginning with the head pin, are by rows: (1) the discovery that we matter to God; (2 and 3) a new relationship with God and a new relationship with the People of God; (4, 5, and 6) doing the will of God, love for people, and freedom in Christ; and in the final row (7, 8, 9, and 10) live in the world but not of it, service and ministry, witness and mission, and discovery of our new identity.

CHAPTER 6

Perspectives from the Cathedrals: Description and Analysis

It is not enough to understand how mission is understood by its practitioners and how these view the churches with which they are in relationship. Nor is it sufficient to try to understand how members of the shadow culture, both those in church and those distant from it, perceive the Christian church and the gospel it is thought to proclaim. If we would understand the dynamics of the culture clash between the cathedral culture and the shadow culture and the role missionaries play as culture brokers between the two, then we must attempt to understand the churches and Christian groups from the perspective of their own self-understanding and how they view their relationship to the shadow culture found at the margins of the mainstream culture which, for those in the shadows at least, includes the Christian church.

From the Cathedral Culture

Of the three populations interviewed, this one was the most available to me and inundated me with data, much of which are valuable to this research. However, of necessity I must be selective in reporting it, drawing only upon those parts especially pertinent to

the questions under investigation. Of course, any findings which brought surprises and contradictions will also be included.

Among this sample population, I interviewed twenty persons face-to-face in or around Basel, Switzerland between January 16 and March 8, 1995. Two other responses to my queries were received by correspondence at later dates. These 22 interviews were conducted among clergy and lay leaders of churches, parachurch ministries, and youth groups in or near the city of Basel with the one exception of a traditional Reformed Church in Zürich, Switzerland which is attempting radical innovation.

The representatives of churches and works from whom information was gathered are comprised as follows:

- 6 Evangelical-Reformed Church (ERK)
- 5 Parachurch ministries
- 2 Youth groups (one from the ERK; one independent)
- 4 Evangelical-Methodist Church (EMK)
- 1 Mennonite Church (MC)
- 1 Evangelical Church of Basel (independent; EGB)
- 1 Swiss Pentecostal Mission church (SPM)
- 1 Salvation Army (SA)
- 1 Church for Unchurched People (independent; CUP)

The persons interviewed hold the following positions in the churches and ministries listed above.

- 8 Pastors
- 2 Parish assistant ministers
- 2 Lay leaders of youth and young adults
- 2 Former members of a youth group
- 2 Founders and directors of parachurch ministries
- 1 Interim director
- 1 Social worker
- 1 Diaconal minister

- 1 Leadership team member and office manager
- 1 Division Commander of the Salvation Army
- 1 Church planter and leadership consultant

The age range of the leadership within these groups and churches varies greatly between the ages of 24 years and 60 years due in part to the various natures of the groups themselves, the nature of their respective organizational structures, and length of their existence.

The leadership in most of the churches, however, at the congregational level adheres to a relational pastoral style, in conversation or democratic partnership with others, providing vision, direction, and teaching. Others spoke of collegial, fraternal leadership, though with authority and within hierarchical structures. Two others said their leadership was as director with associates in a team. These two are in parachurch ministries.

One ministry, which is unique because it is communally organized, i.e., similar to a religious order, and which lives as a life-covenant community, spoke about their experience with a hierarchical leadership style with one leader at the pinnacle. In their case this led to crisis within the community, the emotional breakdown of the leader, and a setback of the whole group. This group is now seeking a mutuality model of leadership.

Only one group told about an authoritarian, patriarchal, dictatorial leader. This group experienced a tragic end when the leader left his wife, deserted the group, and moved to another country with one of the young women from the group.

According to the semi-structured interview protocol used with this population of Christian groups and leaders, their open-ended

responses provided a wealth of information which is summarized below.

About the Cathedrals

Depending on whether the group under consideration is a traditional church, an independent church, a youth group, or a parachurch ministry, many of the defining characteristics are determined. The groups investigated have existed from as recently as eight months to as long as over 100 years. This is helpful to see if groups in various stages of evolution display any of the same dynamics and defining characteristics, whether young or old. Usually, the older the church, the older its constituency will be and the more ironclad its tradition. Most youth groups, on the other hand, exist only for a generation before they dissipate when its members embark on professional careers or marry and establish families which become priority, thus changing the *raison d'être* and dynamics of the group. None of the youth groups interviewed integrated with a church, as a group, at this stage of its evolution.

In most traditional churches¹ the regular Sunday preaching services are attended by elderly persons. Periodically there are teenagers in attendance who are going through catechesis and are required to attend a set number of church services during the course of their confirmation instruction. Of course, there are among both state churches and free churches exceptions to this generalized description of the so-called "first program" (see explanation in n. 20) in traditional churches. If there is a "second program" in a church or

associated with a particular congregation, the age of participants in the second program seems to run in the late 20s to mid-30s (Brodbeck 1995; Kachel 1995; cf. Ross 1992:58).

Represented on an average Sunday morning in traditional churches (as defined in n. 1) are small children in child care if it is provided, Sunday school for school-age children which usually takes place during the worship assembly for adults, the catechetes or confirmands, a few young adults ages 20-30, and older people age 55 and above. A few active participants, along with the pastor, carry out most of the churches' active functions. These members fall in the 40-45 year old range and are a rare phenomenon according to some of the pastors (Nussbaumer 1995; Hauzenberger 1995).

There is a conspicuous absence of persons age 25-55 in most traditional churches, even though some of these who have families with children do send their children to Sunday school.

Some pastors and ministers point out intergenerational conflicts between more traditional elderly church attenders and less traditional younger ones (Gumbal 1995; Dürr 1995; Hofer 1995; Ruth Wenger, January-February 1995; E. Wenger 1995).

Alternative churches, both within and outside the state church tradition, which might include charismatic groups, international or multi-lingual worship services, and newly founded congregations, show an age group of 17-40 years old (Doerpfeld 1995; Brodbeck 1995; Ross 1992:58).

Most persons who sporadically avail themselves of emergency social services and diaconal ministries of congregations are 25-30

years old (Rudi Suter 1995). These persons are usually among the marginalized of society and find no home within the structures of traditional church services.

The parachurch ministries I interviewed are comprised largely of this same age group (Roth 1995; Gutmann 1995; Diefenbach 1995). They reported persons from 25-35 years of age (Gutmann 1995; Kuhl 1995; Roth 1995; Diefenbach 1995; Steuri 1995). Youth groups range in age from 14-25 years of age (Pausa 1995; Andreani 1995a; Bron 1995).

The social composition of the Christian group varies from group to group depending on whether it is a church or youth group. Urban churches, as might be expected, are more socially pluralistic, but often the middle aged group is missing from traditional churches.

Youth groups and some parachurch groups start as predominantly single persons who later marry within the group, but this does not assure continuation of the group after achieving adulthood. It was reported to me, however, that former members of one youth group had migrated through a series of Christian experiences from youth group in a parish of the state church, to free churches, to a charismatic church. Several from this original group are now exploring ways to return to their roots in the Reformed state church tradition, yet maintain the revitalized faith they have found through other Christian experiences (Pausa 1995).

In one case of a parachurch group which was established for the purpose of evangelistic-diaconal ministry and covenant-community living, a small group of single women formed an "order"

and took vows of celibacy and communal living for the sake of full-time ministry (Waegeli 1995). This is not uncommon in European Christian tradition, as evidenced by another newly formed order of single women in Basel who have joined in community living for the purpose of quiet prayer and retreat ministry called *El Roi* (Kachel, 1995).

One EMK was described to me as being structurally “rural/sibling” in its make-up but away from church its members live an urban existence. Another church, Mennonite, that assembles in a large suburban center, might also be described in this same way, as many, not all, come from farming families and relate along kinship lines, either biologically or through marriage.

Sociological Factors

Since this study is looking at the dynamics of culture conflict between a segment of society and one particular kind of that society’s institutions, namely, its Christian institutions as cathedral culture, the churches, youth groups, and parachurch ministries are examined by those categories, rather than confessionally or denominationally. It is a premise of this paper that those within the society who are marginal to the churches and Christian groups, i.e., the shadow culture, view these Christian institutions as all part of one whole--the dominant, bounded Christian culture. But how does the cathedral culture view itself?

The churches included in this study² admit to being rigidly bound up by the respective churches’ traditions, ordinances, and

disciplines. The older the church is historically and generationally the more rigid are its boundaries of self-identity, and consequently its barriers to inclusion of newcomers (Dürr 1995; Brodtbeck 1995). A recently established church has laid down, very intentionally and without apology, distinct lines of self-definition and membership, yet allowing for participation of all at various levels (Doerpfeld 1995; cf. Gumbal 1995). The newer of these churches has very few or no elderly participants. It displays youthful vigor and vitality and attracts highly educated young adults. Several bi-racial couples attend this church.

All the Christian churches interviewed describe themselves as being middle class or, in some neighborhoods, as lower middle class. However, many of the members of these churches no longer live in the neighborhood, but have moved to suburban residential communities and return to the old neighborhoods for church (Nussbaumer 1995; Mohr 1995; cf. Gumbal 1995). These are all EMKs that have not adhered to the parochial system. Another church describes its "first program" as middle class, and its "second program" as lower middle class, but the latter is derived from throughout the city (Brodtbeck 1995).

Others among the churches are risking innovations or challenging traditionalists in the church in order to make the church more socially diverse and inclusive (Felix 1995; Felix 1992; Gumbal 1995). It can be observed, however, how quickly the institutionalization of even the youngest churches and groups begins to occur and how soon after their inception they tend to become

homogeneous in composition, unless, as in few cases, an intentional strategy to achieve and maintain diversity is adopted (Felix 1995; Felix 1988; Gumbal 1995). Is this desirable and is it attainable? The two attempts cited here are recent and only time will answer the question.

Youth groups, on the other hand, whether they are open with very flexible boundaries (Pausa 1995) or encapsulated by rigid rules (Andreani 1995) and hierarchical organization (Waegeli 1995), appear to be short lived as an identifiable group. With time they pass either by dissipating into separate walks of career and marriage, or they integrate as individuals and couples into other Christian bodies. One group, in order to preserve its desired deep level of Christian commitment and identity, rapidly formed a covenant community and stayed together as persons from diverse but theologically and socio-economically similar church backgrounds. After restructuring so soon after its beginning into a covenant community, it has not been counted among youth groups in this study, but among parachurch ministries. Most in this group also share a higher level of schooling, possess white-collar job training, and come from middle class homes. This same group, however, is undergoing major restructuring of its leadership team and is still uncertain about the outcome. In order to weather its crisis of leadership and identity, it has loosened its once rigid "rules of engagement" (Waegeli 1995).

However, all the youth groups interviewed spoke of "imposed boundaries and expectations" (Pausa, Andreani, Waegeli, Bron

1995)³. In one case they were imposed by a pastor who would not affirm the group's existence because it was not denominationally and parish specific (Pausa 1995). This group was denominationally diverse, included some who were physically or emotionally impaired, but who also shared a similar level of education. Many members of this particular youth group find themselves today in professional health care or social services.

In yet another youth group, rigid interpretations of Scripture and high expectations were voiced by authoritarian leadership which then "trickled down" through an established "pecking order" by those who had "earned points" with the group hierarchy and exerted peer pressure on others, even newcomers and seekers, to conform to the group's norms (Andreani 1995). In another instance the boundaries were self-imposed in order to make faith and commitment more rigorous, thus forming the covenant community referred to above (Waegeli 1995). Finally, one group had the threat of being dissolved by the pastor if his criteria were not met (Bron 1995). All groups worked under the pressures of high expectations and imposed boundaries. What effects did this have on the groups themselves and on those who tried to become part of the groups?

The five parachurch ministries and one social services ministry of the ERK included in this research are each designed for a special stratum of society, but each of which may be found at the margins of mainstream society, e.g., rehabilitation for alcoholics and drug addicts (Gutmann 1995; Kuhl 1995; Rudi Suter 1995), prison releasees wrestling with addictions and dysfunctional relationships

(Diefenbach 1995), work and resocialization therapy for emotionally damaged young adults due largely to broken homes and dysfunctional families (Roth 1995), and outreach to youth through integration of Christian values into the cultural milieu of youth culture and the arts (Steuri 1995). Some of the strategies of these groups include the intention and the attempt to introduce and integrate these persons into Christian churches and groups (Gutmann 1995; Kuhl 1995; Roth 1995; Rudi Suter 1995). Others do not even make the attempt, recognizing that churches are either not willing or are not prepared to deal with or cope with marginal persons in general, which includes most blue-collar working class people who show a different mentality from the dominant cathedral culture, and those persons with deep-seated emotional and behavioral problems in particular (Diefenbach 1995; Steuri 1995; cf. also Roth 1995 and Kachel 1995). The clients of these ministries not only come from broken or otherwise dysfunctional families, but are usually from lower class families and neighborhoods (though not always) and either have minimal public education or may be vocational school drop-outs (Steuri, Roth, Gutmann, Kuhl 1995). Only one of them referred to any of their clients coming from middle class families (Gutmann 1995).

Among these ministries, as among the Mitternachtsmission Basel, bridges between the shadow culture and the cathedral culture are needful. If these ministries were embedded in a church or perhaps adopted by a church they could themselves serve as bridges between the cultures of the shadows and the cathedrals. One of the

churches interviewed has begun a support group which includes a midnight missionary, members of the church congregation, and persons from the night culture. This will hopefully serve as a bridge between the two worlds as relationships develop (Gutmann 1995; Nussbaumer, 2 February 1995; Marc Nussbaumer, "Domino: Gemeindeblatt, Bezirk Kleinbasel, November/Dezember 1995:9).

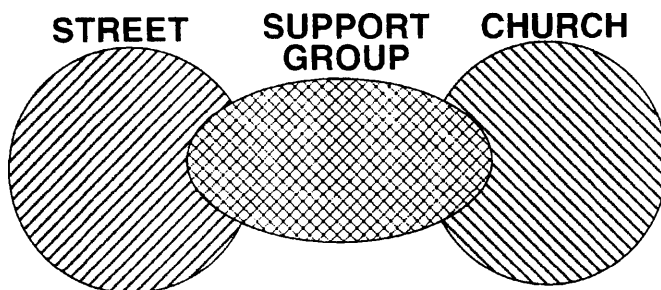


Figure 6

Support group as bridge between cultures

Others recognize the validity of personal relationships in small, non-threatening settings like house groups as an initial introduction to Christian community, but even here there is often culture conflict when Christians set forth expectations, give advice, and press for commitments that persons from the shadow culture are not ready to accept or to make (Kachel 1995; Robert Wenger 1995; Roth 1995; Kuhl 1995).

One parish assistant minister in the ERK expressed the dilemma in this way when admitting the church does not know how to reach the indigenous working class in their parish who live in the shadow of the cathedral. She says,

The church speaks the wrong language. It is too intellectual, too middle-class. Most house groups are already too “high” for people. Many people who are emotionally damaged do have very deep faith. Still others will come to me when they are in a financial crisis, but they don’t want to come to church. I am puzzled about why we can’t attract them. There needs to be a work of the holy spirit; a charismatic breakthrough. We wait for it to come. Some how, some day we will reach the working class. (Kachel 1995)

But where does the Holy Spirit’s work need to occur? Where is the breakthrough needed? In the world? In the Church? In both?

The churches, youth groups, and parachurch ministries share some traits in common that make them not only monocultural within themselves, but also possess several common dynamics, as we have seen. But how are they different within themselves? What is different about them that sets them apart?

All the churches that can be defined as “traditional churches,” whatever the denominational affiliation, point out generational conflict except for one. The recently formed non-denominational, free church, *Evangelische Gemeinde Basel*, spoke of no generational conflict, but then there are no elderly persons present in the church, at least as I observed it (Sunday morning worship service, 5 February 1995) or as it was related to me (Doerpfeld 1995). It is a monogenerational church and a first generation church. It must be

noted however that one third of its members come from so-called nominal Christian backgrounds, one third have transferred from other churches, and one third are new converts.

Otherwise the conflicts created by the generational polarity within churches are described as traditional versus contemporary, familiar versus creative, rural versus urban, vocational versus academic, past orientation versus “now” orientation, maintenance versus outreach. A diaconal minister pointed out to me how many older people in their traditional Sunday service (first program) view children in the service as a disturbance and do not want them there (Brodbeck 1995). A father who belongs to the shadow culture experienced the same rejection when he took his daughter to a Sunday morning service in another congregation of a state church (M. Suter 1995). After an elderly man fussed at the child for being in church one Sunday morning, she is now afraid to go to church.

One church, however, an EMK, recognizes there is diversity in scriptural interpretations among them since many of its members come from diverse denominational backgrounds. Among the older members most are traditional Methodists and among the younger many are from Catholic backgrounds. In education and vocation they range from manual laborers to doctors, and consequently, socio-economically they range from lower and lower middle class among the young to upper middle class among the older members.

This diversity creates conflict and tension, but the church is working on unity in diversity and is making steady progress. E.g., worship services are a mix of traditional and contemporary styles

with participation of laity in leadership (reading, prayers). Raising of hands is common, but those who prefer to do so are asked to sit or stand in back or at the sides of the assembly so not to create a distraction for those sitting or otherwise unaccustomed to the practice. Common also are testimonies and open prayer times. Singing is often accompanied by keyboards, guitar, and flute rather than more traditional organ or harmonium. It has not, however, been successful in ministry to the many foreigners in its immediate neighborhood who now number almost 80% (Gumbal 1995). Most of its members no longer live in the neighborhood and only drive in for church.

In addition to its traditional church program, one ERK has begun a second program that attempts to reach and integrate, or at least offer hospitality to, foreigners of diverse tribes, nations, peoples and tongues by means of offering asylum to them while they are applying for papers. Assistance is given during this process and often pastor and wife are advocates for these folks in front of authorities. Both pastor and wife speak several languages and they spend at least 1/3 1/2 time in ministry to foreigners, supported by the state Reformed Church. Many foreigners receive temporary quarters, meals, and work in a make-shift crafts workshop, and some of them participate in a special Sunday night worship service conducted in several languages. The service is very participatory with singing, drama, testimony, prayer, and preaching (in at least two or three languages). It may be long and rather disjointed, but it is a "glad" service. The languages used on the evening I attended

were: German, French, English, Portuguese, Spanish, a Slavic language (ex-Yugoslavs), Swahili. Some Turkish youth were also in attendance, but they were German speaking. The pastor reported to me that often whenever these persons receive visas and work permits they move on to a life without the benefit of or contact with the Christian church. Peer pressure is great from their own ethnic communities, so far as these exist. The neighborhood in question is now known as "Little Istanbul" and consists of 50%-65% foreigners, mostly Turks who, at least culturally, are Muslim (so-called secular Muslims or "Aleviten"). The process in this instance is: immediate crisis --> food, shelter, part-time work --> relationship --> invite, take with, participate, retreats --> visas, work permits or deportation --> disappear in their cultural milieu.

The youth groups showed very little diversity within the groups with the one exception of the group that was open to physically and mentally impaired youth who were included as equals (Pausa 1995). These groups were shaped largely by the leader, the leader's expectations, and the leader's agenda.

Since the parachurch ministries targeted specific socially marginal persons exhibiting similar or identical problems the groups were not very diverse. However, many marginalized people have few relational skills or positive role models in their lives and minor differences between them become major issues and require high investments of time and energy from the leaders of these ministries (Diefenbach 1995; Roth 1995; Suter 1995).

Defining the Center

Among all those interviewed, there was little variation in their understanding of what the gospel is. For all, in short, the gospel is the good news of God's liberating love to humankind revealed in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God. Accepting the gospel entails making Jesus Christ the central focus of one's life which effects a change in life's orientation and life style. No one spoke specifically about theological understanding or about what constituted acceptable life style. Perhaps each responder had his or her own assumptions about a "clear proclamation" or "understanding of the Bible," but they were not articulated. What was voiced concerning the good news follows:

- Clear gospel is a decisive proclamation regarding Jesus according to the Scripture, calling for conversion, the human response to God's love.
- The gospel is being loved by God; God's mercy and greatness.
- It is testimony pointing to Jesus.
- It is life-changing good news and understanding of the Bible.
- Christ is the middle point in life, not a mere theology.
- It includes openness, collegiality, helping one another.
- God's reign has broken into our world in the person of Jesus Christ making possible personal relationship to God, relationship to a church (faith community), and relationship to society (social responsibility).
- The gospel concerns the person of Jesus Christ and relationship/commitment to him.
- Good news of forgiveness through Jesus Christ is the gospel.
- It is life in the love of God in fellowship with one another.
- Gospel is the atoning work of Jesus Christ as divine love
- Redemption is through Jesus Christ alone.
- The good news is that even though we are still sinners, we are

- spoken righteous by God.
- God's self-revelation as told in Bible is the gospel.
 - Once the gospel meant unconditional obedience to our group leader.
 - Now I know Jesus alone is redeemer, savior (not some man claiming to understand him better than others).
 - Forgiveness of sin through Jesus Christ means acceptance by God.
 - The gospel is the joy of the free gift of redemption in Jesus Christ through grace.
 - Jesus, cross, redemption, God's love, freedom from bondage are all part of the gospel.
 - The gospel is redemption in Jesus Christ, reconciliation with God and others.
 - Jesus Christ is central, but church is outwardly plural. (This respondent quickly added that it is this reality that creates tension within the church and between churches and Christian groups.)

Birth and Re-birth: Conversion

Clearly, most respondents to this question see as necessary come kind of conversion experience by recognition of one's own sinfulness and faith in Jesus Christ for forgiveness of sin as a gift of God's grace. For some this includes an inner witness of the Spirit of God and an outward confession or expression of that faith such as baptism. Only one response included such things as belonging to a church, reading the Bible, and prayer in order to keep the faith, confession of sin, turning outward in mission as necessary for being a Christian (Gutmann 1995; Kuhl 1995). A second added: after conversion, however one defines the experience, should follow a life of prayer, learning, and listening to God through the Bible in community (Pausa 1995).

At a time in their past one couple from a youth group said they had felt they must earn their righteousness by being obedient to God and the group leader in all things (Andreani 1995).

Defining the Boundaries

The churches are denominationally distinct whether reformed as in the case of the ERK, wesleyan as in the case with the EMK, anabaptist as with Mennonites, pentecostal with the SPM, evangelical as with the EGB, salvationist in the case of the Salvation Army, and not yet clear, perhaps interdenominational-evangelical, at the Church for Unchurched People.⁴

These share basically a common center, by their own definition (see above), but different identities by the very nature of their social, educational, economic, and generational composition among the churches.

A Methodist pastor (Nussbaumer 1995) suggested that, as a free church, the EMK was in a unique position to serve as a bridge between the larger institutional ERK and smaller free churches, but its own institutional structure is too complicated for most Swiss. The EMK is seeking the middle ground in Basel, in Switzerland, and in Europe. Another Methodist pastor (Mohr 1995) agreed with this vision, and added that because of the EMK's relationship to the Ministerial Alliance on the one hand and to the Ecumenical Movement on the other, it is in a special position between these two bodies and other free churches. However, he added, those persons not happy in state churches who leave them are going either into

fundamentalist churches or nowhere. He asks whether the EMK has become too much like the state churches institutionally and theologically, or has it just not made itself well enough known? Or, I might ask, has it just not made Jesus Christ well enough known in culturally appropriate ways?

Another EMK claims unity in spite of its diversity. Earlier the church almost splintered in three directions, i.e., traditional liberal Methodists would stay at the EMK building, fundamentalists would go to Chrischona, and charismatics would go to the *Urchristen*⁵. This crisis was weathered and today the church is continuing to grow in its unity with diversity.

The youth groups and parachurch ministries share in common a Christward orientation, but are unique in group interests and purpose, whether they exist primarily for fellowship and mutual upbuilding or for ministry among specific population groups. One group was founded on “kerygma, koinonia, and diakonia” as an evangelistic team, communal fellowship, and service-orientated crafts workshop, but became self-absorbed and lost its sense of mission. It is now re-evaluating its orientation and purpose (Waegeli 1995).

One youth group (Pausa 1995) described itself as Christ centered, but outwardly open. They felt they were often criticized for this by other youth groups in the city with which they had contact and who wanted to set their defining boundaries for them. They rejected this and developed their own dynamic. Today-- pursuing career, married with children, more mature and

experienced in the Christian culture of Basel--they are seeking ways to come together again, perhaps in their former parish where they once began as a youth group. On the other hand, another group (Andreani 1995) felt it was the only "real" Christian group in the city and if anyone came to them then they must come on the group's terms or not at all in order to be a Christian.

It is interesting to observe that the parachurch ministries say: they have "no strong distinctives" (Roth 1995); "diakonia and hospitality" (Kachel 1995); a "missionary-diaconal" emphasis (Suter 1995); to challenge, prevent, protect without pressure to convert or to conform (Steuri 1995); a low threshold without pressure to convert to Christian faith although that is a goal (Diefenbach 1995).

Churches as Cultures

Other than denominational distinctives (ERK, EMK, Mennonite, SPM, SA, FEG, EGB; see note 4) some of the churches and some of the youth groups felt a strong sense of mission to the "lost" and unchurched people around them. This was described as "not just talk, but doing evangelization and service" (Waegeli 1995) or that the goal was "to missionize the neighborhood" (Kachel 1995). The pastor of a Reformed Church in the city described his parish as having a heritage of strong, popular preachers in recent history, but the church members are deeply entrenched in good, middle class, "bourgeois" Christian tradition (Dürr 1995) and do not want their comfort zone disturbed by other kinds of folks.

Some of the expressions I heard may also denote contrasts to

other groups and may reveal other possible dynamics. A youth group that was often criticized for its openness describes itself as *weniger fromm* (less pious) and as spending “normal” time together (Pausa 1995). Does this suggest that other groups were too pious and did not spend normal time together? Or when one group says they have a lack of expectations and demands on newcomers and members (Pausa 1995; Steuri 1995) does this suggest that other groups do place demands on their members and guests? A parachurch group that attempts to work with so-called secular artists, i.e., those artists whose artistic expression does not contain an explicit Christian message, is heavily criticized by the Evangelical church communities for “compromising the gospel” (Steuri 1995). The same is true for churches that by innovative means seek dialogue with the broader culture that exists outside its own cathedral walls (Felix 1995; Felix 1992 Katzenstein, 1995; “Lebensfreude: Pfarrer Felix Felix: ein aussergewoehnlicher Gastgeber,” *Sonnseitig leben* 2/95:4-7).

Cognitive Categories

As might be expected in any institution, churches have their defining boundaries. The more theologically conservative the church, the more distinct and rigidly enforced the boundaries become since they are deemed essential to genuine Christian conversion and maintenance of Christian faith and standing. This is true also for entrance into Christian community, for the purpose of acceptance into it and participation with it.

In state churches, including those which have so-called first programs, membership involves living in the parish and coming from either a Reformed or Catholic family. That identity includes christening, usually as an infant shortly after birth, and confirmation sometime between the ages of 14 and 16, preceded by a two year period of preparatory instruction by the pastor. At this time one is recognized as a voting member of the parish congregation. However, it has been determined that an increasing number of state church members are voting with their feet and leaving the churches, most of whom do not then join any church (Heitz and Simson 1989; Simson 1992; "Evangelische Synode sagt ja zur Offenen Kirche" 1995). This is not only true, however, of state churches, but Methodists (Gaberthüel 1990; Nussbaumer 1996) and Mennonites (Kipfer 1995) as well.

Those churches having a second program require a person to join the volunteer association and commit to active ministry, small group participation, and sharing of responsibility (Brodbeck 1995; Aschoff 1992; Wieland 1992). One innovative ERK church, following the "city church" model of St. James's, Piccadilly, in London, England (Reeves 1981; cf. n. 6), exists almost entirely of several second programs, each made up of various self-governing special interest groups, paramount to homogeneous units, but under the aegis of the one leadership team and identified with the state church ("Jahresbericht 1994 der Offenen Kirche Elisabethen," 3-6; cf. Tillepaugh 1982:44-57, 101-111, 122-143). The only identifiable boundaries are "a Christian church" meeting at a particular location seeking dialogue with today's culture, but not restricted by parochial

or confessional boundaries (Felix 1992). Its founding documents identify its center as uniquely Christian, but culturally flexible and open to dialogue with all segments of society and all faiths, whether Christian or otherwise.

Membership in an EMK assumes a positive reply to the four questions:

1. Do you confess Jesus as Savior and Lord?
2. Do you accept the Bible as the only authoritative revelation from God?
3. Do you desire to live in grace?
4. Do you commit to involvement in the EMK?

Others may participate in services and activities of an EMK congregation, but are not otherwise members. One who expresses a "desire to meet God" can be an affiliate member, however many people today are fearful of any level of serious commitment (Mohr 1995; Robert Wenger 1995).

Other evangelical churches require some period of instruction before baptism in water, and pentecostals assume an experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit before full membership is possible. One recently established church, the Evangelische Gemeinde Basel (Doerpfeld 1995), requires a four-part introductory course to the Christian faith and an additional four evenings hearing the story, the orientation and vision of this congregation, and an explanation of the need for personal commitment and prayer. The church practices believer's baptism by immersion, but does not make it a requirement for membership. It does not seem to have difficulty obtaining commitments as it has grown rapidly, one third of its members being

new converts to the faith (Doerpfeld 1995). It is comprised of well-educated, upwardly mobile young adults.

When one youth group established themselves as a parachurch covenant community for the purpose of a shared life of mission and service, it set its standards for admission so high that no one else applied for admission (Waegeli 1995). Another reported (Andreani 1995) that their admission requirements consisted of recognition of the leader, submission to the leader, and submission to the internal group hierarchy, all “without ‘de facto’ reference to Jesus.” Today the group no longer exists in any form, several have left the Christian faith, others are struggling to find their faith footing, and a few are actively engaged in churches.

The youth group with the least pressures to conform and conditions for participation and membership testifies today that a great number of the former youth group are continuing in the Christian faith and seeking participation in Christian community (Pausa 1995). This group maintains it was open to all, but its identity was derived from the one around whom they gathered, Jesus Christ. Otherwise it had no identifying criteria.

Parachurch ministries have clearly defined criteria of participation, but these are considered to be “low threshold” and are necessary for life-controlling problems rather than imposed requirements of a cognitive or moral nature (Diefenbach 1995; Steuri 1995; Roth 1995).

But it is fact that all of the Christian organizations have boundaries of inclusion which at the same time are boundaries of

exclusion. There are different levels of participation and membership in them all, or there are at least different groupings in some of the churches which allows for participation and inclusion of more people and more diverse groupings under the umbrella of the Christian church or Christian organization.

In churches, youth groups, and parachurch ministries alike there is the expectation and requirement to keep an active, participatory “yes” to the respective group’s core message and central focus, a yes manifested by an investment of time, energy, and resources to sustain the group’s mission and to maintain one’s relationship to it. This may occur through conversion or through joining the group by transfer from another Christian church or group, but in either case some conformity is expected. Sometimes that conformity includes criteria established by the group or its leadership, explicitly or implicitly stated by its theological understanding, or self-perceptions of Christian living and witness, such as regulations concerning clothes, movies, music, dancing, gender relationships, even consumption of certain kinds of foods and drink.

One thought that continues to surface in response to several of the questions about group membership criteria and expectations is that of pressure to commit and to conform. This seems to be a major deterrent to participation in Christian groups by many in today’s society, both young and old alike, especially those who have had negative experiences with Christians or with church and who now live in its shadows.

Among the groups questioned in this research there is a full spectrum of meetings for purposes as diverse as the groups themselves. These meetings range from traditional Sunday morning church services which are considered optional by most members of state churches but required by many free churches for good standing in the church, to daily meetings of the residents in therapeutic drug-rehabilitation and resocialization programs. Meetings may be of a liturgical, worshipful nature in churches; prayerful planning sessions in any of the churches or groups; fun-filled times of play and socializing in youth groups; evangelistic meetings hosted by any of the churches or ministries; meetings for dealing with life's issues and concerns and for learning skills to live productively in society.

In order to make church warmer and friendlier for both members and guests, a formal church service may be preceded or followed by coffee and cakes in the foyer or fellowship hall. Some churches are experimenting with schedule changes for assemblies on Sundays and adding services and activities throughout the week in order to attract more participants and to be available to a public that may be seeking encounter with God, but in non-traditional ways and at non-traditional times. This is especially true of those traditional churches with a second program and of the "open" city-church.⁶ One church draws more people to assemblies and activities throughout the week than on Sundays, partly because it is located in a business district with few permanent residents nearby (Felix 1995). Another is attended by only one third of its members on Sunday morning and two thirds on Sunday evening at a different location, but it is one

church. Members are not expected to be at both services, although some choose to be (Doerpfeld 1995). In this church as in churches with second programs, participation in a house group is not only desired by the leadership of constituent members, but usually required as part of a serious commitment to the church or group (Brodbeck 1995; Doerpfeld 1995; Waegeli 1995).

Cathedral Culture and Shadow Culture

Of twenty-two churches and Christian groups interviewed only two said that they were not open to incorporating individuals from marginal, alternative segments of society per se, especially those persons from the night culture dealing with substance abuse and other life controlling issues, the so-called "real weak" (Czwalina 1995). Czwalina's attempt is to start a church for the unchurched among leadership personnel from business and management circles who, he says, have a longing for God but are disillusioned by untenable, cool, and impersonal churches. He does not consider these persons to be marginal. They do not belong to the lower socio-economic echelons of society, but neither do they belong to the large, burgeoning middle class, unless perhaps at the upper edge. Does *not* belonging to the socio-economic middle and *not* belonging to the mainstream Christian cultural center not make them, too, in a sense marginal? The question is, Which margin? And also, if these are considered to have "good potential," does this suggest that others have no good potential? Either for being human or for being Christian? (Cf. Bittner 1993:136)

Nor is it the intention of the group which is now organized as a covenant community (Waegeli 1995) to be an open, inclusive community. It had earlier held "open evenings" for all comers, but discontinued when the demands became too great and the focus of the group turned more inward.

Four admit that theoretically they say they are open to all kinds of people, including marginal persons who are different than themselves, but when it comes to practice of outreach and hospitality by the group everyone, including the guests, are expected to conform to upstanding, middle-class forms and norms which are comfortable to the Christian group (Andreani 1995b). Many of the expectations are unspoken by the Christian group, but strongly perceived by the guests (Max 1995; Erika 1995; Dieter 1995). One of those churches had earlier tried to reach out to the milieu of neighborhood rowdies, but when violence began to disrupt their efforts they discontinued their efforts, at least temporarily (Gumbal 1995). They are now suggesting a different, more subtle approach.

All other churches, groups, and ministries express a willingness to receive all comers, regardless of background or style. They will be received on the same terms as anyone else. Of course, the clients of most of the parachurch ministries come from the social margins because of addictions and life-control issues and for them it is a mute point. But even when these parachurch ministries attempt to serve as bridges to churches and youth groups, and even when the churches form support groups to help integrate the socially marginalized into the church, why are there so few who cross that

bridge? Are there perhaps barriers which are only visible from one direction, like one-way glass? Attitudinal barriers? On one side only? On both sides?

One youth group claims that because of its openness and acceptance of others, the emotionally and physically impaired were drawn to the group because they were treated with respect as worthy equals (Pausa 1995). Others admit that even though they seek relationship with the socially marginal, they are not yet able to reach them or integrate them (Nussbaumer 1995; Stoeckli 1995). The newly begun church planting effort of the Church for Unchurched People seeks to avoid the mistake of many free churches, according to Czwalina (1995), of "an insistent manner and multiple commitments" which keep people away from church.

Pastors speak of marginal people who have come to church but do not remain (Gumbal 1995); another claims regular guests from the street milieu who attend sometimes but have not joined (Mohr 1995); a third expresses a willingness to welcome even if it brings problems for the church and intends to become more intentional about the effort by emphasizing it more in preaching and teaching in his church. These are all EMK pastors who stem from a Wesleyan tradition of evangelism among the socially marginalized and economically deprived.

And a parachurch ministry, that is intentional about being a bridge to church and has good relations with a congregation that is open to their clients, tells that the effort is not working well or consistently (Gutmann 1995).

Almost none of those who were asked this question responded about why it is not working for them, even though many are willing and some are making an effort to reach out to the socially marginalized in the shadows of their own cathedrals, whether large or small ones. Some believe small house groups may be the solution.

When asked for specific numbers of those in their churches who might be considered socially marginal to their respective church constituencies, the responses either brought embarrassment or uncertainty.

Specific responses from those who seemed to know were: "three or four" out of a membership of 300; "three or four" out of 100; one out of 65; and seven admit there are none in their churches.

That is not to say, however, that they are not making an effort to reach out to all persons. One church situated on the edge of a "red-light" district in a working-class neighborhood confessed that its members have all fled the neighborhood (Nussbaumer 1995a). It has recently begun, however, a support group as bridge between midnight mission work and the church (Nussbaumer 1995b:9), which one midnight missionary attends regularly. Some of the church members volunteer with the Midnight Mission Basel. Another EMK church lends its facilities to a therapy group working among alcoholics. While located in a neighborhood of 80% Tamils, Turks, and Italians, the same church has not yet begun reaching out to them (Gumbal 1995).

A different church that is located in yet another part of the city that is also overwhelmed by foreigners, mostly Turks and Bosnians,

is providing ministry to these folks. In their second program--the pastor has been released by the ERK to spend 1/3 to 1/2 his time working with refugees and illegal aliens (Fürst 1995; Kachel 1995)--the church has about twenty live-in guests who are awaiting decisions regarding visas for themselves and their families who are often still in war-torn lands. The alternative facing these souls is deportation or further flight into the underground of this or another land. In addition to food and shelter for the twenty mentioned, a Sunday evening community worship is held in the church for everyone who will come, both Swiss and foreign. About 30-40 foreigners from several nations and tongues attend (see above) as do 15-20 Swiss Christians. For the staid, stolid Swiss who is accustomed to everything running with clock-work precision and is very resistant to innovation, the service, as I experienced it (Sunday evening, 26 February 1995), must seem like pandemonium!

Other responses received about how many people from the outside edges of the church's shadows actually attend the church were "a few" and "several, but that's hard to pin-point." As previously mentioned, in some of the youth groups and churches alike, those who are different felt unaccepted and unwelcome as they were and did not return or remain with the group after trying it.

In the larger church assemblies where the ratio of subculture guests to acculturated Christians is minimal, no problems were created due to the weight of the numbers. In the smaller churches and some youth groups, however, the older members felt threatened that the traditional, familiar status quo might be called into question

or changed, and in other instances the group leadership felt challenged by newcomers who dared think or act differently from the prescribed norms. I was told that if you, as a group member, brought someone who challenged the leadership, you yourself might become suspected of subversion or rebellion (Andreani 1995). This is the extreme case, but found in some groups and to varying degrees during my own eight years of experience throughout the cathedral culture of Basel.

One of the greatest problems faced by most Christians in these situations is fear--fear of that which is unknown and "other," and fear of making mistakes in relating to the stranger.

I often heard, that the elderly church members were sometimes in overt opposition to receiving marginals into their church. It is acceptable to go to them and minister to them, but not to bring them in until they "clean up their act," i.e., become like us. Most of the churches recognize it creates tensions and problems, but recognize that only a loving atmosphere will break down the invisible attitudinal barriers so often unseen to the cathedral culture and so obvious to the shadow culture. But intolerance is not one sided. Because of the low tolerance level of people "on the edge" churches need to find new forms for attracting and holding the interest of marginal who are averse to Christian churches which are usually viewed together as one monolithic culture.

The most common problem mentioned was the problem of the generations--traditionalists versus youthful innovators in the churches.

In the eleven instances when Christian groups and churches had experiences of persons from the social shadows coming into their church eight of those eleven had dropped out. Others look in from time to time, but do not remain either.

Reasons given for this are that the framework, ambiance, and order of church are not attractive and the services are “too dry.” Even those who drop out of traditional churches and go to more loosely structured charismatic services make no commitment in the new place. Frequently they find the pressure to conform to the charismatic forms and interpretations greater and more overt than elsewhere. Legalism and narrowness among Christians was cited as a leading cause for church drop-outs. This often causes people struggling with life-controlling issues to become frustrated and disappointed because often in conservative Christian circles conversion to Christ is presented as an end to all struggles. Some convert with false or unrealistic expectations and soon lose hope when difficulties arise or whenever they see similar problems to their own among Christians whom they have come to believe are somehow “other worldly.”

Some, after making an initial commitment, leave out of peer pressure or because the immediate crisis has been overcome (Kachel 1995; Fürst 1995; cf. Erika 1995). In the case of some from foreign cultures, it is possible the conversions to Christianity have been “courtesy conversions” because of a favor done on their behalf (Fürst 1995).

Since integration of subculture persons into Christian groups

and churches is rare, as we saw above, the many responses concerning this matter must fall into the realm of theory or hopeful expectation.

Summary of Findings and a Look Ahead

Personal contact and relationships were named as the best means of introducing and integrating someone into the new reference group. Someone must serve as a bridge between the old milieu and the new group, most responders feeling that a house group is the best level of entry into any larger church involvement, although some admitted that house groups as ports of entry to church was not working for them. Could it be the small group was too much like church? Or that the disparity between the house circle and church was too great?

Also, it is helpful if the newcomer knows or meets someone from a similar background or similar experience who has made the transition from outside to inclusion and engagement in the Christian context. Friendship evangelism surpasses event evangelism in its effectiveness today, especially among the younger generation. They must be seen as persons, not as contacts or potential converts. If a person is accepted as a worthy and responsible participant in the group and allowed time to grow in Christian faith and virtue, that person is much more likely to remain in the group and to develop a genuine faith commitment than when pressure to convert and conform is placed on that person.

When I asked about future possibilities for ministry with the

marginalized, the question caused a good deal of reflection and a long litany of responses. I think it worthwhile to list them here, as they were given, for later evaluation and analysis. These are responses from pastors, parish assistant ministers, diaconal ministers, directors and team members of parachurch ministries, former youth group members--all with deep Christian commitments, all participants in Christian faith communities, all concerned about sharing life with subculture groups in their society, almost all expressed desire to be involved in mission to those among the shadows of their own cathedral cultures. How do these pastors, ministers, servants see themselves as change agents, culture brokers, bridges between cultures which are at conflict and seem to have little understanding about how to find a way to each other, even when it is desired?

I give their responses here as they were said to me in order to illustrate the humanness of genuine Christian concern of these responses, but at the same time, as obvious as these suggestions may appear, I confess on behalf of my brothers and sisters who so kindly responded to my inquiries and myself, how difficult it is for us to live out even part of what we know, cognitively or intuitively, concerning the will of God and love for our fellow humans.

In the future I would hope to:

- as a pastor seek more possibilities of contact with persons outside our worship services.
- encourage Christians to have open eyes and open doors for people in their own environs who are different or excluded.
- show that the gospel does not contain anything different for marginals; they are part and parcel of the gospel. We

need, however, a clear “call” to reach them.

- engender more personal and corporate honesty; more mature faith.
- practice a more “relaxed” Christianity; I cannot impress God with my piety.
- have lasting relationships beyond mere contact.
- have stayed with our home church if we had had more encouragement and support from the pastor as a group.
- as pastor and as a church, have more contact between unbelievers, new converts, and members of the church.
- see a rejection of old, strict pietism.
- see the pastor’s role as “broker,” catalyst: through preaching and modelling; seeking for and presenting new methods of evangelism.
- form an evangelistic team *from the church* which is trained to understand outreach to outsiders and marginals.
- encourage churches to start support groups for marginals.
- work so that parachurch ministries could be more fully integrated into a church congregation.
- as pastor, help the church become more evangelistic and diverse. The previous pastor was very involved city-wide, but much has institutionalized, died out, or split off. We have gotten comfortable.
- to encourage more one-on-one evangelism. The era of event evangelism is past.
- wait and see. I don’t know yet; here only 2 years.
- recognize it is extremely difficult to find churches ready to integrate the weak.
- “We are all seeking new forms of Christian living fellowships, community living.”
- “Some how, some day we will reach the working class.”
- draw the wayward/marginal into church.
- admit that sometimes I feel better at a *Dorf-Fest* (village festival) than in church.
- participate in more Alliance worship services [to show unity and solidarity among Christians].
- let Spirit work across denominational and doctrinal

boundaries.

- be like the father in the prodigal son story: love so strong that we run out to meet the wayward and welcome them, even before they arrive in our house.
- get away from programmed youth work. Go more with indigenous ideas and help them develop them. Away from working “for” to working “with” others. From consumers to participants. Work with their felt needs, not the needs we assume they have.
- to be more flexible as a church. There is a boundary/limit, but it is much wider than 5 years ago.
- encourage relationships!
- start a living community for and with marginals.
- have more increased openness in dialogue and planning.
- have more missionary engagement as a church.
- become more motivational [in preaching] without becoming a “morality apostle.”
- look for 2-3 totally radical Christian families to work with.
- increase emphasis on house groups.
- include children in worship.
- start this kind of living community [with marginals] sooner.
- find people; a seeker friendly church.
- have good relations with the state church.
- do more training of lay leaders.
- spend more time together as church--meals, excursions, etc.
- show more openness; be outward looking.

These responses show a desire for a more flexible church with an emphasis on relationships and less emphasis on strict boundaries of denominational identity and fewer expectations on new converts to practice personal piety as more mature Christians might do. There is a wish for more time together as Christians in community--some through small groups and some in community living. There is the

hope for more contact with and ministry among those people who are at the farthest edges of the shadows cast by a cathedral culture.

Analysis of Findings from the Cathedral Culture

The subject is churches. Not buildings. Not worship services. Or Sunday School. Or pastor, deacons, and staff. Or a religious institution. Or any other imperfect image that may come to mind.

The subject is churches--congregations of individuals voluntarily bound together, not by votes or neighborhood or need, but by members' common bond of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

Their fashion of worship, methods of working together, modes of witness, and ways of study--all emerge as a result of that faith. (Parks 1980:2)

What is the source of a church's identity? Is it neighborhood or parish? Is it fashion of worship (or fashion of clothing for that matter)? Is it our method of witness or mission? Is it a particular hermeneutic or doctrinal understanding of Scripture? As R. Keith Parks, former President of the Foreign Mission Board of Southern Baptists, stated, it is faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord that binds Christians together as a church, and out of *that* common center all expressions of worship and work emerge in culturally appropriate forms. This defines the centered set church of my interpretive framework, according to Hiebert (1978). Anything more than that common bond of faith in Jesus Christ begins to erect barriers of exclusion that divide even Christians and hinder inclusion of many seekers and new converts, creating bounded set churches.

What kinds of churches and ministries did I find among the cathedral culture in Basel, Switzerland? How do they understand themselves and the dynamics between themselves and the shadow culture of their society?

Of the twenty-two interviews conducted among this population of Christian churches, parachurch ministries, and youth groups, five of those fall, as parachurch ministries designed for particular clientele, into a special category. By the specific nature of their ministries they receive only persons who fit their specific criteria--persons with life-controlling issues such as substance abuse, asocial behavior due to psychological and emotional problems, criminal behavior, and, in one case, ministry among the youth media culture, all of which may in some cases be interrelated, but have been delineated by the ministries for their purposes of dealing with particular aspects in each category. Since these parachurch ministries see themselves in most cases as bridges between the milieu of the shadows and the churches, they have been included here and provide insights into the relationship between shadow culture and cathedral culture. They are all fundamentally Christian and seek healing of the whole person--body, soul, and spirit. Only the presenting problem and stages of healing are unique to each of them. They all see themselves as part of the church in mission and have as an ultimate goal the integration of persons in their care into viable Christian faith communities (Roth 1995; Diefenbach 1995; Gutmann and Kuhl 1995; Steuri 1995).

One parachurch ministry began as a youth movement and soon

established itself as a covenant community in order to live out its mission of youth evangelization and diaconal ministry together. Its identity became rapidly exclusive and its standards of admission very strict (Waegeli 1995). Therefore it did not grow as a unit, but has been instrumental in contributing to the growth of other youth groups and churches. It is presently undergoing reevaluation of its leadership style and ministry goals. Hopefully a revitalization movement will occur among them (Wallace 1956), as the intentional process they are in strongly resembles the stages of Wallace's model (cf. chapters 3 and 7 for explanation of this model).

The youth groups I interviewed are portrayed by participant lay leaders in those groups who draw upon their experiences during a period of approximately eight years in each case. Neither group exists today as a group, but the persons interviewed are active in Christian faith communities, although there was a period of uncertainty for each after the dissolution of their groups (Andreani 1995b; Pausa 1995).

But what about the churches? Regardless of the denomination, the longer a church has existed, the older its constituency will be, at least in attendance at its regular scheduled services. The older its constituency, the more ironclad its traditions. The more ironclad its traditions, the less it is apt to change and welcome new people who might be perceived as a threat to its comfort zone and familiar ways. Often I was told that elderly church members are in overt opposition to receiving marginals into their church. "It is right and good to go to them and minister to them, but do not bring them to our church until

they 'clean up their act,' i.e., become like us." This was recognized by many of the pastors and ministers I interviewed (Dürr 1995; Mohr 1995; Gumbal 1995; Nussbaumer 1995; Brodtbeck 1995; Rudi Suter 1995; Hauzenberger 1995; Hofer 1995). And that means, in 13 out of 15 churches I examined, a person is expected to look like, act like, talk like, work like, think like a good, upstanding, quiet, middle class Christian with middle class values, middle class life style, and middle class friends.

In these instances the respective church's traditions and cultural preferences have become its boundaries (Hiebert 1978; cf. Hunter 1996:56; Snyder 1989:302). Without the familiar traditions, there is the threat of a loss of identity, especially as long as those bounded traditions define who we are as Christians. Churches and church members fail to recognize that their identity as Christians comes out of its center and not from its defining cultural traits, not even from its time-honored doctrinal distinctives. Christians' identity comes out of *whose* they are and not *what* they do or *how* they act. The term "Christian" means "belonging to Christ" (Acts 11:26). Christian conversion and identity are centered upon the person and work of Jesus Christ, not upon cultural preferences which someone may mistakenly hold to be inherently a part of the gospel that is to be believed and obeyed by all. Nor are theological and doctrinal constructs, which may seem so obvious to one Christian, necessarily valid and binding in the life of a Christian coming from another cultural perspective, nor are they necessary for becoming a Christian (Hiebert 1978; cf. Dye 1976; Hunter 1996:64-65). Whether

a traditional church is evangelical or mainline is not the issue. The issue is whether the respective church seeks to uphold its traditions more than to uphold the center of its identity as Christian, or whether it is making its traditions equal to and part of the central message of the gospel that is to be believed in order to become a Christian, thus creating historical-cultural barriers to the conversion and integration of many into the Christian church (McGavran 1990:239; Hunter 1996:60). How much must Papayya really know about the gospel to be a Christian (Hiebert 1978)? How "Christian" must Papayya be to belong to our church?

Charles Kraft (1979:322) says the biblical model of church would (1) place Christian meaning over traditional forms and structures, (2) respond to the felt needs of the society in such a manner that its impact for Christ is similar to the way the first-century church impacted its social relationships, and (3) take on cultural forms indigenous to the culture or subculture with its familiar context of life. New Testament examples for this can be drawn from the book of Acts, the Corinthian epistles, and the pastoral epistles regarding indigenous organization, leadership, fellowship, witness, and worship. This issue was addressed and a resolution was offered by the church council held in Jerusalem as reported by Luke in Acts 15. Gentiles were not bound to the religious customs of the Jews but were left free to seek their own expressions of Christian faith and worship. The patterns in each case "developed in response to the felt needs of the members of the culture and subculture in which the particular local church operated"

(Kraft 1979:322-323). This is apparent when a comparison of churches in different cities is made, differences which are evidenced by the epistles addressed to the various churches. Is this also necessary and possible where cathedrals cast their long shadows? Is it yet possible for existing, structured churches to become intentional in their mission so that they can become indigenous to the subculture groups in the society they endeavor to reach with the gospel of the rule of God?

Kraft maintains further that "contemporary churches, whether in Euro-America or overseas, are to develop dynamically equivalent forms within and relevant to their contemporary cultural matrix" (1979:322). If, therefore, the present forms of church, whether in the existing Christian youth groups or in the structured liturgical services of traditional churches, be they Protestant or Catholic, state or free, pietist or pentecostal, do not provide marginal elements in our culture "a place to feel at home" then some change needs to take place! What is the change that is needed? Is it on the part of the new convert to conform to the existing dominant Christian culture of youth group or church? Or is it possible for church and youth group to change so that both new converts *and* those previously converted feel at home? Is it possible for both to be welcome and included around the same table? Or once a social entity, whether Christian or not, becomes institutionalized (Berger and Luckmann 1966) is it any longer apt to change and open itself to others who might not easily cross established institutional boundaries?

If the present forms do not prove to be dynamic and

meaningful in the life of individuals and groups of individuals from within the culture, then how can other forms be discovered and established? What forms make the salvation event and the corporate life of those gathered around that event meaningful and relevant? What expressions of Christian faith and worship can be found within the cultural matrix where lives are shaped and meaningful forms are lived out daily?

Where could Stefan, whom God encountered in a solitary jail cell--a theophany so real that Stefan was moved to commit his life to Jesus Christ--find acceptance among others of like faith commitment and where he could grow spiritually as a part of the community of faith, the new reference group (Swanson 1989:62-65), the new Christian context (Tippett 1977:219)? Why could Philippe not find forgiveness and acceptance from many of the Christian friends in the group he was trying to attach himself to, even though he would periodically struggle with himself and revert to occasional homosexual practice? Was there a resolution to their dilemma and to our continuing frustration? Would only a subcultural, indigenous church provide that needed community? If so, what could have been its relationship to the churches of the "cathedral culture?"

For the above reason some traditional churches are adding to their "first program" (see n. 1), a "second program" for the sake of renewal and growth in their churches through innovation and cultural adaptation in order to bring about revitalization of the church and to carry out the church's mission to the world (Wieland 1992; Pestalozzi 1992; Brodtbeck 1995b; Fürst 1995). In other

instances, pastors leave the traditional church altogether in order to begin new churches that bypass the time-honored traditions, hindering hierarchies, and binding bureaucracies of rigidly institutionalized churches (Kopfermann 1990; cf. Meyer 1995) and many who remain are frustrated, both in state churches and tradition-bound free churches.

Even the Salvation Army, that in the past has been used by God to liberate many marginalized people around the world and in Switzerland, is faced with “considerable difficulties” and admits “the acute problem of reaching them with the Gospel has not yet been solved” (Bannister 1995). Though there may not be “actual conflict between the social groups,” Major Neil Bannister, Divisional Commander in Basel, reports, “rapport is also very fragmentary . . . [T]he problems of bridging the gap are enormous.” He attributes much of this to converts having become “respectable.” They have experienced “salvation and lift,” the children and grandchildren belong to a different social class than the previous generation, and now “the great-grandchildren live in the suburbs, own their own homes and send their children to the better schools, preparing them for Oxford or Asbury.”

A cause of conflict growing out of the geriatrification of many, especially traditional, churches is intergenerational conflict between the more traditional elderly church members and the less traditional, more innovative younger ones (Gumbal 1995; Dürr 1995; Brodtbeck 1995b; Hofer 1995; Gutmann and Kuhl 1995; Ruth Wenger 1995; E. Wenger 1995). In some cases, the elderly church goes even express

intolerance toward children whom they consider a disruption or out of place in church (Brodbeck 1995b; Manfred 1995).

These are mentioned here to illustrate how many, if not most, traditional churches are bounded sets with their time and energy going toward boundary maintenance rather than witness to the good news of God's love brought to humankind in Jesus Christ (Hiebert 1978; Hunter 1992:111-113). Pastors are consumed by the obligations of a church ordinance that holds them captive to "official" duties of worship services, sermons, baptisms, Lord's supper, catechism, hospital and home visits, funerals, weddings, and committee meetings (Felix 1995; Wieland 1992) and lay training and encouragement is of lesser importance. No time or energy is left for reflection, planning, or innovative strategies about how to move beyond universe maintenance and make the church more outward focused and inclusive.

The Methodist Church, Moersbergerstrasse, in Basel has been able to uphold its unity, however, in spite of its diversity. Three years ago it was on the verge of a three-way split between traditional liberal Methodists, conservative pietists, and charismatic youth of Catholic background (Gumbal 1995). They have discovered that the diversity of generations, denominations, doctrinal interpretations, worship styles, socio-economic backgrounds, and educational opportunities has enriched their Christian experience, although there are still tensions and conflicts. They are learning to listen to one another and work out their differences because they all belong to Christ. This is consistent with the picture of the churches

in the New Testament that found their common ground in Christ (Acts 15:6-11; 1 Corinthians 1:4-13; 2:2; 15:3-5a), not in circumcision (Galatians 5:6; 6:15), not in eating meat or abstaining from eating meat offered to idols (1 Corinthians 8:4-13), not in geographic origin, cultural experience, or language (Acts 6:1-7), not in obtaining and exercising any particular spiritual gift (1 Corinthians 12-14). Not only were the churches of the New Testament diverse between themselves as the descriptions in the various letters to the churches show, but they were diverse within themselves, yet always admonished to esteem one another in Christ and work out their differences (1 Corinthians 1:10-11; 3:1-23; 11:17-33; Galatians 2:11-14; Ephesians 2:11-21; 4:1-16; Philippians 1:18; 4:2; Colossians 2:16-19; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-14; James 2:1-13). The diversity within the first century churches is called an attractive feature by scholars of the socio-historical school of New Testament interpretation because it rose above the stratification and discrimination of the Roman society of that day (Theissen 1992:214; cf. also chapter 3, n. 5 and n. 12; Malherbe 1983:9, cf. also p. 67, note 18; Meeks 1983:84-110).⁷ One of the features called for by those in the shadow culture to make church more attractive to them was more diversity, not just in the liturgy, but in the people in church who are tolerant and respectful of one another (Franco 1995; Max 1995; Dieter 1995; Erika 1995). Perhaps one of the things that makes church boring to so many is its predictability. Most of the churches, it seems, are monochrome, monotone, and monogenerational.

The conflicts created by the generational polarity which is

occurring in state churches and free churches alike are described as (1) traditional versus contemporary, (2) familiar versus innovative, (3) rural versus urban, (4) vocational versus academic, (5) past orientation versus now orientation, and (6) maintenance versus mission. Although the traditionalists claim to be modern and progressive, reality proves otherwise.

In order to circumvent the resistant traditionalists, numerous state churches are starting so-called "second programs" (see n. 1). Two of the churches I surveyed have already begun a second program, namely, St. Thomas's Church (ERK) and St. Matthew's Church (ERK). The former draws lower middle class young adults from throughout the city for Sunday evening contemporary worship services. The latter is for foreign language exiles, refugees, and immigrant laborers in its neighborhood, but neither of these is penetrating the marginalized Swiss population in their parishes or in the city (Brodbeck 1995b; Kachel 1995) who are the primary focus of this study.

The youth groups I interviewed also showed very little diversity in their groups (Pausa 1995; Andreani 1995b). Two other groups involve youth, but never functioned as "youth groups" (Waegeli 1995; Bron 1995). The one began as the result of a youth revival in 1974 and very shortly formed a covenant community that was de facto closed to seekers and newcomers who were not ready to make mature, long-term commitments to the group (Waegeli 1995). It has been treated as a parachurch ministry in this study (see above). A ministry of a Swiss Pentecostal Mission church in a

neighboring town is conducted with a roving Café Bar for outreach to youth and has been treated here as part of the church (Bron 1995).

Although one of the youth groups examined showed some diversity by welcoming several physically and mentally impaired youth, these shared similar socio-economic and educational backgrounds with the group (Pausa 1995). The group's focus was not on denominational, doctrinal, or theological boundaries, however, and this led to some conflict with the senior pastor in the parish who wanted the group to be more denominational and parish specific (Pausa 1995). It eventually had to find a meeting room elsewhere and later dispersed, as youth groups seem to do, when the age of career and marriage was reached. Several in this group sought Christian contact in other fellowships throughout the city, but today want to return to their roots and perhaps reform as a group since several already have renewed contact (Pausa 1995).

For the purpose of analysis with the interpretive framework of this study, both groups can be taken as bounded sets--one with strict legalistic doctrinal boundaries (Andreani 1995b), the other with common socio-economic and educational boundaries while having an openness to varying views on Christian doctrinal matters (Pausa 1995). Both claimed Jesus as its central focus, the one adding the requirements of a distinct conversion experience that involved total brokenness, praying through, and submission to the group leader (Andreani 1995b), and the other holding to confession of faith in Christ, but not requiring it for participation in the group (Pausa 1995). The latter's boundaries were more flexible or porous, but by

nature it was a homogeneous unit.

As listed above (p. 232-233) every group, ministry, and church interviewed gave a consistent definition of what each felt the central focus of its identity and message ought to be, namely, the gospel of God's love revealed in Jesus Christ. Each felt that faith in Jesus is necessary for being a Christian, whether through a distinct, personal conversion experience or otherwise through a confession of faith in Jesus.

Every group, however, has its defining boundaries of identity. Churches have doctrinal understandings of Scripture that make them the denominations they are. Even independent congregations have some defining, denominating doctrine or experience. Parachurch ministries have distinct reasons for their existence and specific goals and objectives that include some and exclude others. Youth groups may be somewhat more ambiguous, as we have seen, but usually take the identity of their church or leader (Andreani 1995b; Pausa 1995; Bron 1995). Even when a group defies boundaries, it seems to settle into homogeneity. Are, then, homogeneous units bounded sets?

Homogeneous units may be used as a strategy for bringing people to faith and establishing churches, albeit churches which Hunter (1987:175) says are only "penultimate to the church that is to be" because they do not reflect the diversity and inclusiveness of kingdom communities (Shenk and Stutzmann 1988; Snyder 1977). But this presents a problem with homogeneous units. Because humans tend to be drawn to others most like themselves (McGavran

1955:23; 1990:163-178; Hunter 1992:65-68) and because social entities and movements tend to institutionalize from their inception (Berger and Luckmann 1966), how can homogeneous units and institutionalized churches be made more inclusive and diverse to reflect the kingdom of God (Cf. Kraybill 1990; Snyder 1977, 1991:145-156)?

According to Berger and Luckmann (1966:47-128) every social entity begins to institutionalize itself from its beginning.⁸ Starting as a movement around a central person--a charismatic leader/prophet, according to Weber (1968)--it undertakes steps or goes through stages to preserve the nature and character of the movement and its leader. This is not even necessarily a conscious process. Humans are creatures of habit. How quickly a highly charismatic church that prides itself in its spontaneity and non-liturgical worship style becomes predictable! It lapses into habits of being spontaneous in the same predictable ways or of fostering spontaneity by the same means each Sunday until there is a distinct pattern and order of worship for each service. It may only be printed out for the sake of the leadership team, but the congregation has come to expect certain elements in the service and can usually predict in what order things will occur. Each service becomes typical of the other and typical to the particular church. This is neither right nor wrong. It is simply so. (I use churches as the social entities referred to by Berger and Luckmann since that is the subject of this study.)

Following habitualization and typification, the activities of the social group begin to crystalize. Berger and Luckmann apply this

stage to the second biological generation of the social group, but in churches it can apply in the same way to the "next generation" of converts or influx of newcomers. That is to say, when what was once fluid or at least in a soluble, liquid state begins to crystalize it has begun to harden and "settle out," thus taking on a distinct reality of its own. At this stage things are already less flexible and less subject to change. They "carry within them the tendency to persist" (1966:58). That which has crystalized creates sedimentation of what have become the traditions of that particular movement (1966:67). The social entity under consideration--a church, a congregation, a ministry, a youth group--is well on its way to institutionalization and to developing its own objective reality that then must be legitimized to those who follow and who have no memory or experience of the beginnings of what was once a dynamic movement or why it began in the first place (1966:92-128). That is how institutions rapidly come about. Legitimization [justification; *raison d'être*] assures that the symbolic universe (the institution) that now has been created will be maintained.

Universe maintenance of societies and boundary maintenance of churches are the same. However, as Berger and Luckmann acknowledge (1966:116), societies change. But they do not change unless someone is questioning the definition and "pushing questions about the historically available conceptualizations of reality from the abstract 'What?' to the sociologically concrete 'Says who?'" This, it seems, allows for the continual redefinition, reconceptualization, and reshaping of the institution for the new situation. It must seek its

identity from its root cause, its original impetus (i.e., its center) and not out of the social construction of a past reality (i.e., its boundary), but allow the same impetus, experienced anew, to create a new universe for today.

Before that is possible, however, the message of the living Christ must be proclaimed, heard, believed, and obeyed: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news" (Mark 1:15). None of the Christian groups I interviewed made any mention of or reference to the kingdom of God, God's reign, or God's rule. Perhaps it was assumed, but it was not part of their language. Perhaps it is not part of the thinking.

The institutions of this study, as my interviews indicate, desire to be renewed and to become warm and welcoming communities of faith to the socially marginalized as well as to the culturally familiar, without social, cultural, or attitudinal barriers that hinder participation at God's table (Cf. Luke 15:11-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

Churches, parachurch ministries, and youth groups are all, by their own admission and self-definition, in some ways bounded sets. This is still true even though they may have a well defined center as well. Two churches--the Offene Kirche Elisabethen and the Evangelisch-methodistische Kirche, Moersbergerstrasse--and the youth group *Theodora* may be called centered sets, although the EMK does have, of course, its denominational distinctives and prerequisites for membership. Its boundaries of participation are, however, flexible and it is tolerant of diverse interpretations of Scripture (Gumbal 1995).

My interviews revealed from the leadership and participants in churches, ministries, and youth groups the desire to be one thing, but the frustration of being something else. Some admitted a weariness brought on by the resistance to change in their respective churches. All of them, however, continue to believe there is still hope for their groups and churches. They expressed the desire to move ahead to the future with God without abandoning the people in those churches with whom they are in relationship and to whom they are committed. Each of them expressed the desire to reach out, include, and minister among the socially marginalized, whether it is those with addictions or simply those who are culturally and socio-economically different. Recognizing that their own church cultures are resistant to change, especially the older those cultures are, the question always arose, "How can we do this?"

What are the missiological implications of this study? Are there models and means available to overcome the cultural barriers that the cathedral culture has erected? What would interest the shadow culture in church and how could they be made to feel welcome there? What would church look like and act like so that resident and alien alike could come together in God's *shalom*? Many of the elements have already been identified by the respondents themselves. How can we put them together in order to help them in their missionary task?

Notes

1 . By “traditional churches” I am referring to those churches which are greatly concerned with preserving and protecting the historical forms, vocabulary, and liturgies by which they have defined themselves, whether they are state churches such as the ERK, or free churches of long standing such as the EMK, FEG, Mennonite, and SPM. These kinds of churches are operating within a framework referred to by some recent innovators within the traditional churches as “first program” (Wieland 1992). First program is concerned with maintenance of the existing structures and status quo. The pastor is primary and is responsible for everyone and everything, so to speak. George G. Hunter (1992:111-113) refers to pastors of these churches as chaplains, rather than apostles.

Some of these traditional churches are discovering that to liberate clergy and laity from the binding strictures of church ordinances and disciplines they must try new forms of church and mission to the world. Some state churches are beginning what is called the “second program.” This is the establishment of a volunteer association of persons from the church parish and perhaps beyond who are ready to launch new, innovative ministries, programs, and worship experiences to revitalize the churches themselves and to make mission to the world, both at home and abroad, a living reality. Hunter refers to this as the “lay apostolate” (1992:113-117; cf. Bittner 1993:101-102).

These two programs usually overlap in a church congregation, but not necessarily. However, experience shows that the pastor who attempts to manage or to be fully involved in both programs is in imminent danger of experiencing burn out (Pestalozzi 1992; Brodtbeck 1995).

2 . The Salvation Army (SA) is included among churches in this study. In Switzerland it is organized and recognized legally as a church, conducts regular worship services, and carries out its mission as such. Recently in the USA it is seriously considering its theology

and structure about whether or not to officially become and seek recognition as a church. Attempts have been made to define its ecclesiology (Paul Needham. 1987; cf. Rhemick 1984). In Basel, Switzerland the Salvation Army recognizes it has become largely middle class and though the attempt is still being made and many of the marginalized in that society are being served by the SA, few of the socially marginal are being penetrated with the liberating good news of God's salvation and reign (Bannister 1995).

3 . It must be noted that these assessments of the dynamics within these groups do not come from disgruntled persons excluded from the groups, but from participants in the group leadership teams. They are all still very committed to the Christian faith and participation in Christian community, even though in two instances the youth groups in which they participated no longer exist as groups.

4 . The Evangelisch-Reformierte Kirche (ERK) follows the Reformed tradition as articulated by John Calvin (*RGG* vol. 5:884-890). Today it is theologically diverse and pluralistic. Each ERK in Switzerland is cantonal in its governance. The Evangelisch-methodistische Kirche (EMK) is Wesleyan. It follows the theological understanding of the Wesleyan-Arminian tradition (*RGG* vol. 4:914-919; Handschin 1988) and is part of the World Methodist Council since 1969. Mennonites are represented by various branches today, but have their roots in the anabaptist movements of the Radical Reformation (*RGG* vol. 4:855-858). The Schweizerische Pfingstmission is an outgrowth of the world-wide pentecostal movement and began in Switzerland in 1907 (*RGG* vol. 5:308-311). The Frei-evangelische Gemeinde (FEG) originated as part of the Evangelische Gemeinschaft and hold a strong pietist tradition. Congregationally autonomous they are formed into an association (Bund) with one another (*RGG* vol. 2:1110-1113). The Evangelische Gemeinde Basel (EGB) is a newly formed independent church on theological foundations of the Lausanne Covenant and can be viewed as part of mainstream Evangelicalism and is influenced by the church growth movement (Evangelische Gemeinde Basel, "Leitbild" n. d.; Lausanne Covenant 1974). The Salvation Army (SA) began in

Switzerland after a visit from its founder in 1882 (*Salvation Army History* ??; *RGG* vol. 3:185-187; cf. Needham 1987). The fledgling Church for Unchurched People probably falls within Evangelicalism (Czwalina 1995b).

5. *Die Gemeinde für Urchristentum* (the Church for Primitive Christianity) is an association of pentecostal churches in Switzerland that seeks to restore or recapture the earliest New Testament church in all its practice of charismatic phenomena. It began as part of the Pentecostal revival of 1907 (*RGG* vol. 5:308-311).

6. According to Rev. Donald Reeves of the Church of England (1991) and as it is being applied in churches in Basel (*Offene Kirche Elisabethen*) and Zürich (*Offener St. Jakob*), Switzerland, city church is an innovative form of church in the inner city context of metropolitan centers. Many urban centers today consist largely of offices and businesses that are operated during the week, but abandoned on weekends. The few residential apartments that remain are often inhabited by socially marginal and alternative types of people most of whom are also marginal to the traditional Christian church. The successful upper and middle classes have moved their residence to the suburbs. The churches that remain in the inner city have either been abandoned by their members to decline--many being turned into museums, galleries, and concert halls--or they are attended on Sunday mornings by a few elderly people unable to leave the inner city and by those few who return there for traditional services because of sentimental ties to that location. The city church is no longer a parish church.

The city church, as it is being attempted at St. James's, Piccadilly, in London, *Offene Kirche Elisabethen* in Basel, and at *Offener St. Jakob* in Zürich, is a Christian presence and witness throughout the week and at all times to the people who are present in the inner city. During the week that may be business folks and consumers, artists and actors, tourists and commuters. The city church is open at all times, both physically accessible and open to truth and interfaith dialogue. It offers hospitality through cafes, quiet corners for nursing mothers, meditation rooms, and a respite from the bustle of the business day, offering noontime musical

meditations, prayers, conversations, and lectures on theology, spirituality, health, the arts, human rights, politics, or any other subject of interest to today's society. The city church offers space for exhibits and musical presentations whether Christian or not. It may also be the location of numerous base church communities and alternative church groups that do not fit into traditional church structures, but embracing them all for dialogue and discipleship. The city church may even offer Sunday worship services. The English model has been adapted for the Swiss context in the respective cities of Basel and Zürich by Pastors Felix (1988; 1994) and Burr (1992). (Cf. Felix 1994; Zweifel 1995; Katzenstein 1995; Moehl 1995).

7. There is some uncertainty among scholars whether first century Christianity was an upper-middle class phenomenon indicated by the artisans and traders to whom Paul often goes in his mission, the frequent reference to householders in whose homes the churches met and most likely included slave members, indicating the presence of lower classes who soon outnumbered the home owners, or whether the Christian movement was largely a lower-class phenomenon or regardless of how one divides the classes, orders, and status of Christians, is for this study incidental. The consensus is that the churches were socially diverse, diastatic, in make up, thus setting them apart and above the society around them. This contributed to tensions and conflict in the churches and between the churches (Malherbe 1983:60-91; Meeks 1983:51-73; Theissen 1992:213-227; Filson 1939), but the churches were admonished to work out their differences in the unity of the Spirit and in love, since all Christians are part of one body and eat of one bread. Exclusiveness toward one another and division from one another was not an option.

8. Margaret Y. MacDonald (1988), using the institutionalization theory of Berger and Luckmann (1966) and drawing heavily on Malherbe, Malina, Meeks, and Theissen, provides a thought provoking analysis of the institutionalization of the Pauline churches based on the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline writings. She focuses her study on community-building, community-stabilizing, and community-protecting aspects of institutionalization.

CHAPTER 7

Reshaping the Cathedrals, Recasting the Shadows: Implications and Recommendations for Mission

The first time I saw Stefan after his release from the Lohnhof jail where he had been held during investigation of burglaries in which he was a prime suspect, I was astonished. I already knew from Stefan's testimony to me that he had had a powerful encounter with God in his jail cell. It was there in that cell he had surrendered his life to Jesus after years of resistance and struggle. God's appearance to him had been so real that he described it "like a bright light." When Stefan walked into the Wendepunkt after his release from jail, I saw a Stefan that contrasted with what I was accustomed to seeing. He had laces in his shoes; he had washed and cut his hair; his shirt was buttoned; and to my amazement there was a Band-Aid covering the tattoo in the middle of his forehead! He was wearing a pleased, boyish grin on his face.

Were we seeing "fruit worthy of repentance" (Matthew 3:8) and the beginning, at least, of the cleansing "from every defilement of body and of spirit" (2 Corinthians 7:1)? The Wendepunkt team felt that it was. And from the baffled looks and puzzled remarks of peers they, too, saw something different about him. To the Christian youth groups and churches where we would hope to integrate Stefan

and where we had often attended with him over the past three years, would these outward signs be evidence enough of an inward work of grace? Could he be accepted with the smell of wine on his breath and a Gauloise cigarette between his fingers? Would he have to have the tattoo on his forehead surgically removed? Would it be enough that God had encountered him and he had surrendered to Jesus Christ? Did it matter that he knew little or nothing about the Acts of the Apostles, the Apostle's Creed, or "quiet time"? Could we Christians trust that the Holy Spirit would be his teacher (John 14:25), convict him about sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:7-11), and lead him into all truth (John 16:13; Ephesians 5:16-26)? We never learned the answer to these questions because Stefan took his own life when he received notice he had been sentenced to three years in prison for the burglaries he had committed. For him a loss of his freedom was worse than death itself. Is for some persons a loss of spiritual freedom and freedom of choice a fate worse than death, i.e., a fate worse than being excluded from participation in a Christianity as practiced and prescribed by that particular cathedral culture? Is that the reason so many go their own ways in life without association with a church or any other Christian group? Is that the reason they come and go anonymously at various Christian gatherings without making a commitment to the one or the other?

How does the interpretive framework chosen for this study and the guiding literature that has been reviewed help us in understanding and explaining the dynamics of culture conflict between shadow culture and cathedral culture? Are there ways of

overcoming the conflictual barriers between the two? What role can the missionary or missionary group play in the encounter of the two worlds?

A Catholic missionary, Father Vincent Donovan, makes a strong argument for the "refounding" of the church. He says, "We see quite plainly the church as it is, but what *should* it be like" (1989:xi)?¹ Loren Mead of the Alban Institute speaks of "reinventing the church for a new mission" (1991:43) and "transforming congregations" (1994). C. Kirk Hadaway and David A. Roozen see the need for *Rerouting the Protestant Mainstream* (1995), calling for radical change (1995:65-69). Hunter (1996:19-34) advocates a "rebirth of the apostolic congregation." Bittner (1993:10-11, 17) makes a plea for the church simply to be the church by rediscovering its center, returning to the radical nature of its existence and character by "looking back to the roots" from which it came and being reshaped in our time and for our time. Keith A. Russell (1994) searches for images of tomorrow's congregations in the New Testament in order for today's church to make the kind of change necessary to fit "the present situation and to begin construction of a new and different future" (1994:vii). Knoblauch, Eickhoff, and Aschoff (1992) have collected numerous accounts of innovations being tried to make the churches relevant to today's culture and to reverse the decline of Christianity in German-speaking Europe among state churches and free churches alike.

Whether Catholic or Protestant--Episcopalian, Southern Baptist, United Methodist, Swiss Reformed, American Baptist, Evangelical

Lutheran, Pietist, or Pentecostal, there is the realization among a growing number of concerned Christians and churches that something must be done to reverse the decline of the Christian movement in the West. But perhaps that is just it--there has been no movement recently! Much of Christianity has become an entrenched, cultural Christianity that is out of date, out of touch, and out of breath from digging ourselves deeper and deeper into irrelevancy. Michael R. Tucker (1974:77-104; 172-179), challenges the church to change or decay, emphasizing that the church should propagate unity to encourage change, protect people, and preach grace so that change can be allowed to occur.

Many Christian movements and churches have become bounded sets by drawing up, defining, and defending denominational doctrinal distinctives, dogmatizing their unique cultural religious experiences and equating them with the kingdom of God. This we have done to the loss of our own vitality and the loss of at least two generations of disillusioned contemporaries in the "once Christian West." What can we do in mission today based on the findings in this study?

There are four primary points of agreement among the three population groups I interviewed in Basel.

1. Churches and Christian groups need to lower or remove the barriers that separate them from one another and that make it difficult for newcomers to find entrance and feel welcome among them due to cultural conditions and pressures placed on the guest. Whenever these exist they create conflict and cause mutual rejection

of each other. Christian churches should draw their identity from the center of their faith which is Jesus Christ and the coming of God's reign. No one I interviewed called for the abolition of the church. It is a part of the cultural landscape and the social skyline. But there was an outcry for change--from the missionaries among the shadows, from the shadow culture, and from those who live in and serve the cathedral culture.

2. Small groups are key to experiencing Christian faith and life at a meaningful level and for finding entrance to the larger Christian church community.

3. Relationships based on trust and mutual respect are desirable from both the shadow culture and the missionary and cathedral culture. Any other basis for relationship is suspect. Persons should be accepted for who they are and not who we think they ought to be.

4. Missionaries and Christian friends serve as the best bridges between the shadow culture and the cathedral culture. Sometimes support groups serve as bridges if they involve both the missionary and church members.

What models of intervention can be found and suggested for each of these areas of missiological concern? First, we will consider some models from our theoretical framework, then we will consider some tried and tested models from the past and the present. Finally, we will look in on some experiments in progress within the context of the cathedral culture itself.

Theoretical Models for Potential Change

Stephen B. Bevans (1992; cf. Kraft 1979:23-42), especially in chapter 3, "The Notion and Use of Models," points out that the use of any model is somewhat arbitrary and does not satisfy all aspects of the given situation to which it is being applied. Just as all analogies break down at some point, so it is with models. Therefore, in the use of models we may be eclectic in selecting the models we may find useful in order to satisfy the different aspects of various contexts. This usually then leads to a synthesis of models.

Set Theory

According to the interpretive framework of this study, set theory borrowed from the field of mathematics (Zadeh 1965) and applied to Christian mission by Hiebert (1978), churches fall into two possible categories. They are either bounded sets or centered sets.

Bounded set churches are those that have established fixed, rigid, closed boundaries of identification, boundaries that can only be crossed by fulfilling prescribed conditions, set down by the group in the case of churches. Once those conditions are met by the newcomer, he or she is considered by the group to "be converted" and can be included in the set. Until then, that person is a non-participant outsider. The conditions set forth by the group for inclusion in the group are usually justified on "doctrinal grounds," i.e., tenets of belief, rituals of initiation, and cultic rites that are considered essential to professing and maintaining Christian faith as defined by the group's interpretation of Scripture. However, in

traditional, “bounded set” churches or fellowships, those conditions or boundaries are often based on church traditions that have been shaped either by the cultural preferences of a distant, but familiar Christian past or by the “Christian knowledge” acquired by “our” group. Until a person adopts our cultural expressions of Christianity and acquires our knowledge concerning the Christian faith, one cannot be a part of the church, as we know it and define it—culture Christianity (Shenk 1994; Kraft 1963) or cathedral culture. The churches’ time, energy, efforts, and resources go primarily toward maintaining these exterior boundaries and everything within those boundaries, namely, the comfortable status quo. These churches and groups can be represented by the following diagram.

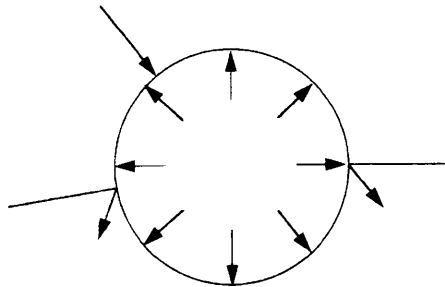
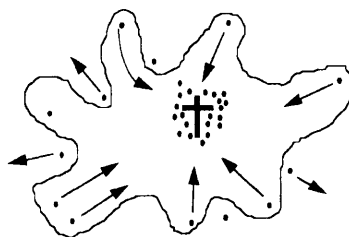


Figure 7

Bounded sets with fixed, rigid, closed boundaries.

On the other hand, churches have the possibility of being centered sets. In a centered set church the focus is its energy and

efforts is not on boundaries that distinguish it and set it apart, but rather its preaching, prayer, and worship is focused on the “object of its affection.” It derives its identity from the center of its faith and source of its salvation and hope which is Jesus Christ and God’s rule on earth. In this set everyone who declares allegiance to God in Jesus Christ and begins to live with a Christward orientation is included in the Christian set or Christian community. Inclusion does not depend on the distance from Christ in morals, knowledge, practice of piety, or anything other than repentance and following after Jesus. As long as that is the orientation of one’s faith and direction of movement in one’s life, the boundaries of Christian identity flex to any shape and to any length to include that person. The centered set church can be portrayed by the following figure.



Centered Set

Figure 8

Centered set with flexible, extending boundaries (Hiebert 1978)

The consensus of the populations surveyed in this study is that change needs to occur in churches and Christian groups in such a

manner that barriers come down and the groups become more inclusive and less discriminating toward those who are culturally or theologically different from the group. The unspoken pressures to conform to group cultural preferences and to the moralism² of the dominant majority--things that are erroneously believed to be part of essential Christianity--need to be removed so that those from the margin who seek contact with Christian communities of faith or who come to church will not be "stressed" (Robert 1995) and feel rejection by Christians.

Change, however, if it comes about, will come from within the culture itself. Therefore, the recognized leaders within the cathedral culture have the greatest potential for affecting change within that culture, even when the culture is resistant to change. The change will not come by attacking the boundaries (Snyder 1989:302-303). That only creates defensiveness on the part of traditionalists who then start a movement to rid themselves of the accusing pastor or to label the minority movement heretical. What is needed is a shift of focus away from the boundaries of keeping laws to living in grace, from morality to reorientation and transformation of life, from church to the kingdom of God,³ in short, from "Christianity" to Christ. Jesus becomes a "model *of* and model *for*" (Geertz 1973:93-94) life and mission of the Christian and of the faith community, i.e., our example in faith and practice (Matthew 10:24-25; Romans 8:28-29; cf. John 17:14-22).

Primary in the life and thought of the Christian is the coming of the kingdom or rule of God at all levels of our existence. To strive for

God's reign and righteousness will affect how we view the church and our relationships in the church and in the world. To seek the kingdom of God is not an utopian ideal, but a reality for which we can pray and work in this world (Jones 1940; Kümmel 1956; Ladd 1959; 1974; Kraybill 1990). It is what John, Jesus, the Apostles, and the early church preached. And the result? Repentant communities of faith centered around the salvation event of the cross and the empty tomb "doing God's thing together" as "a disciple group characterized by spiritual, emotional, and economic interdependence . . ." (Kraybill 1990:267). The church as a community of the kingdom becomes in effect "a counter-community," "a prophetic minority," an alternate subculture" (1990:268-269; cf. Colson 1987). As "[a]n incarnational community, they embody the life-giving reign of God in the midst of cultures bent on death, destruction, and violence" (1990:267-268). Kraybill emphasizes

The community of God isn't at odds with all prevailing cultural values The members of the new kingdom have a different vision, a different set of values. They pledge allegiance to a different King. And at times that allegiance will mean they sail against the prevailing social winds.

The people of God are tempted to absorb the values around them. It's easy to temper the gospel by making it pleasant to the majority. And before we know it, we borrow the ideology, the logic, and the bureaucratic structures of our neighbors. We put a little religious Teflon on top, but underneath the values and procedures clash with the way of Jesus. The organizational structures of our churches must be functional and relevant to our cultural context without being determined by it. The moment the church capitulates to the world, the light is dimmed, the salt turns tasteless, and the leaven leaves. (1990:269)

Even those interviewed for this study from among the shadow culture challenged Christians to a more radical Christian discipleship --to an upside-down kingdom, away from middle class, anonymous, status quo Christianity (Erika 1995; Franco 1995; Dieter 1995; Max 1995; Elli 1995). They have called for a more tolerant, open, Christward oriented discipleship without the strictures of moralism and middle class cultural values which have been equated with the Christian gospel. Christians can become radical without becoming remote.

To lose the central focus of the good news of God in Christ Jesus by emphasizing "law and works"⁴ over grace and faith is to confuse the meaning of Christian faith and to pervert the gospel of Christ from good news to old news and from a blessing to a burden (Galatians 1:6-9; cf. Acts 15:1; Romans 1-8).

If a refocus on the essential core of Christian identity is needed for the revitalization of the church and its mission, how and where is this to occur?

Revitalization Movements

As described in the review of the literature in chapter 3, pp. 86-89, Anthony F. C. Wallace has demonstrated how cultural revitalization occurs in diverse movements such as nativistic movements, revivalistic movements, cargo cults, vitalistic movements, and millenarian movements, many of which are religious in nature (1956:505). How revitalization occurred in a

district of the Methodist Church in Brazil along the lines of Wallace's model has been illustrated by Joao Carlos Lopes (1989) in a doctoral dissertation at Asbury Theological Seminary.

Application of this model can also be made to bounded set churches, i.e., cathedral culture in Basel, Switzerland, in order to aid in bringing about refocus and renewal in those churches if, indeed, those churches are open and willing to be changed by God's Spirit. When Christians work together with God's Spirit, using the human resources at their disposal--in this case the "revitalization model," the desired and hoped for changes voiced by missionaries, shadow culture, and church leaders can readily happen, recognizing that it is God's work by the Holy Spirit that affects the change (Zechariah 4:6; Acts 7:51; 13:2; 20:28; Titus 3:5; Hebrews 2:4).

By way of graphic illustrations I will apply Wallace's revitalization model to bounded set churches to show how, cooperating with the Spirit of God who sends seasons of refreshing to repentant ones who call upon God, they can be intentionally transformed into centered set churches (Hiebert 1978), from static churches into dynamic churches (Kraft 1979:32, 389-390).

The first of "five somewhat overlapping stages" (Wallace 1956:506) is the [old] steady state.

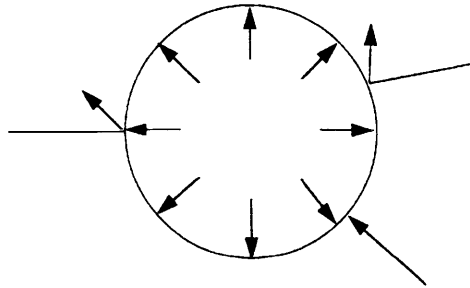


Figure 9

The old steady state (Wallace); the bounded set (Hiebert)

At this stage of the church nothing is essentially changing. The time, energy, and resources of the church culture are invested in the maintenance of the status quo and the culture is relatively content as it is and is not interested in change or any intrusion on its comfort and stability. Within limits even some small disturbance from “psychotics” [or “three or four” marginals], for example, can be tolerated as long as they do not challenge the status quo of the dominant culture and its traditions (Wallace 1956:506).

The second stage Wallace (1956:506) calls “the period of increased individual stress.”

Over a period of years, individual members of a population (which may be “primitive” or “civilized,” either a whole society or a class, caste, religious, occupational, acculturational, or other definable social group) experience severe stress as a result of the decreasing efficiency of certain stress-reduction techniques. (1956:506-507)

As people or groups of people within the culture (in our case the cathedral culture of church) begin to feel and recognize that the culture (church) is no longer adequately meeting their needs, individual and, eventually, corporate stress increases. Admission that this is true is extremely difficult because it threatens personal and cultural identity which again increases the stress, but also adds to the dissatisfaction due to inefficiency of the culture to satisfy felt needs.

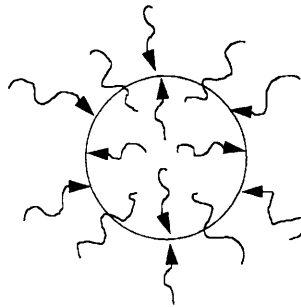


Figure 10

Period of increased stress (Wallace)

At this stage in the life of the church nothing has visibly changed, but the internal dissatisfaction and unrest is growing. It may or may not have begun to be articulated by the church membership or addressed by the church's pastoral leadership.

Wallace's third stage of a revitalization movement is the period of cultural distortion. It is here that things start to change. The culture may begin to die and disintegrate. The more rigid its

members and its boundaries, the more likely this is to occur (Wallace 1956:507). However, Wallace adds,

more flexible persons tryout various limited mazeway changes in their personal lives, attempting to reduce stress by addition or substitution of mazeway elements with more or less concern for the *Gestalt* of the system. (1956:507)

As stress increases and more distortion occurs, it becomes increasingly clear that the problems need to be addressed. Some members lapse into passivity and indifference to the state of affairs and take no responsibility for the situation or for the future of the culture. Others begin to experiment with new forms of meeting needs and addressing problems. Consequently, further distortion takes place.

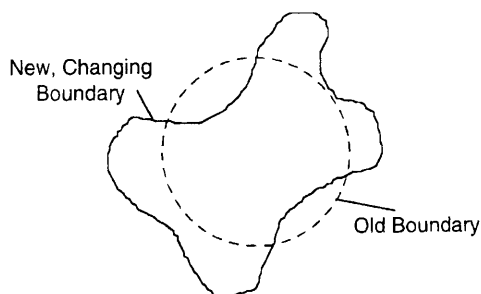


Figure 11

Cultural distortion (Wallace); change of focus and altering of the boundaries (Hiebert).

When applied to the church, the problems and potential solutions are addressed in the event of preaching and in the context of the hermeneutical community as experienced by the church in dialogue

with its leadership. A new foundation is laid for the reformation of the (cathedral) culture by changing the focus from the old boundaries of identification which defined the group and excluded any others who did not meet its criteria of identification with it. Rather than focus on the boundaries of identity (cultural forms of faith, doctrinal formulations, denominational distinctives) the church culture begins to focus in the center of its identity (Jesus Christ, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith), so that when stress increases and the old forms need to change in order to address and meet changed and new conditions of life, there is no loss of identity nor is there the feeling that further entrenchment into the limitations of the old identity is necessary in order to preserve Christian identity.

The boundaries have become distorted and are no longer the same as before because internal changes have begun to occur, the culture has begun to refocus on a new cultural identity. It may retain some of the old culture traits, but is at the same time adopting new ones, if it chooses to fight back against the stresses through a process of six major tasks (Wallace 1956:507).

At this point the culture embarks on a period of revitalization. It is at this point that missionary or pastor has the greatest opportunity to function as an agent of change for the church culture. As my research has shown, both missionaries, as bicultural bridges engaged in both shadow culture and cathedral culture, and pastors of churches desire change. They desire change in order for the church to flex, expand, and extend its boundaries to include those who may be different from the old cultural definition of *who* is a Christian and

on what basis is one identified as a Christian (Hiebert 1978). At this point of revitalization of the cathedral culture the church can move from a self-absorbed focus on the boundaries of church to a focus on Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God which continually revitalizes. Because the kingdom of God precedes and exceeds the boundaries of the church and of churches which, even if built by Jesus in their essence (Matthew 16:18), are not viewed in Scripture as human institutions, but as organisms of the Spirit. Scripture only speaks of the church in dynamic metaphors such as body (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31; Ephesians 4:4), living stones built into a spiritual house, a holy priesthood (1 Peter 2:4-10).

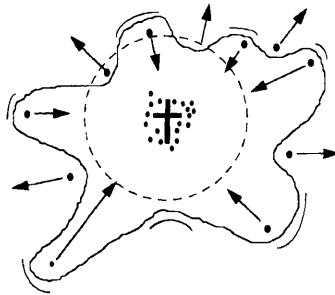


Figure 12

Period of revitalization (Wallace); the church culture changes from a bounded set to a centered set (Hiebert)

The cultural change can occur due to the six functions outlined by Wallace (1956:507-509).

The first function in the period of revitalization is *reformulation of the code* by which the culture lives. It may contain

elements and subsystems that are familiar in the society. They may merely need to be restructured. For example, applied to the cathedral culture of this study, kingdom of God personified in Jesus Christ becomes the focus or dominant element and church becomes a subset of it. Usually, the opposite has been true--kingdom of God has been a subset of the dominant culture of church and subject to it. Now is the time to recognize that the church, homogeneous or heterogeneous, is only "penultimate to the kingdom" (Hunter 1987:175).

Function two of the revitalization is *communication* of the new insight or new emphasis. This must be done by the recognized, credible leader. This may take place in sundry settings--in preaching, in personal persuasion--and directed at various audiences. Communication, however, never occurs one way, but also always involves listening.

Third, organizationally the "*power*" of leadership should never reside in one person, but *should be distributed* among others in order to assure ongoing vitality within an otherwise "stable institutional structure" (Wallace 1956:509). At this point care must be given that the structure not rest on rigid, "load bearing" exterior walls of group identity, but rather the structure must be supported by the center pole (Jesus; God's rule) of the tent of our earthly communal habitation that continually reminds us of our pilgrimage without yet having arrived at our destination (Hebrews 11:8-10). The boundaries of our tent are changeable. The center pole of its support does not.

The fourth task in revitalization, in some ways, may be the most difficult. As the *culture adapts to the changes*--formulation of a new code, communication of the new identity, changes in the organization--there will usually be resistance from within or from without. It is important to keep focus and momentum at this point.

As the fifth task, *cultural transformation*, is taking place the stressors of the old steady state are replaced with agreed upon reforms that meet the social needs of the culture in a satisfying way. One of these can be a program of group action or common mission. Again, this presents the church with an opportunity to redirect its emphasis from maintenance of rigid, closed boundaries to fluid, open boundaries by reaching out, ministering to, and drawing in those who until now have been excluded or marginalized from participation in the old cathedral culture. In the newly reformulated definition of the cathedral culture, its boundary remains flexible so that it includes all who turn their allegiance toward Jesus Christ and begin movement toward Christ, regardless of where they start from and regardless of the moral or cognitive "distance" they may be from the center or what cultural forms their faith expression may take (Hiebert 1978).

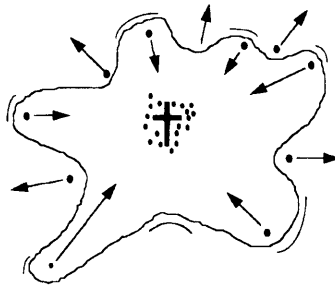


Figure 13

The boundary shape of the culture changes, no longer upheld by its old defining traits, but by its new center (Hiebert 1978)

Before *routinization* of the new forms and customs happens, Wallace's sixth task of revitalization (1956:509), (cf. Berger and Luckmann 1966) the church would do well to find ways to establish contact with the marginalized of society, if that is its desire and the focus of its mission. As stated in my research, that is the intention of the missionaries and church leaders I interviewed. That would be welcomed also by the shadow culture if certain cultural changes (the fifth task) were to occur in the cathedral culture. Contact, established through bicultural missionaries, could be nurtured by support groups. Innovations, experimentation, and risk taking must then become a part of "the way we do church" so that church becomes more attractive to those who find "church as usual" boring and the traditions of past eras in church history irrelevant to the "thirty-somethings" of today's post-modern world.

After fulfilling these six major tasks of revitalization, according to Wallace (1956:507-509), the (cathedral) culture comes to a new

steady state. Wallace emphasizes that

The culture of this state will probably be different in pattern, organization or *Gestalt*, as well as in traits, from the earlier steady state; it will be different from that of the period of cultural distortion. (1956:509)

The church may now more nearly resemble the following figure.

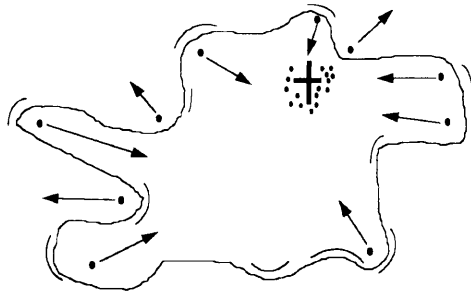


Figure 14

New steady state (Wallace) at the center, always flexing at the boundary (Hiebert).

When the church has been revitalized by the Spirit of God, how does the church carry out its mission to evangelize the world in its neighborhood and culture? In order to help answer this question, we will look at another model from the field of behavioral science.

Conversion as a Dynamic Process

Alan R. Tippett (1977) has applied anthropology's model of conversion as process to Christian conversion for use in Christian

mission, as I have also reviewed in Chapter 3, pp. 55-60. Tippett illustrates the dynamic conversion process in the following way.

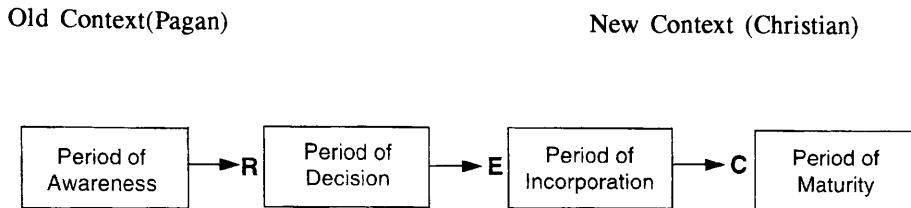


Figure 15

Conversion as a dynamic process (Tippett 1977)

Tippett has explained that the process of conversion begins when a messenger (in our case the missionary) advocates a change to the hearer (in our case a person from the shadow culture). This brings the recipient to a period of awareness of the offer which leads to the realization (R) that he or she has the possibility of conversion. The point of realization is followed by a period of making a decision. Tippett (1977:207) notes that this “model is purely processual, measuring periods and points,” not length of time of any given period. After the period of decision the receptor comes to the point of encounter (E). This is what is often called “crisis of faith” or “moment of crisis.” At this point the message is rejected or accepted. If it is accepted it is followed by a period of incorporation after which a rite of initiation or confirmation (C) is celebrated. Then comes the period of maturity (which I have, for the sake of

illustration, left open ended).

It is on the period of incorporation I want to focus attention in this application. When and how is this to occur for those seeking contact or association with a community of Christian believers?

Ritual Process

Victor Turner (1977), building on Arnold van Gennep's (1960) findings on *rites de passage*, has shown how the three stages of ritual process function in moving persons from an old status to a new status in society. There are three stages to this process, as shown in my review of the literature, pp. 72-79. This process has implications for mission as they are applied to the incorporation of marginal people from the shadow culture of society into fellowship with the Christian faith community if that is what a person is seeking, as Stefan, Philippe, and others were in our case study.

The three stages of ritual process, according to Turner, are depicted as follows.

Stage I: <u>Separation</u>	Stage II: <u>Liminality</u>	Stage III: <u>Integration</u>
Old Status	Transition/ Marginality	New Status
Structure	Anti-Structure	Structure

Figure 16

Three stages of ritual process according to van Gennep (1960) and Turner (1977)

Applying Turner's ritual process to the process of Christian conversion and incorporation of converts into the community of believers, whether a youth group or a church, the stage of liminality corresponds to Tippet's (1977) period of incorporation.

When a person experiences Christian conversion by believing in Jesus and turning from allegiance to gods to God, as Papayya did (Hiebert 1978), a separation from Stage One takes place. This is a separation from the old status with its familiar structures. After separation from the old status, the convert enters Stage Two, liminality or the threshold stage of uncertainty about what lies ahead, about new relationships, and about new status. Turner describes it as a period of anti-structure. At this stage of liminality the Christian church has the greatest opportunity to integrate the new convert into the faith community, or new status in life. As Finn (1989) demonstrated the rite of confirmation was originally designed as a transitional, liminal state (cf. chapter 3, pp. 77-79; also Appendix 3).

Küng (1978:178-204) has rightly argued that confirmation no longer fulfills the function for which it was designed, as my research findings also show (cf. Monkres and Ostermiller 1995). That is not to say, however, that the use of the liminal stage of ritual process has no place in incorporating new converts into the Christian community. On the contrary, it challenges the Christian community to find and utilize creative ways for entering into marginality with those coming as seekers or converts and to help them find inclusion in the Christian faith community.

The Role of Small Groups

Especially the midnight missionaries and church leaders recognize that small groups are key to renewal and to incorporation of newcomers. It is here that relationships of trust are built between the persons coming from the shadow culture and the persons coming from the cathedral culture, the bicultural missionary being the bridge. In some cases, marginalized people may never get beyond this level of Christian community, but if in this setting spiritual needs are met as the small community gathers around the Christ event for worship and edification then perhaps that is enough. As Malherbe (1983; cf. Birkey 1991) and others of the socio-historical school of interpretation have pointed out, the early church began as house churches, even when they understood themselves as part of something greater. It was in the house churches that the life of faith was worked out, spiritual gifts were exercised and developed to maturity, and conflicts between the diverse socio-cultural subsets were resolved.

However, others may find confidence to test the water of the larger ecclesia after they have learned to be a part of the ecclesiola. The "ecclesiola in ecclesia" such as the "collegia pietatis" of Lutheran Pietism or the "classes, societies, and bands" of Wesley have almost always been instrumental in renewal movements of the church and they have provided the place where more people could exercise the charismata of the body of Christ (Snyder 1989:305-307; Hunter 1996:81-117).

In the mid-eighteenth century John Wesley was effective in bringing social sub-sets into faith and Christian community, i.e., societies which closely resemble the homogeneous units of church growth theory. It must be recognized, however, that Wesley was not successful in incorporating converts into the existing Anglican church. This resulted in a new and vital movement, later called Methodism, although John Wesley himself never left the Church of England in which he was an ordained priest.⁵

As essential to small groups, whatever format or structure they may take such as prayer or Bible study groups, recovery support groups, or common task forces, Hunter (1996:94) sees four components: (1) loving service to one another, (2) learning together about God and one another, (3) shared decision making, and (4) doing common tasks.

It remains to be seen if the *Unterstützungsgruppe* (support group) begun at the Methodist Church in Klein-Basel will succeed in bringing people from the street culture of Basel into Christian community. A start has been made involving midnight missionaries and members of the EMK congregation that includes two regular attenders from the shadow culture of Basel's night scene.

The February 1996 "Freundesbrief" from the MMB is hoping for the integration of its Samstagsclub (a small group) into the Freievang. Gemeinde.

On the other hand, Anna-Kaethi Kachel (1995), parish assistant minister of St. Matthew's Church, admits that most small groups begun in that church are still too intellectual and middle class for the

working class and marginal people of their neighborhood. Many pastors see them as strategic to renewal in their churches and for a reorientation away from traditional structures toward a more open, friendlier fellowship of believers (Mohr 1995; Hauzenberger 1995; Nussbaumer 1995a) and some are working almost exclusively with small groups of aliens or with base church communities of all kinds of social groups which are from the shadows on the outside of their respective cathedral cultures (Fürst 1995; Felix 1995).

Father Vincent Donovan calls for a decentralized church (1989:108-110), i.e., one that is less institutional and less hierarchical, with the base church community as the primary reference group for Christians (1989:149-156). These groups may develop within the already existing structured church and adhere to it, but are not controlled by it. They may come to life outside the institutional church and associate with it. It could be necessary to form outside the church and, by necessity or by choice, separate from it.

Donovan described these base communities as each developing in its own way, but sharing common characteristics. Foremost, there is the realization of community which did not exist before. The community is the heart of shared life gathered around the Bible and the gospel (1989:149). As these groups reflect on the gospel and discuss actual events and situations, they usually move to group problems and become more prayerful. Their own rituals and celebrations are formed (1989:149-151).

In the Basel experiment of city church (Reeves 1981; Felix

1988; 1994) this is actually happening. However, it has not been without controversy, but many of the characteristics of George Hunter's profile of the effective city pastor (class handout, 1991) are found in Pastor Felix Felix of the Offene Kirche Elisabethen in Basel.

Effective city pastors are

1. Visible public people.
2. Willing to risk controversy.
3. Reported and quoted in the press.
4. Interesting people.
5. Communicating in secular language and analogies.
6. Close to power people--without compromise.
7. Visibly involved in a sphere of the city's life.
8. Supporting ministries of compassion in their churches.
9. Knowledgeable about their city through research.
10. Building and maintaining networks.
11. Managing their time.
12. Exercising the executive role.
13. Planning a long term pastorate.
14. Holding to theological clarity without dogmatism.
15. Uninterested in denominational politics, but interested in ecumenical achievements.

Pastor Felix meets at least twelve of these criteria (Felix 1995; "Lebensfreude" 1995; Moehl 1995; Zweifel 1995).

The *Offene Kirche Elisabethen* represents to me the best example of a centered set church I found during my research, even as its name suggests, "Open Church [at St.] Elisabeth's." And that is the source of much criticism from conservative evangelical Christian circles in Basel--it is too open. However, as its founding documents clearly state (Felix 1988; 1992), it is distinctly rooted in the Judeo-Christian faith tradition, but in forms that are trying to be attractive and compatible with much of today's post-modern, secular culture.

Pastor Felix Felix (1995) stated in my interview that the *Offene Kirche Elisabethen* (OKE) does not propose to be the future form of the church per se, but rather he sees the OKE as a complement to the church, a bridge between the church and secular culture. The OKE was intentionally formed as an association so that it could involve people in its founding who usually have not been associated with the traditional church. Even though it involves several hundred persons, it is a conglomeration of smaller units, each of which is self-determining, and includes a base church community of gays and lesbians. The boundaries of the groups are not defined for them. Some of the groups arise and then dissolve after a time, since many of these people, too, are wary of long-term commitments, Felix commented. He added that they do find they have a place in the church, however. Many are former members of the cathedral culture, but have rejected it and lost touch with anything that is Christian. The OKE gives them the opportunity to participate again, but in a way that is agreeable to them (but disagreeable to many other Christians in the city).

There are thirteen principles laid down in its vision and goals for the three working groups of the OKE (Felix 1992).

1. To seek new forms of church life at the end of the 20th century.
2. To take its identity from Christ, revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, working in the church through the Holy Spirit.
3. To seek and encourage dialogue and debate with other

thought forms and groups, listening and learning from contemporary culture and relevant social issues.

4. To cross boundaries--boundaries of sickness, of social stratification, of worship style, and of moralism.

5. To foster fellowship and create contact among the most diverse social and religious groups and traditions.

6. To find contemporary forms of celebration and conversation.

7. To advocate for the disadvantaged and oppressed.

8. To carry out a ministry of reconciliation.

9. To encourage participation and fellowship by exercising hospitality.

10. To exercise friendship at the grass roots of society and practice the "priesthood of all believers."

11. To be flexible--spontaneous, experimental, and "makeshift."

12. To practice mission through encounter with Judeo-Christian faith tradition.

13. To be ecumenical--at the local and at the global levels.

The Synod of the Evangelical-Reformed Church of Basel has embraced the experiment by providing funding for the full-time pastorate of H. R. Felix Felix ("Evangelische Synode" 1995) who describes his role as that of a "CEO" more than as a typical parish pastor (1995).

The activities of the Offene Kirche Elisabethen may be debated long and loud in some Christian circles, but the fundamental fact remains that it is in dialogue with and has engaged segments of

society and numerous subculture groups with whom no other Christian church in Basel, to my knowledge, has much if any contact. The concept of the OKE is a good one and is very near to a pure centered set (Hiebert 1978) and displays many characteristics of the kingdom of God that go beyond the preaching and practice of the majority of cathedral culture.

Donovan observes,

If the truth were told, there is sometimes no experience of community in the most vibrant-appearing, teeming suburban parish churches of America [or Europe]. Where is it that Christian people will experience the reality of the New Testament event in their lives? Wherever it is, *that* is church. (1989:109)

Concurring with this Malherbe says, "The implications of the preaching that called the communities into existence had to be worked out by those communities" (1983:69-70). He remarks how "early Christians did not see themselves as isolated individuals" and how "often the New Testament deals with issues in relation to the Christian community" which Malherbe identifies as house churches.⁶ And, as the church grew in a city, there would be more than one house church formed (1983:70).

In an effort to define the boundaries of such communities both Donovan and Robert J. Schreiter (1985:117-121) explain that loyalty to and participation with the new community whose worship and service is *centered* in the salvation event of the cross define the boundaries of the base community. This is consistent with Hiebert's centered set concept of what constitutes inclusion in the Christian

church, as mentioned above. It is the center that must become institutionalized (Berger and Luckmann 1966), however, not the outer boundaries of a church's cultural identity, whether a small house-group church, a free church, a state church, or a city church. Only if the focus remains on the center of Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God can a church remain dynamic and flexible. The realistic vision of the rule of God in the human community of faith always stretches the church beyond its present, familiar, cultural boundaries because the kingdom of God is greater than cultures and greater than human institutions.

Once a faith group, however, achieves "its new contextual entity," as Tippett calls it, the new norms have to be fixed, and the group entity has to be established (1977:211). But is this not again establishing boundaries of inclusion and exclusion? Is this phenomenon inevitable in establishing social identity or is it avoidable? Will institutionalization inevitably occur as Berger and Luckmann (1966:47128) maintain? But what kind of boundaries are acceptable if indeed they must exist for the sake of stability, identity, and self-definition? Are the boundaries permeable? In either or both directions, i.e., are they permeable from without and from within? Are the same boundaries which keep seekers and new converts outside the circle of the church keeping the Christians bound up inside the church so that they cannot go outside to enter into the world of others? Can these boundaries in some way be made flexible? Are indigenous, homogeneous church units the only alternative for converts from the social margins to experience faith

in community? Is it possible for converts from subcultures of society to find incorporation into the existing churches of a locale without conforming to a prescribed Christian church culture? And by what rite of initiation or act of recognition that is culturally relevant today should that happen?

According to Tippett's model (see Figure 13) the period of incorporation should culminate in an act of incorporation (1977:211). Following the New Testament practice of baptism as a public declaration of identity with the death and resurrection of Christ and as the act of initiation into the people of God under the new covenant, Donovan, Schreiter, and Kraft all agree with Tippett that before incorporation into the new community of faith is complete there should follow an act of incorporation, initiation, or celebration. These missiological models are consistent with the model of *rites de passage* as recognized by Arnold van Gennep (1960 [1909]) and further developed as *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* by Victor Turner (1977) who emphasizes the significance of the second stage of rites of passage, i.e., liminality and the sense of community which arises out of the "threshold" experience. (See Figure 16, p. 297.) Those who have shared this liminal experience bond with one another by the time integration or reincorporation into the new reference group or state occurs through a rite of initiation.

Bicultural Missionaries and the Missionary Church

In order to illustrate how missionaries can serve both shadow culture and cathedral culture as bicultural bridge I propose an overlay of the various models discussed above as a synthesis.

Following stages three and four of Anthony F. C. Wallace's (1956) revitalization model,⁷ by which bounded set churches can be renewed in co-work with God's Spirit of power and turned into centered sets if they will refocus on the center of Christian identity, namely, on Jesus and the reign of God, it is at this point that I propose a new or synthesized model.

Using the ritual process of Victor Turner (1977) and illustrated by Thomas M. Finn (1989), I add my own application of the example of Jesus and the concept of *kenosis* (emptying). The practice of *dislocation*⁸ of Christian disciples in the book of Acts for the purpose of liminality in mission (Turner's "anti-structure" which is created by a culture during the ritual process and corresponds neither to the old status nor to the new status, in order to create liminality, i.e., uncertainty, and a common experience for initiants),⁹ is also a time during which bonding or *communitas* occurs before the initiate enters the new status and full incorporation into the social community.

It is my premise that Christians from within the existing church institution (Christian church culture), as they become aware through Scripture of their mission, even as the missionary has entered into the world of the subculture, the Christian group, or numerous members of it, can enter into a period of *intentional*

cultural distortion and enter into Turner's stage of *liminality* with new converts during the period of incorporation, thus creating *communitas*, bonding with them and helping to usher them into the church through rites of initiation and celebration, thus serving as bi-cultural bridges between shadow culture and cathedral culture.

Through these bonds of community with new members, the influx of new persons, fresh energy, and new spiritual gifts, the church is revitalized. It must be realized, however, that in order for revitalization to occur within the church the church must be "refounded" (Donovan 1989). The church does not return to its old steady state, but arrives at a new steady state. It undergoes "culture change."

According to Wallace's model that entails a true reformation of the church which *includes* the new members by again going through the process of the revitalization stage:

1. formulation of a [new] code,
2. [new] lines of communication,
3. re-organization which includes the new members,
4. adaptation of old structures and ways of performing,
5. cultural adjustments and transformation, and
6. routinization, i.e., becoming comfortable with the new ways.

This leads to the final stage of Wallace's revitalization model, a new steady state.¹⁰ This is an ongoing process in an "apostolic congregation" (Hunter 1996) that is continually revitalizing itself.

It is no longer church as usual in its traditional ways, acting as the dominant culture which expects the newcomers to conform to it, but it is a renewed church which includes both those who are older

in the Christian faith and the newcomers. This can be done without compromising any aspect of the gospel, but rather is by the very act of intentional *kenosis* and *dislocation* the proclamation of the *incarnation* of Christ in the world (Christ's bodily presence) which means the kingdom of God is among us.

The following illustration combines the different theories from anthropology and missiology with concepts and examples from Scripture.

"kenosis," incarnation, dislocation, intentional liminality and cultural distortion for the sake of mission and the incorporation of converts into the Christian faith community.

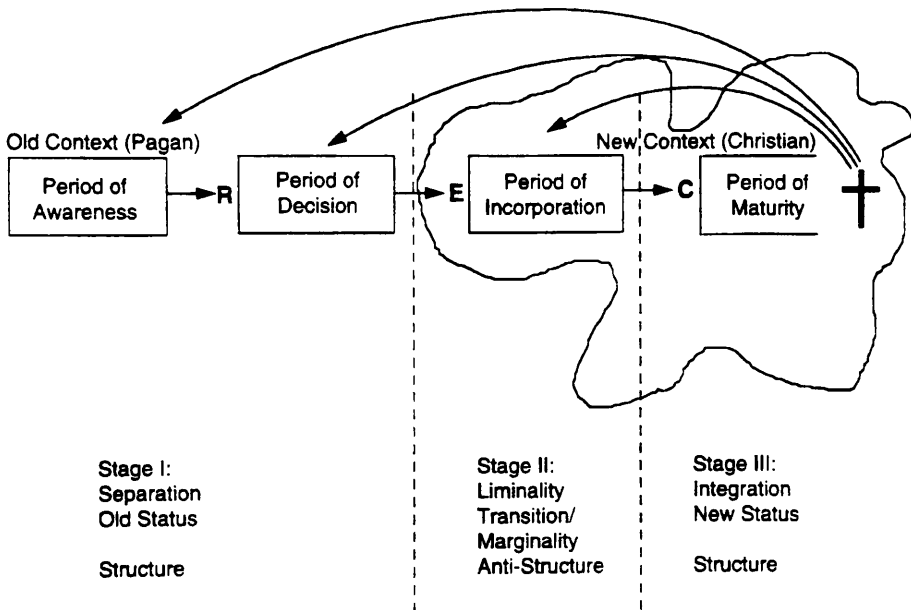


Figure 17

A synthesis of Hiebert (1978), Turner (1977), and Tippett (1977), adding the dynamic of *kenosis*, *dislocation*, and *incarnation*

The centered set, “apostolic” church sends out missionaries (apostles) as bi-cultural bridges into the world of new cultures. They go with “the mind of Christ” who emptied himself (kenosis) of his “heavenly culture” in order to enter into and identify with a specific human culture. Jesus did not deny who he was or where he had come from, yet he fully embodied humanness and embraced the Jewish culture in which he became incarnate, and that pleased God. Jesus was a bicultural bridge between human culture and God’s kingdom culture. Jesus, and thus the missionary church, entered into every level of human experience and made choices based on God’s reign. By entering into the Jewish culture Jesus conveyed the gospel, yet the gospel of God’s reign, not the static, bounded religious institutions, critiqued and challenged the culture.

At yet another level Jesus entered into the world of the socially marginal, a subculture, and the same process occurred. He communicated liberating good news while challenging the sinfulness of those human beings as well. Jesus experienced their liminality with them, journeyed the road with them, developed *communitas* with them, and called them friends, so that he could lead them into the community of God’s rule, beyond the boundaries of stereotypes and stigmas, and so that they could feel themselves included and counted among God’s people--yes, even before they met the moral and religious expectations of the “temple culture” of his day.

Jesus was criticized for “experimenting and risk taking” with those who were alien to the religious culture of the time and who

were already condemned by the “religiously right.” His very essence and identity as Messiah and Son of God were questioned because of his manner and his associations. He was even accused of decadent indulgence and behavior! Are we willing to go that far “to seek and to save that which is lost?” How do we respond to Jesus’ words that we have been sent into the world just as he was sent into the world?

Especially for people from socially marginal groups churches need to seek creative ways to experience liminality (the threshold) (Turner 1977) with seekers and new converts. This period of incorporation (Tippett 1977) occurs after a person has turned (repented) and expresses a desire and the intention of following after Jesus. The church must at this point include the convert openly and with the least preconditions. Otherwise the new convert experiences rejection, feeling their faith commitment is called into question and that they, as a person, are rejected. Usually, at this point the new convert reverts to the old reference group (Tippett 1977) and discontinues following after Jesus.

The missionary group of the church, then, not only serves to lead converts to faith, it introduces them to the larger faith community. It also facilitates the converts’ participation with that faith community. In order for the Christian faith culture to accept converts from the other culture, the study shows how the missionary group also serves as an agent of change to prepare the Christian community to accept converts in ways that allow them to feel acceptance and find full participation in the new reference group. In other words, not only is the culture change within the life of the

convert, there is also culture change within the life of the faith community (cathedral culture) as it prepares to admit culturally distant people into its fellowship, brokered by bicultural missionaries.

What then are we to conclude? What might be the resolution of the problem of incorporation when individuals come to faith through a "centered set" method of evangelism which, in my experience, is how most Christian evangelism is done (Green 1970)¹¹, encounter a Christian community which defines itself by "bounded set" characteristics which, in my experience, most evangelical Christian communities do?

Must the young convert conform in descriptive, external characteristics in order to find acceptance and feel included in the Christian community where young faith can be encouraged and nurtured? Does one have to adapt to a type of "Christian church culture" in order to become a Christian? Would that not be converting to a culture rather than to Christ, as Kraft suggests (1979:340)?

We do not know if Stefan and Philippe had found a place in viable Christian community, whether they would have still opted for the same means of escape from the pain and struggle they were experiencing. We do not know if they would have successfully made the transition from one reference group to another and the transformation from one life style to another. There were certainly other things going on and other factors involved in their decisions. Nor do we seek blame among the sincere, devoted, but bounded

Christian groups where Stefan and Philippe sometimes sought inclusion. Some few converts did find meaningful relationships in Christian groups. What Stefan and Philippe chose to do was their choice. Their cases do point out, however, that it is often difficult to find inclusion in Christian communities that define themselves by the distinctive boundaries of their own self-identity and making, rather than by the center of their existence. In the case of Christian communities that center should be the person of Jesus Christ himself (1 Corinthians 2:2; 15:3-4). A person's allegiance to him and a person's movement toward the kingdom of God (Matthew 6:31-33; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-37) become the criteria for inclusion in the Christian set. In this manner the culture conflict which otherwise arises can be avoided before it occurs or else overcome where it exists.

My research has shown that few, if any churches, are or could become true centered sets as described by my interpretive framework (Hiebert 1978). Even the churches I interviewed that are open to marginal people of the shadow culture around them, display and will likely retain their denominational distinctives or doctrinal emphases as churches. For example, even the Methodist Church, Moersbergerstrasse in Basel, which is experiencing unity in diversity (Gumbal 1995; see p. 229), reflecting many characteristics of the kingdom of God, and continuing to grow in size and strength (Gaberthüel 1996), has an internal boundary which one must first cross to become a Methodist and full member of that church. The church is flexible about who it includes in participation at worship

and ministry, even in some levels of leadership. However, it retains its denominational criteria of membership which are the four questions of the *Evangelisch-methodistische Kirche* in Switzerland (Handschin 1988:n. p.):

1. Do you confess Jesus as Savior and Lord?
2. Do you accept the Bible as the only authoritative revelation from God?
3. Do you desire to live in grace?
4. Do you commit to involvement in the EMK?

The same is true in other congregations of the EMK I interviewed (Nussbaumer 1995a; Hauzenberger 1995) and of other churches such as the *Frei-evangelische Gemeinde* (Vogel 1995) or the *Evangelische Gemeinde Basel* (Doerpfeld 1995). Though open to the participation of seekers and new converts at one level they each have membership criteria and conditions for leadership roles at another level (cf. Schaller 1978:73-98).

Using the interpretive framework of centered sets and bounded sets (Hiebert 1978) these churches look like this modified set.

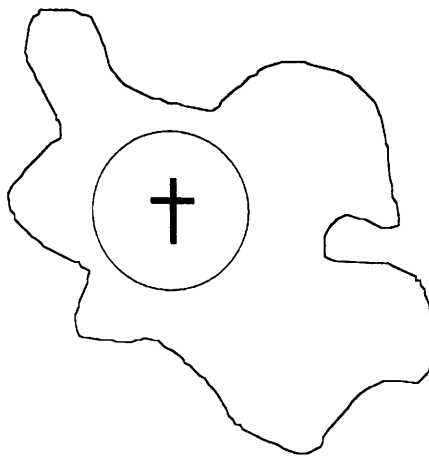


Figure 18

The modified set with bounded inner circle

This church set has a fluid boundary for participation in peripheral activities, but maintains a rigid boundary at its center to assure its distinctives which it considers non-negotiable and unchanging: perhaps hierarchical leadership based on kinship, gender, or age; perhaps length of affiliation; perhaps doctrinal understanding; perhaps education or success in business; or perhaps other criteria. In any case not everyone has access to the inner workings of the church and that which identifies it is something other than its center, Jesus Christ. Even if the inner boundary may be very close to the center, it is still exclusionary.

Another possibility of a modified set is similar, but different.

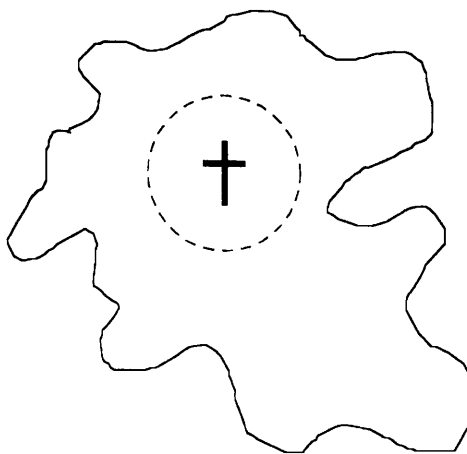


Figure 19

The modified set with an open inner circle

In this instance the boundaries are flexible to include all persons who have turned their allegiance to God and are moving Christward, toward the center of life's origin and revelation of God in Jesus Christ. The inner circle of stability is open and permeable. Persons can move into the inner circle in participation and outward from the circle to welcome newcomers and to move beyond the set in mission. The broken lines of the inner circle may be viewed as secondary support poles around the center pole that give the organizational structure stability and strength, but do not create

exclusive, impenetrable barriers to achieving full integration in the Christian group.

If the convert centered on Christ cannot find acceptance, affirmation, and nurture in a Christian group that is set on its own peculiar boundaries, then where can he or she find a sense of belonging that is essential to keeping the faith and growing to maturity (Tippett 1977) or perfection (McGavran 1955)? Those who are marginal to the dominant, middle-class cathedral culture will feel acceptance and full personhood in a church setting which includes all whose hearts and minds are centered on Christ and whose lives are moving in a Christward direction. As long as there are cultural barriers of inclusion and exclusion that identify Christian groups, the marginal will remain marginal. Until the Christian church culture humbles itself and takes on the form of a servant again, it will not penetrate the socially marginalized lower working classes with the good news of God's liberating love manifested in Jesus Christ and the body of Christ on earth, the church, as it lives out the life and work of Jesus, thus reflecting the full reign of God.

My proposed models must be *intentionally* carried out as part of the evangelistic ministry of a church and as a means of assimilating new members.¹²

Suggestions for Further Research

Questions arising out of this study which warrant further research concern those places in the world, similar to western Europe, where historic, traditional churches already exist. This may

include other parts of western Europe, eastern Europe, Latin America, and in some ways North America, especially among “mainline denominations.”

1. Does culture conflict occur in these other parts of the world between marginal cultural groups and cathedral culture of traditional churches? How are “shadow culture” and “cathedral culture” defined in these settings and what is the dynamic between the two?

2. To what extent do economic differences between the social groups create and reinforce religious cultural barriers that hinder acceptance of one another and participation in one another’s faith communities?

3. Have some of the independent, indigenous churches in other lands become traditional, and developed a cathedral culture which marginalizes other cultural groups?

4. Are efforts underway to incorporate marginalized cultural groups into existing churches, and if so by what means and how effective are they?

5. Do missionary groups, either foreign or indigenous, attempt to cooperate with the historic, traditional churches? If so, who initiates the attempt and how is it carried out?

6. How can missionary groups serve as culture brokers and bicultural bridges between marginal groups and traditional churches in other lands that have similar historical relationships and similar cultural attitudes between churches and the marginalized?

Recommendations from This Study

Based on the findings of this study I recommend the following ways of resolving culture conflict between marginal cultural groups and Christian church culture, and how missionaries as culture brokers can help in leading the two cultures together.

1. Both state churches and free churches still need to *decide* whether or not they *intend to be in mission to and with* the people of *the shadow culture*.

2. Churches need to *develop plans* for such mission--with *specific ministries, programs, and activities*. One way to accomplish this is to *return mission to local churches*. Local churches need to look for ways to incorporate existing missionary groups into their church life by, as a congregation, *adopting, sponsoring, and becoming personally involved* with one of the missionary outreaches or parachurch ministries in the city that is reaching out to marginalized people.

3. This research bears out the fact that key to the renewal and mission of the church is the *implementation of small groups within church congregations*. Small groups not only serve to bond Christians and enhance their own spiritual growth, they also serve as *entry points* into the church for seekers and new converts. Although some of these groups could be *special support groups* for those struggling with particular issues in life, most groups should involve others from the church itself who can serve as bridges between the shadow culture and cathedral culture.

4. *New homogeneous groups* can be started within the

congregation in order to meet unique or specific situations. But the involvement of others from the church who bring cultural and social diversity and who foster a sense of belonging to something bigger than the specific small group, is also important.

5. Churches should begin now to raise up a bicultural *missionary laity, or lay apostolate*. The church should return to the biblical concept of “the priesthood of all believers” and then release the missionary laity in ministry--called by God, set apart by the Holy Spirit, sent by the church, and answering to the congregation of which they are a part. In this way the congregation will take *mutual ownership of mission, and share responsibility and hospitality* for those who are yet unchurched.

6. *Missionaries*, as members of the churches, should be *recognized and given opportunity* to address their churches periodically--especially their home churches--so that they can function more effectively as *bicultural bridges between the social margins and the church*, serving both cultures to further God's kingdom on earth. This also helps *break down the clergy/laity dichotomy*.

These concrete steps can be implemented without hesitation in order to propel the church into mission to the shadow culture if that is its desire and intention. Several deeper level paradigm shifts would help the churches become more profoundly missional in its life and ministry.

1. It is supremely important that churches and other Christian ministries *derive their identity from the center* of the

Christian faith, namely, *Jesus Christ*, rather than from the boundaries of doctrine and denomination, cult and culture which divide the church and exclude those who are not "like us." This will be the beginning of revitalizing the church and growing in love and compassion for people.

2. With hearts and minds set on Jesus Christ, Christian groups learn about their God-given mission by *learning from Jesus* as our model of and model for ministry. *Scripture and the Holy Spirit* are their teachers. *Worship and prayer* are the keys to revival in personal life and ministry of the church.

3. It is of paramount importance that churches *become strategically intentional* about renewing themselves by *preaching on repentance and the kingdom of God* with all its implications for living and for ministering to the whole person.¹³ Human cultural dynamics provide some avenues for the Spirit of God to bring revitalization to otherwise static institutions which are, as such, doomed to decline and demise.

4. Just as God sent Jesus into the world, so, too, are his disciples *sent into the world* as they empty themselves and become servants to others. When they are "sent by the Father," being dislocated from what is familiar and comfortable in order to become incarnate in the new culture to which they bring the "good news" of reconciliation, like Jesus, they willingly undergo cultural *kenosis*.

5. Churches, like Jesus, will have to be *willing to undergo change*--change in outlook, change in doing, change in relationships, change in culture. Churches, like Jesus, will have to be *willing to*

experiment, to risk making mistakes, and to take criticism.

These recommendations should not be viewed as theoretical, but rather as concrete steps which can be implemented by local churches or denominations. If the church is instructed by the example of Jesus and the apostles, gifted and empowered by the Holy Spirit, prayerfully and boldly carried out by an informed priesthood of believers, then God is able to “accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine.”

It appears that the churches in Basel, Switzerland and throughout western Europe are at a cross-roads. They can

1. accept the status quo by doing nothing and changing nothing,
2. be like the Judaizing teachers of Paul’s day and insist that all who want to be Christians become like us and our way of living out the Christian faith,
3. or they can adopt and try what is working elsewhere in the world, adapt what would seemingly work in their own multi-cultural context, and imaginatively create new ways of doing church without losing their central focus, which is Jesus Christ who “died for our sins according to the scriptures, and . . . was buried, and . . . was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures.”

There is much to be celebrated in the European Christian heritage and in today’s churches as well. But the voice of the people who are voting in vast numbers with their feet and their pocket books must be taken seriously if churches expect to be taken seriously.

Remember 1968 when the Swiss watch-making industry held a 65% market share in the world for watches and controlled 80% of the profits from their sale? Joel A. Barker (1989) reports with examples from science and business how new ideas cause change and disrupt the status quo. Most church leadership (as in industry and business), see the future as merely an extension of the past, and, therefore, honest, thoughtful people resist change. This was true in the 16th century with Galileo; it is true in the 20th century.

It was the Swiss who invented the electronically driven, liquid crystal digital watch and displayed it to the world in 1967. Even though it was more accurate than the mechanical watch and less expensive to manufacture, they neither patented it nor produced it. It would not work or be accepted, they claimed. It was too radically different. It just is not the way watches are made. The Swiss watch industry was blinded by past successes and limited by old paradigms. It failed to recognize that what assured success in the past does not necessarily work in the future. Barker states that Texas Instruments and Seiko took the idea of the quartz digital watch, "and the rest is history." By 1978, only ten years later, the Swiss watch industry shared only 10% of the world's watch market and layoffs in the Swiss watch industry were devastating.

Undoubtedly there are parallels in this story for churches. Past successes guarantee nothing in following generations. Unless the church is open to new ideas, it too could continue to lose ground to the growing materialistic secularism of our age. Yes, people are still religious, just as people still use watches. But "time" is of the

essence. It is a question of how we “tell time.” The best ways to tell time today may be more accurate than watching the sun traverse the sky, than sun dials, regulators, or even Rolexes. Maybe we need new forms of church, also, and new ways to tell the eternal good news to the world that wants to hear “What time is it?”

The issues raised by this study cannot be taken for granted nor can the answers be assumed. We are at a critical point in the history of the Christian church in Basel, Switzerland and throughout western Europe. I do not raise these questions as one who judges the churches and Christian ministries of Basel. I raise them as one who cares deeply and who prays that the people in the shadows *be heard* and that the people in the shadows *hear* the good news of life in Jesus Christ. The people of the shadow culture in Basel have names and faces to me, as do the people in the pews and pulpits of Basel’s churches. I respect them both. It is my hope that the two can meet and become one in heart and mind, as different as they are, on the common ground of faith in Jesus, seeking God’s kingdom together which is, I believe, the deepest longing of every human heart.

In any case, the hoped for result is new life in the community of Christ which witnesses to his presence in the midst of God’s people--all God’s people.

Notes

1 . Catholic cultural anthropologist, Gerald A. Arbuckle (1993) calls for the refounding of the church as indicated by “authority dissenters” and “pathfinder dissenters” (1993:6). He shows how Vatican II began a revitalization of the church which has stalled due to an aging culture among the leadership that has thrown the Roman Catholic Church in chaos. The refounding of the church can begin, however, according to Arbuckle, in the religious congregations, i.e., at the grass roots level, as they rediscover the meaning of living in “community” according to the gospel (1993:158-179) which is essential for the ongoing reformation or refounding of the church.

2 . It is moralism that Jacques Ellul (1986:11; cf. Chapter 3, n. 5) has called the perversion or subversion of Christianity. Through this shift in focus and emphasis from (1) “the revelation and work of God accomplished in Jesus Christ,” (2) “the being of the church as the body of Christ,” and (3) “the faith and life of Christians in truth and love” under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to the protection of its identity based on moral behavioral standards, the church began to voluntarily lose its freedom in Christ and “opt for a new bondage” (1986:13) wherein, Ellul claims, “what counts is not the believer’s relationship of faith with God but the church’s ritual and the object [baptism and Eucharist] that has the sacred power of transformation” (1986:64).

3 . This shift of emphasis was the major concern of E. Stanley Jones when he arrived at the decennial meeting of the International Missionary Council in Tambaram, Madras, India in 1938 that had been convened to consider the church in its social context to the kingdom of God with its Christian social objective. What Jones wanted to emphasize at Tambaram in 1938 is still relevant for the church today, namely, when the gospel of the kingdom of God is proclaimed, people respond and churches are formed as communities of the kingdom. Now as then the danger exists of focusing on the church as a social phenomenon which begins to devote its energies to the preservation of the institution and the maintenance of its

boundaries at the expense of the preaching of the good news of the kingdom.

For reports on the debate over the emphasis on church and kingdom at the Tamaram conference cf. Paul Braisted (1939a, 1939b, 1939c); E. Stanley Jones (1939a, 1939b, 1939c); Henry Van Dusen (1939).

4 . As Hunter (1996:60) has reminded us, it was Donald McGavran (cf. 1955:37; 1959:85-92) who stated that cultural and sociological barriers are greater deterrents to people coming to faith in Jesus than are theological or religious ones. Also, McGavran's discussion of "discipling and perfecting" (1959:93-102) is pertinent to this issue.

5 . Howard A. Snyder (1980) gives a perceptive discussion of this outworking of Wesley's class meetings in *The Radical Wesley & Patterns for Church Renewal*.

6 . The *ekklesia*, i.e., the general church, and the *oikos*, i.e., the household church, are both engaged in *kerygma*, *koinonia*, and *diakonia*, according to Malherbe (1983:60-112; cf. Meeks 1983:74-110).

7 . In *Signs of the Spirit: How God Reshapes the Church* Howard Snyder (1989) reports on several historical accounts of renewal movements which have reshaped segments of the Christian church in their respective eras. Snyder offers an analysis of those renewals and seeks to build a renewal strategy for the church today and addresses some of the issues raised by this study. This study will offer more grounding in anthropological theory and analysis than Snyder sometimes gives.

8 . This is a concept which I developed in an unpublished paper for Dr. Mathias Zahniser in a course on "Cross-Cultural Christian Discipling," Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, KY. Dislocation occurs through both "sending and going out" intentionally in mission and unintentional "scattering" through commercial travel and by persecution, but while going, intentionally spreading the Christian

message wherever one goes and by whatever means (Acts 8:1-8; 10:1-48; 13:1-3 et al.). There is a dynamic working here which aids Christian mission because as a state of liminality and anti-structure is created by dislocation, it attracts and bonds persons sharing this experience, thus fostering a sense of *communitas* (Turner 1977). Dietrich Werner (1990) has developed a similar concept he sees working in the life of the young church in the Acts of the Apostles as a result of the Holy Spirit's activity. This concept may be translated "crossing borders" as a principle of the life of the church in order for its mission to be carried out.

9 Finn shows how the late second century Roman church assured its survival by institutionalizing the ritual process as explained by Turner (1977). The application of separation, liminality, and integration were very distinct stages in the life of a convert and intentionally articulated and utilized by the Roman church to "screen" prospective new church members while preparing them for integration into the church. This process covered a three-year period of instruction and testing, only after which the catechumen would be received into the church. Key in this process was the participation of the whole church in the three-year period of catechesis. As Turner has illustrated this created *communitas* between new and prior members of the church, thus assuring better integration and a new reference for the new member and making reversion less likely. It seems this also gave new vitality to the church. It appears that the only prerequisites placed on the catechumens in Rome according to Hippolytus were confessional and moral. Also, it appears that the fresh convert was expected, indeed required, to conform to the Christian "church culture" though this is neither stated nor described in the *Apostolic Tradition*.

10 . In his book *Activating the Passive Church* (1981), Lyle E. Schaller has shown how an influx of new members serves to renew or revitalize a church, often to the dismay and concern of old members who fear losing the familiar and comfortable past.

11 . The Mitternachtsmission Basel was surely engaged in centered set evangelism during the eight years I was involved in it.

Persons were told of the good news of forgiveness by God's grace through faith in Christ Jesus' incarnation, death, and resurrection. These persons were invited to accept that forgiveness and the liberation which a life of discipleship to Jesus brings when one is empowered by the Holy Spirit. That, too, seemed to be the focus of some of the groups in Basel, e.g. Alban-Arbeit (no longer extant), Thomas-Kirche, and perhaps others. Most of the youth groups and churches, however, required not only a turning and movement toward Christ in order to find acceptance in their group, but many other stipulations and restrictions, some spoken and some unspoken, were placed on those seeking inclusion and acceptance in their circle, such as no smoking, language free of particular expletives, dress codes, preferred style of music, "proper behavior," not to mention assent to and confession of certain Christian doctrines. These not only included some form of initiation or public acknowledgment of conversion through testimony, but often included what Hiebert (1978) calls adopting the group's "cognitive categories."

12 Lyle Schaller (1978) in *Assimilating New Members* deals with this subject extensively, but primarily from a materialistic and mechanistic approach, i.e., pragmatically and practically addressing the question of what and how to assimilate new church members without addressing substantially the motivational question of why. It must be surmised that Schaller works from the homogeneous unit assumption since he does not address difficulties of cross-cultural barriers or treat churches as religious cultures themselves.

13 . In most of Protestant European Christianity the *event of preaching* is central to the worship liturgy and is the primary means of instructing and informing the church concerning the life and ministry of the faith community. It receives most of the time and attention in the worship services of state churches and free churches alike. We may even refer, in a sense, to the "sacrament of preaching." For this reason, the sermon is strategically important in churches. The idiom of the language belies this priority. Another way of saying "to go to church" is *in die Predigt gehen* (to go to the sermon). Therefore, the central focus of preaching will likely be the central focus of Christian life and mission.

APPENDIX 1

Interview Protocols Used in Research

Personal interviews with both full time Midnight Missionaries and volunteer co-workers of the Mission, some of whom have been involved with the MMB from its beginning, shed further light on this subject.

From these persons I seek answers to the research questions by use of the following protocol.

Missionary Interview Protocol (MIP)

Nr. _____

Taped: Y N

PERSONAL DATA

Name: _____ Age: _____

Gender: M F Involvement: F P V

How long involved with the MMB? _____ Dates: _____

Member of which church? _____

Present occupation? _____

METHODOLOGICAL DATA

1. By what means, in your view, has/does the MMB attempted to lead its converts into established churches?
2. To what extent has this effort worked or not worked?
3. What factors have contributed to it working or not working?

4. How have the Christian churches themselves contributed to the success or failure of this effort?
5. How have you as a midnight missionary functioned in leading persons into a Christian church?
6. What other possibilities have you seen that you believe have worked?
 - a. Among predecessors?
 - b. Among co-workers?
 - c. Others (not MMB)?

The following protocol was used to interview persons from Der Wendepunkt and the shadow culture.

Personal Interview Protocol (PIP)

Nr. _____

Taped: Y N

Name: _____ Age: _____

Gender: M F Marital Status: S M D W C

Nationality: _____ Children: Y N How many: _____

Ages: _____

Gender: _____

1. Place of birth: _____

2. Parents' countries of origin: Father _____

Mother _____

3. Church affiliation of parents: Father _____

Mother _____

4. Present relation of father to that church?
Present relation of mother to that church?
5. Baptized in the same church? Y N Confirmed? Y N Age: ___
6. Your present relation to the Christian faith?
7. Your present relation to any church or Christian group?
8. What do you understand the Christian gospel to be?
9. Age when you first comprehended the gospel message?
10. Where and how did you come to this understanding?
11. Was there a particular time you came to this understanding?
12. From whom did you first hear the gospel message?
13. In what way/manner did that person tell you the gospel?
14. Age at which the gospel was believed/rejected?
15. What motivated you to accept/reject the gospel?
16. What did you find attractive about the gospel?
17. What did you find least attractive about the gospel?
18. Did you visit/participate with a Christian group? Y N Why?
19. What drew/repelled you about this group?
20. Are you still a part of that group? Y N How long?
21. [If answer to Nr. 18 is "no," ask this question.] Would you like to be part of a Christian group? Y N
 - a. What kind of group would you like to be a part of?
 - b. What would it take to interest you in joining a Christian group?
22. What is your present opinion of churches in general?
23. Do you believe membership in some kind of Christian church or fellowship group is absolutely necessary for being a Christian? Y N

a. If not, is it advantageous? Y N

b. Why?

24. Is it possible to be a strong Christian alone? Y N

a. If not, why not?

b. If so, how does one go about it?

The following interview schedule was used to interview members and/or leaders of Christian groups and churches.

Group Interview Protocol (GIP)

Nr. _____

Taped: Y N

Name of group: _____

Name of person interviewed: _____

Position in the group: _____

Age of the leader(s): _____

Leadership style: _____

1. How long has the group existed?
2. What is the average age of (majority of) group members?
3. What is the social composition of the group (singles, married couples, married but spouse not in group)?
4. What do most group members have in common; how are they different from each other (homogeneous or heterogeneous)?
5. In brief, what do you understand the gospel to be?

6. What are the group's fundamental Christian beliefs and/or theological/doctrinal distinctives?
7. Which of these do you consider necessary for being a Christian?
8. Are there any other characteristics that make the group unique from other Christian groups?
9. What are the criteria for admission or entry into the group?
10. What are the requirements of group members once they have been admitted to the group?
11. How often does the group meet and for what purposes?
12. Is the group open to incorporate people from the milieu? Y N
13. If not, why?
14. If so, on what conditions?
15. How many such persons are in the group now?
16. What kind of peculiar problems does this create for the group, if any?
17. Have some of the night-milieu persons dropped out? Y N
18. If so, why do you think they did so?
19. How have subculture persons been integrated into the group?
20. What might you do differently in the future?

APPENDIX 2

Transparencies Outlining Mitternachtsmission Strategies

Ziel der -Arbeit

Menschen am Rand der Gesellschaft

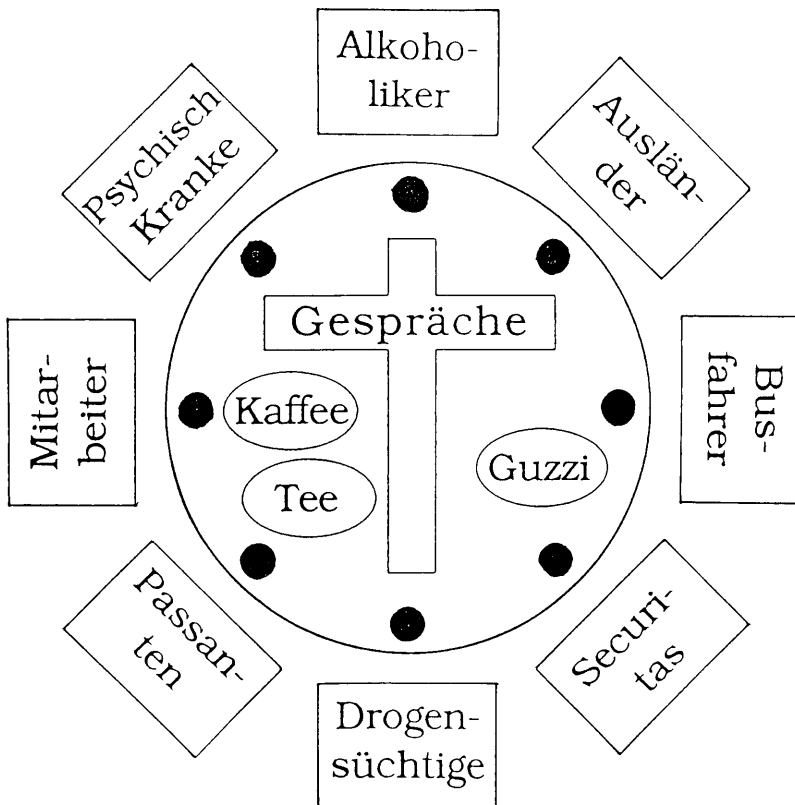
- zu Jesus führen
- zum Ausstieg aus Sucht, Prostitution etc. helfen
- in Gemeinden integrieren

Arbeitsbereiche

- Teemobil und Gassenarbeit
- Betreuung, Beratung, Seelsorge
- Samstagsclub
- Prostituiertenarbeit

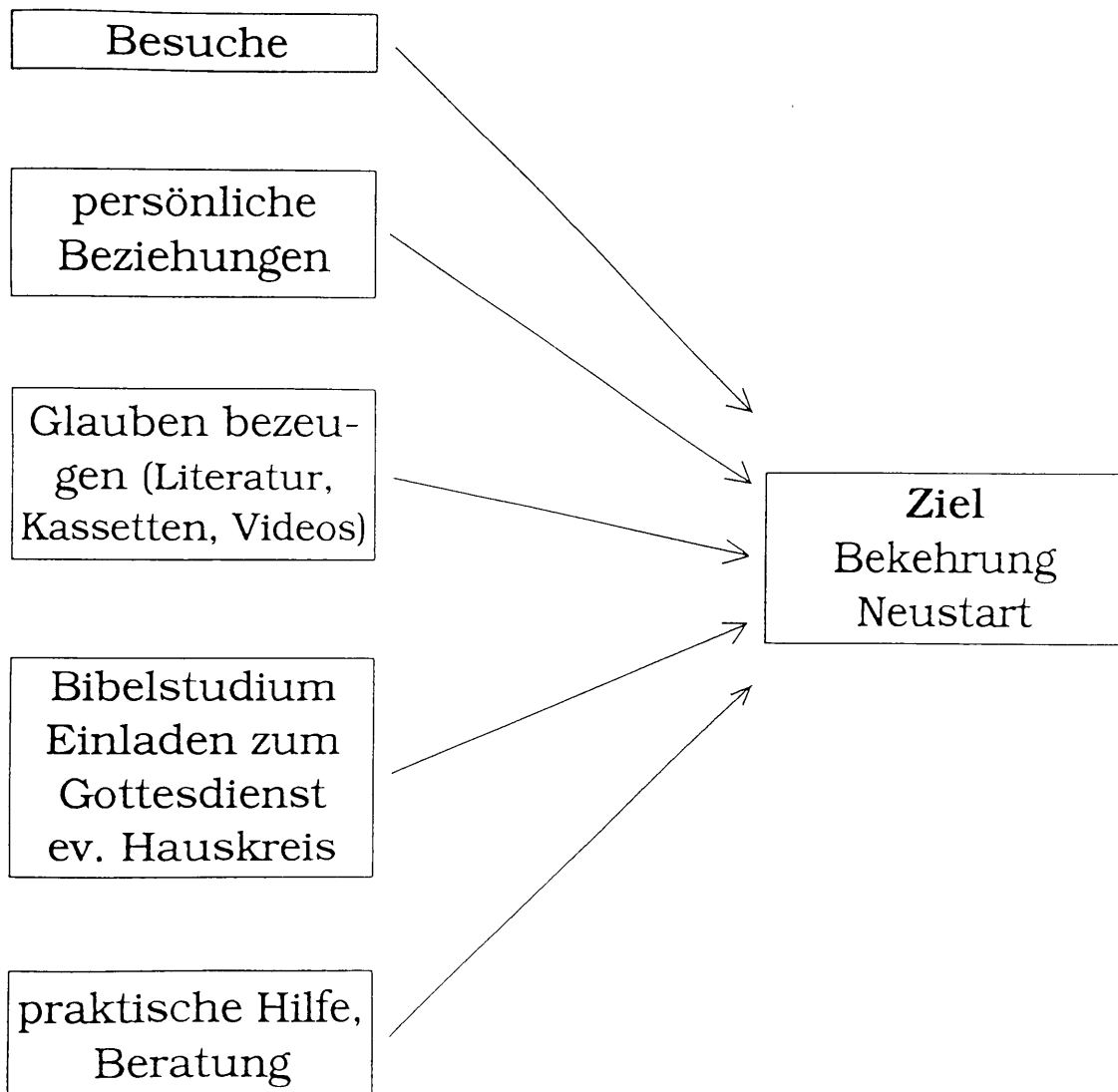
Teemobil

2 mal wöchentlich auf dem Claraplatz
Dienstag und Freitag 20.³⁰ - 24.⁰⁰ Uhr



Mitarbeiter: 3 Vollamtliche
2 - 4 Ehrenamtliche

Prostituierten - Arbeit



Betreuung, Beratung und Seelsorge

- - Kontakte weiterführen
- - Besuche:
 - bei den Betreuten
 - im Spital
 - PUK
 - Gefängnis
- - Betreute kommen zu uns (privat)
- - Gespräche an der Socinstrasse
- - Hilfe bei Arbeits- und Wohnungssuche
- - Mithilfe beim Zügeln
- - Beratung: Vermitteln von weiterer Hilfe (z.B. Beratungsstellen, Therapieplätze, Amtsstellen etc.)
- - Begleitung auf Amtsstellen
- - Geldverwaltung
- - Seelsorge

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